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MOBILE LEARNING: APP-RAISING AND UPDATING LANGUAGE LEARNING IN THE DIGITAL ERA

Introduction

Over the last decades, technology has experienced a constant and quick development, which has necessarily affected almost any aspect of our everyday life. Not surprisingly, great interest has arisen amongst educators in exploring the use of new media in language learning, driven by fast and restless technological development which requires education to adjust to learners' needs. In time, things have changed quickly but, since the very beginning, education has always used technological tools to help students learn: almost 40 years ago, when more and more people achieved access to television, this new device offered great educational potential and the diffusion of literacy performed by TV programmes gave rise to deep and significant changes in the population. As an example, in 1960, RAI –Italy's national public broadcasting company– broadcasted a programme entitled *"Non è mai troppo tardi. Corso di istruzione popolare per il recupero dell'adulto analfabeta,"* supported by the Ministry of Education, which aimed at teaching adult Italians to read and write. In this programme, the pedagogue Alberto Manzi[1] gave real lectures by using several tools: drawings, video and audio files, and practical scenes.[2] Three decades later, mobile phones started to spread worldwide and the possibility to make a call and send a text message from everywhere to anywhere was stunning enough to make people long for such a device. Today, smartphones offer apps for everything and language learning cannot but be involved in this technological revolution.

Language learning has always worked along with technology, even before cassette players: the very first attempt to use a device in order to learn a foreign language dates back to 1901, when Linguaphone[3] –a pioneer and leading company for self-study language learning– produced wax cylinders which allowed learners to study at home by listening, understanding and repeating audio recordings. The advent of portable devices such as iPods, MP3 and MP4 players, smartphones and tablets, enhanced the development of new tools for language learning, including dictionaries, e-books, e-grammars and flashcard programs. Despite their considerable potential, these devices

[1] Centro Alberto Manzi website <http://www.centroalbertomanzi.it/centrostudi.asp> (06/15) gathers information about Alberto Manzi, including video and audio material about his programmes, as well as supporting new initiatives promoting research and education.

[2] In 2010, Rai Educational broadcasted a special programme about "*Non è mai troppo tardi,*" which can be found on YouTube at the following address <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8OKC_BIcnBc> (06/15).

[3] LinguaPhone Website <http://www.linguaphone.co.uk/> (06/15).

originally displayed some technical issues[4] that made educators and student reluctant to use them for language learning purposes. Specifically: images and videos could not be properly displayed and texts were difficult to read, due to small and low resolution screens. Pin-sized keyboards resulted in awkward text entries; data could not be stored because of limited memory; programs could not be accessed all the time and browsing the web was slow and constrained, because Internet connectivity was not always reliable.[5] Moreover, only a small number of apps could be uploaded on the devices and their functionality was rather limited, as a result of the first operating systems (OS), namely Windows Mobile, Palm OS and Nokia Symbian.

Things changed when the new generation of iPhone, Android Devices and products by Windows Phone 7 were released. These devices are not mere telephones but their computing features make them work as small computers serving as telephones as well. They provide successful solutions for the technical issues which arose from early attempts in mobile language learning. Indeed, new screens are significantly larger and their resolution has considerably improved, enabling users to play high definition videos and read texts much more easily. Also text production is not as difficult as before, thanks to larger keyboards or physical mini-keyboards which can be connected to the device, along with some innovative features, such as voice recognition. Moreover, responsive touch screens and fast 3G or 4G connectivity, besides faster Wi-Fi, have made web browsing much more effortless and storage capabilities have considerably grown, due to new generation flash memory which is now cheaper, smaller and provides more space to store data.

Current smartphones and tablets are equipped with cutting-edge functionalities, which are not even available when using computers, such as GPS, high-resolution cameras and a huge range of apps providing tremendous opportunities for education and language learning, as the ones which will be described in the second part of this article.

Benefits and potential

Mobile learning (M-learning) is an educational approach to electronic learning (E-learning), which uses mobile devices, such as smartphones, PDAs (Personal Digital Assistants), Tablets, eBook readers, in order to ease the learning process, by facilitating the acquisition and delivery of knowledge. Dye, Sosltad and K'Odingo define mobile learning as **"***… learning that can take place anytime, anywhere with the help of a mobile computer device***."**[6]

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[4] Maria Luisa Vinci & Daniela Cucchi, "Possibilities of Application of E-tools in Education: Mobile Learning," *International Conference for ICT for Language Learning*, Florence, 2007.

[5] Wang Shudong & Michael Higgins, "Limitations of Mobile Phone Learning," *Proceedings: IEEE International Workshop on Wireless and Mobile Technologies in Education*, 2005.

[6] Aleksander Dye, Bjørn-Egil Solstad & Joe A. K'Odingo, "Mobile Education - A Glance at the Future," *Norges Informasjonsteknologiske Høgskole*, 2003.

Mobile devices have completely changed the relationship between the new media and their users, which are no longer mere receivers of some content produced by someone else but they produce their own content, such as texts, pictures or videos. However, users' power is not limited to production: they can share this content almost as soon as they create it. Social networks and other platforms serve this purpose: *FACEBOOK* and *TWITTER* allow sharing pictures, videos and small texts; *FLICKR* and *INSTAGRAM* involve picture sharing; *YOUTUBE* is used to share videos and comments about them; websites providing space (such as *WORDPRESS*) for blogs allow users to write and publish texts.

Prensky[7] defines young learners as "Digital Natives," implying that they are familiar with all technical devices and they are completely comfortable with any technological change and innovation. Mobile devices, just like computers, "cannot be understood *simply* as tools, considered in isolation from the social, political, or economic contexts in which they are developed and in which they continue to be used. Technology ... is a richly embroidered artefact of a culture."[8] Mobile devices build new relationships with the real world and the digital one, affecting users' physical, private and social reality. By using mobile devices and sharing their products on platforms such as those mentioned above, users not only produce content but they also create new contexts. Hence, they can also create context for learning both in and out of the classroom.

If m-learning is implemented in the classroom, learners acquire awareness of the quality of their performance and are more willing to accept feedback.[9] Besides, they can efficiently assess their work, by self-supervision, which improves learners' autonomy.[10] Moreover, the use of technology enhances collaboration and communication while learning.[11] According to Hill & Hannafin[12] and Saad & Borg,[13] learners use new media to gather information and interact with a wide range of resources, including pictures and videos, making technology work not only as a reference but mostly as a mean of communication. As a consequence, the learner is connected to the world existing out of the classroom, knowing that his/her work might be accessed by a large audience, which will result in a higher quality

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[7] Marc Prensky, "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants Part 1," *On the Horizon*, 9(5), 2001, pp. 1-6.

[8] Cynthia L. Selfe, "Preparing English teachers for the virtual age: The case for technology critics," in Gail E. Hawisher & Paul LeBlanc (eds.), *Re-imagining computers and composition: Teaching and research in the virtual age*. NH: Boynton/Cook, Portsmouth, 1992.

[9] Ibrahim Abukhattala, "The Use of Technology in Language Classrooms in Libya," *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, 6(4), 2016.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] Marjolein Drent & Martina Meelissen, "Which factors obstruct or stimulate teacher educators to use ICT innovatively," *Computers & Education*, 51, 2008, pp. 187-199.

[12] Janette R. Hill & Michael J. Hannafin, "Teaching and learning in digital environments: The resurgence of resource-based learning," *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 49(3), 2001, pp. 37-52.

[13] Orafi Senussi Saad & Simon Borg, "Intentions and realities in implementing communicative curriculum reform," *System,* 37(2), 2009, pp. 243-253.

performance. In addition, learners can get in touch with other schools' peers, experts and groups sharing the same interests and issues. Drent & Meelissen, Harris, and McCormick & P. Scrimshaw have demonstrated that the use of technology in the classroom enhances interaction and facilitates learning,[14] improves communication, cooperation, problem-solving and helps students to acquire competences that they can use in their future on a professional level to achieve better results.[15] It has also been demonstrated that new media can help learners acquire critical thinking and build and arrange their knowledge to learn in a more efficient way.[16]

One of the most significant benefits associated to m-learning is related to the physical environment where learning takes place. By using mobile devices, learning is not merely confined to the classroom but students can perform learning activities anywhere and at any time, linking together the different environments experienced by the learner –school, home and social environments– and providing access to an ubiquitous learning process. Indeed, the learning process which takes place in the classroom does not have to be confined to the school environment: students can use SMS, e-mails or forums for in-depth analysis of the topics they discussed in class and share their issues and opinions with other students or teachers. They can also use apps for self-practice, in order to master the skills they are learning at school.

Moreover, mobile devices are now considerably affordable and they have spread so much that today almost every person owns a smartphone, implying that it would not be hard to utilize smartphones during a lesson. Indeed, schools often use computers to integrate new media in the education environment, which requires institutions to buy and maintain a significant number of computers, in order to enable all the students in a classroom to use them; the use of smartphones would allow students use their own device, resulting in a reduction of costs for educational activities in the classroom. It is also known that the cost of smartphones has significantly decreased, implying that these mobile devices are almost affordable for everyone and owned by most of the students in developed countries. Therefore, the implementation of mobile devices in the educational environment would guarantee a form of digital equity, involving all learners, regardless their social and economic conditions, both in and out of the class.

It is known that not all learners are alike, and placing the individual's personality at the core of the learning process[17] allows all students to achieve successful results. According to Shuler, m-learning enables educators to use mobile devices to enhance

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[14] Drent & Meelissen, *Which factors obstruct or stimulate teacher educators to use ICT innovatively*, cit.

[15] Judi Harris, "Our agenda for technology integration: It's time to choose," *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education*, 5(2), 2005, pp. 116-122 – Robert McCormick & Peter Scrimshaw, "Information and communications technology, knowledge, and pedagogy," *Education, Communication and Information*, 1(1), 2001, pp. 37-57.

[16] David H. Jonassen et al., "Computers as mindtools for engaging learners in critical thinking," *TechTrends*, 43(2), 1998, pp. 24-32.

[17] Renzo Titone, *La personalità bilingue*, Bompiani, Milano, 1996.

differentiated, individualised and autonomous learning,[18] suggesting that m-learning may also cope well with diversities amongst students' personalities and needs.

The use of mobile devices for educational purposes provides students with a wide range of activities to perform both in class and at home. Learners can access, analyse and create websites, browse the Internet and join online discussions –chat rooms, forums, audio and video conferences– and they can improve their writing skills by creating and revising texts, adding and editing images and other graphic items. The concurrent use of images, words, sentences, audio and video files and pronunciation activities enhance learning results, interaction and students' motivation,[19] providing a tremendous benefit for learners. Indeed, multisensory learning, which was first introduced by Maria Montessori and then developed by Orton and Gillingham, has been proven to be a successful method to learn a foreign language.[20] Specifically, when a student learns by using more senses, all the relevant brain areas work together and keep on working together during the recollection phases, making learners recall terms, expressions and other notions better than learners who do not use the multisensory approach, suggesting that if the information is processed by several sensory organs, the brain is able to learn more easily.[21]

Impact on students and educators

Several researches[22] have implemented m-learning in their language classrooms. This body of research has discovered that students show a positive

[18] Carly Shuler, *Pockets of potential. Using mobile technologies to promote children's Learning,* New York: The Joan Ganz Cooney Centre at Sesame Workshop, 2009, p. 5.

[19] Cher Ping Lim & Ching Sing Chai, "An activity-theoretical approach to research of ICT integration in Singapore schools: orienting activities and learner autonomy," *Computers & Education*, 43(3), 2004, pp. 215-236. – Ton Mooij, "'Design of educational and ICT conditions to integrate differences in learning: contextual learning theory and a first transformation step in early education," *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 23(3), 2007, pp. 1499-1530.

[20] Katja M. Mayer et al., "Visual and Motor Cortices Differentially Support the Translation of Foreign Language Words," *Current biology*, 25(4), 2015, pp. 530-535.

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] Bor Tyng Wang et al., "Using iPad to Facilitate English Vocabulary Learning," *International Journal of Information and Education Technology,* 5(2), 2015. – Abukhattala, *The Use of Technology in Language Classrooms in Libya,* cit. – Betul Kinik, "Teachers' Perceptions towards Technology Use and Integration to Teach English," *Conference proceedings. ICT for language learning*, 2014, pp. 456-460. – Mercedes Rico et al., "Let´s Move: Mobile Learning for Motivation in Language Acquisition," *Conference proceedings. ICT for language learning*, 2014, pp. 90-94. – Binod Mishra, "Innovative ways of English language teaching in rural India through Technology," *International Journal of English and Literature*, 6(2), 2015, pp. 38-44. – Patricia Thornton et al., "Learning on the move: Vocabulary study via mobile phone email," *ICCE 2001 Proceedings*, 2001, pp. 1560-5. – Nadire Cavus & Dogan Ibrahim, "m-Learning: An Experiment in Using SMS to Support Learning New English Language Words," *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 401 2009, pp. 78-91. – Emrah Başoğlu & Ömür Akdemir, "A Comparison of Undergraduate Students' English Vocabulary Learning: Using Mobile Phones and Flash Cards," *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 93, 2010, pp. 1-7. – Roksana Begum, "Prospect for Cell Phones as Instructional Tools in the EFL Classroom: A Case Study of Jahangirnagar University, Bangladesh," *English Language Teaching*, 41, 2011, pp. 105-15.

attitude towards the use of mobile devices. Learners agree with the idea that the combination of mobile devices and wireless connectivity enhances the possibility to easily access learning resources and, at the same time, m-learning enables them to work independently and ubiquitously. Students also seem to embrace m-learning because they feel better engaged and both their mind and their emotions are involved in the learning process, which results in much more successful outcomes for those who usually behave as passive learners.[23] However, students also express concerns about the use of SMS and e-mails, feeling that the receipt of too many messages represents an invasion of their privacy.[24]

As for educators, their beliefs and perceptions may constitute a significant barrier against the implementation of technology and mobile devices in the educational environment, as described by Ertmer.[25] According to Barrell,[26] the use of mobile phones for educational purposes is affected by educators' attitude and their concern about the effectiveness of technology. Specifically, it has been observed[27] that years of experience, technological training, gender and age do not affect the educator's choice to use ICT but it depends on how much the educator is persuaded that using technology as a pedagogical tool is an actual benefit. Teachers do not seem to be concerned about spending time to learn how to use technological tools, their choice to use ICT is rather affected by the time the educator needs in order to select resources and materials.[28] Therefore, educators' beliefs, knowledge and attitudes have a significant impact on the implementation of new media,[29] suggesting that they are not intimidated by technology but they need to learn how to use it and, most importantly, they need to be persuaded that ICT, especially mobile devices, are effective tools for language learning.[30]

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[23] Minjuan Wang et al., "The impact of mobile learning on students' learning behaviours and performance: Report from a large blended classroom," BJET, 40(4), 2009, pp. 673-695.

[24] Wang Shudong & Michael Higgins, *Limitations of Mobile Phone Learning*, cit., pp. 179-81. – Fahad N. Al-Fahad, "Students' Attitudes and Perceptions towards the Effectiveness of Mobile Learning in King Saud University," *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 8(2), 2009, p. 111.

[25] Peggy Ertmer, "Addressing first-and second-order barriers to change: Strategies for technology integration," *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 47, 1999, pp. 47-61.

[26] Barrie Barrell, "Technology and change in Atlantic Canada's new secondary English language arts curriculum," *English Education,* 29(2), 1999, pp. 231-247. – Aimee Howley et al., "Rural elementary school teachers' technology integration," *Journal of Research in Rural Education,* 26(9), 2011, pp. 1-13.

[27] Abukhattala, *The Use of Technology in Language Classrooms in Libya*, cit.

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] Marcela Van Olphen, "Perspectives of foreign language pre-service teachers on the use of a Web-based instructional environment in a methods course," *CALICO Journal*, 25(1), 2007, pp. 91-109.

[30] Junhong Liu, "A survey of EFL learners' attitudes toward information and communication technologies," *English Language Teaching,* 2(4), 2009, pp. 101-106.

Apps for ESL learners: an exemplificative list

The present section includes an exemplificative list of apps which can be used for mobile language learning. I downloaded four apps which are available for both Apple and Android devices and tested them, in order to examine their method. I will briefly describe accessibility and features, providing some screenshots I took while using each app. Then, a brief overview follows, describing results arising from a brief survey involving a sample of university students (20 to 25 years old) belonging to different fields of study. However, all of them are learning English.

1. *Impara l'inglese con* BUSUU[31]

This app includes 150 topics (Fig. 1), vocabulary flash cards (Fig. 2), grammar lessons, audio dialogues (with fill-in the gaps activities), writing activities (Fig. 3) and interactive questionnaires. The user can choose a level (compliant with CEFR[32] ratings), choose a topic, complete the tasks and send the answers to a community where native speakers are available to provide feedback. Moreover, he/she can check progresses by completing amusing quizzes.

Fig. 1- An example of topic

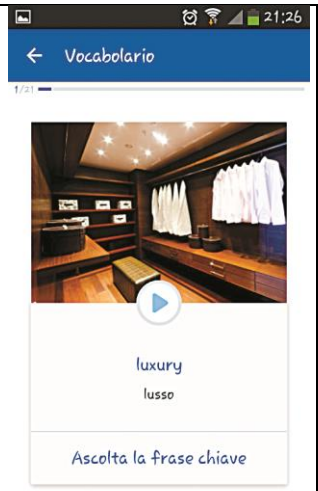


Fig. 2- A vocabulary flashcard

Fig. 3 Writing activity

[31] Web site <https://www.busuu.com/it/> (06/15), available on App Store and Google Play

[32] Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment, < http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf > (06/15).

The app is available for several languages and it is partially free. Topics and tasks are available for free but revision by native speakers requires the premium version, which is available upon monthly payment.

2. *SPEAKINGPAL*[33]

This app is free and provides a list of topics to choose, from elementary to advanced, subdivided into levels (Fig. 4). Each level includes dialogues and the user can listen to a dialogue, then complete several tasks where he/she is asked to speak as one of the dialogue actors, by reading the answer aloud (Fig. 5). The program rates the performance, displays errors and offers the possibility to re-listen to the sentence and repeat it to improve performance (Fig. 6).

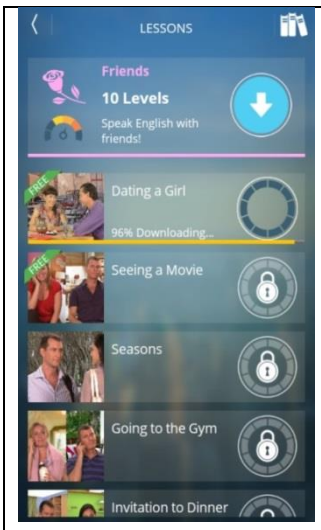


Fig. 4- Available levels

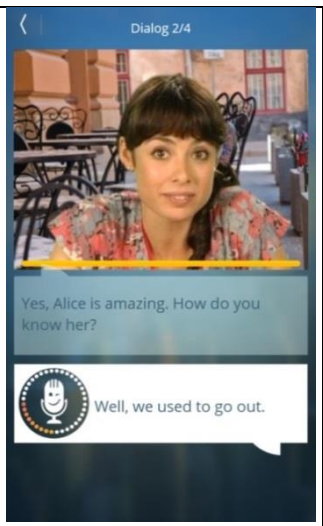


Fig. 5- Dialogue task

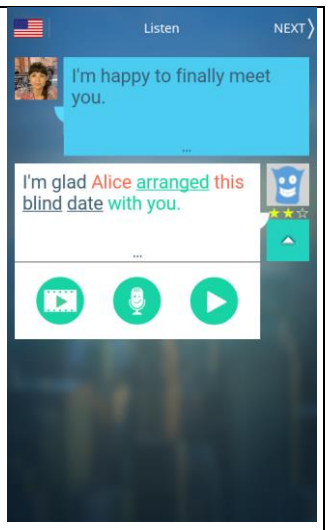


Fig. 6- Error highlighting

Once the whole dialogue has been read, the user completes a final quiz including both comprehension and grammar questions. The app requires an Internet connection, because levels for each topic need to be downloaded.

3. *VOXY*[34]

A trial version (7 days) of this app is available for free, then an upgrade to the premium version (monthly subscription) is required, together with

[33] SpeakingPal Website <http://www.speakingpal.com/products> (06/15), available on App Store and Google Play

[34] Voxy Website < https://voxy.com/> (06/15), available on App Store and Google Play

registration. The user can choose his/her proficiency level, goals (Fig. 7) and interests and the app personalises the course. Lessons include any type of activities (Figg. 8 and 9), such as tasks, audio recordings, karaoke-style music lessons, newspaper articles. The user can also join group or one-to-one lessons with tutors. Tutors receive information about users' performance and create the following lessons by adjusting contents and complexity, according to his/her interests and expectations (Fig. 7).

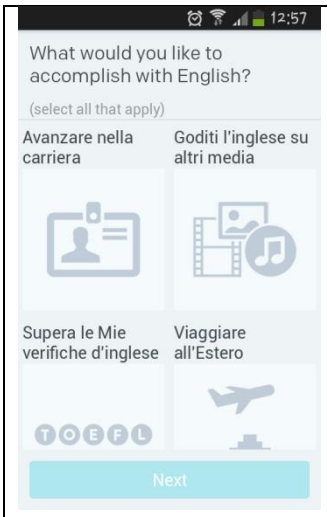


Fig. 7- Customized experience

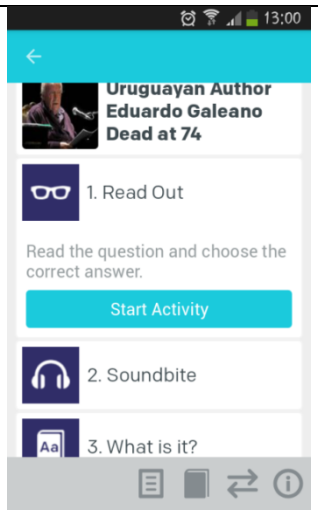


Fig. 8- Tasks available for the lesson

Fig. 9- Vocabulary exercise

4. *OPENLANGUAGE*[35]

OPENLANGUAGE is a language learning app available for several languages. Levels can be chosen according to CEFR ratings and each level offers a lesson (Fig. 14). The lesson includes: a discussion section displaying podcasts; a vocabulary section with dictionary entries; grammar explanations; examples of dialogues; culture highlights; exercises (Fig. 15) and tasks (Fig. 16) which can be uploaded and shared with other learners on *OPENLANGUAGE* or other social media and discuss them.

[35] OpenLanguage Website < http://openlanguage.com/> (06/15), available on App Store and Google Play

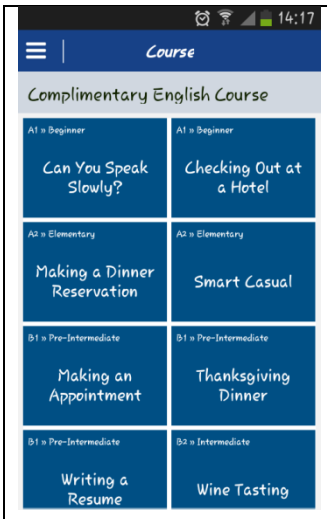


Fig. 14

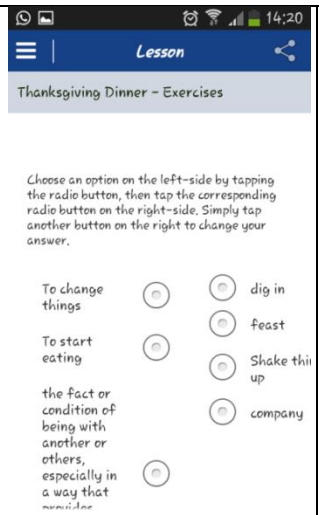


Fig. 15

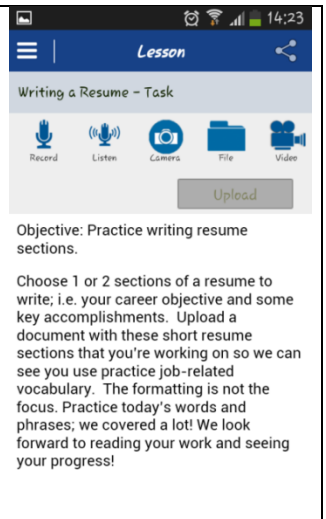


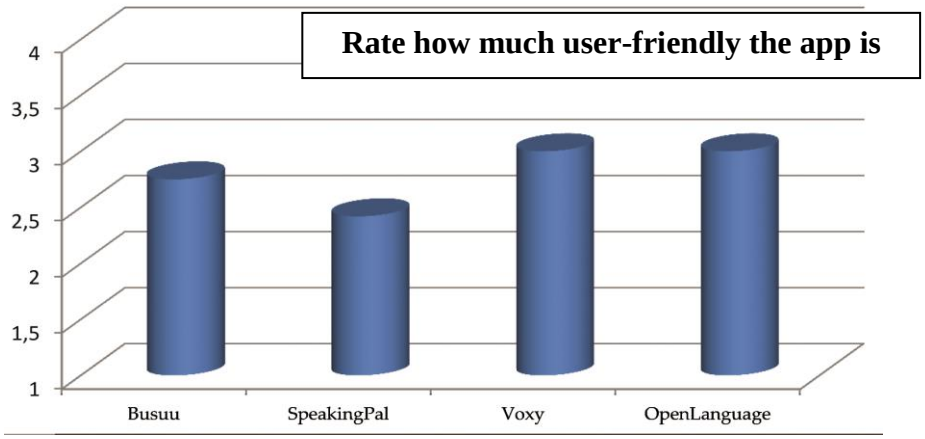
Fig. 16

OPENLANGUAGE is available for free as a demo version but the full version needs a paid subscription.

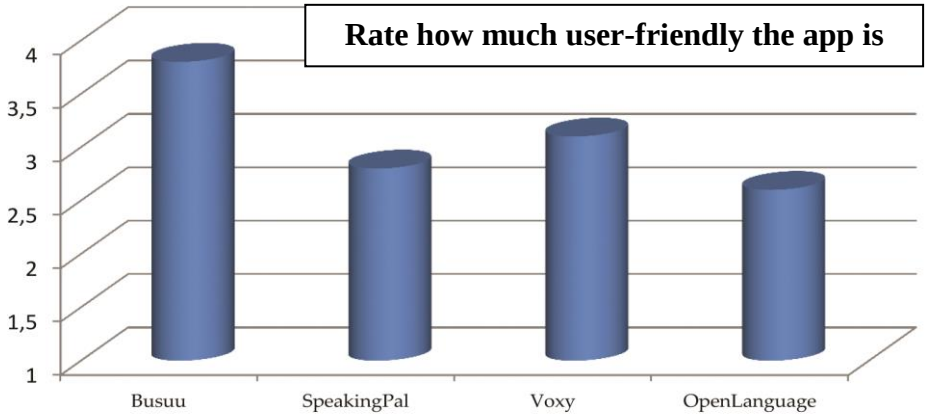
Learning by apps: a survey on students' opinion

A sample of 13 university students (20 to 25 years old, including 10 women and 3 men) was asked to download the four above-described apps and try to use them. All the students are EFL learners, although they belong to different fields of study. Indeed, nine participants are language majors and the remaining four are majoring in engineering, agronomy, medicine and sociology at university. The mobile devices used included both Android and Apple devices. Students were not required to use an app for a specific amount of time but rather to use it until they managed to form their own opinion about it. Then, they were asked to fill in a questionnaire –see Appendix– in Italian, in order to express their comments, preferences, and to rate each app in terms of usefulness and user-friendliness. The means of these questionnaire items are reported below, and the frequency distribution can be found in the appendix.

Amongst the four apps that were taken into consideration, *VOXY* and *OPENLANGUAGE* have been rated as the most useful, with a mean response of 3 –in a scale from 1 'Not very useful' to 4 'Very useful'– followed by *BUSUU* (2.75) and *SPEAKINGPAL* (2.42), as shown in Graph 1. However, in a scale from 1 ('Very hard to use') to 4 ('Very easy to use'), *OPENLANGUAGE* was found to be not very user-friendly, together with *SPEAKINGPAL* (mean rating of 2.6 and 2.8, respectively); conversely, *BUSUU* was rated as the most easy-to-use app, followed by *VOXY* (mean rating of 3.9 and 3.1, respectively), as described in Graph 2.



Graph 1



Graph 2

Participants were also asked to make comments about each app, its benefits and its possible applications. All the apps received positive comments but in most cases the evaluation depended on the user's EFL competence. Learners who considered themselves as proficient felt that some apps included topics and language activities that were too easy to be of any use in their learning process, as reported in some of the comments below; conversely, less proficient users enjoyed almost all of the apps and were more willing to pay a fee for premium versions. Specifically, a brief description of comments and selected opinions[36] are provided as follows:

[36] The translations of students' comments are mine

- *BUSUU* was perceived as including nice and well-organized topics. Graphic features were very appreciated, together with vocabulary flashcards and pronunciation audio buttons.

> *"The app is not very useful for intermediate or proficient students. There are not enough vocabulary flashcards and tasks are too easy. The app can be used to practice without too much effort."* (Giulia)[37]

> *"Busuu is extremely useful for me. There are many levels to face. In this way I can check my progresses."* (Gerardo)

- *SPEAKINGPAL* was considered a useful app but its features are not really user-friendly and some devices experienced issues with voice recognition and the application crashed a few times. However, most of the students were interested in this app because of its focus on spoken English and pronunciation.

> *"This app is very useful for pronunciation, there are not many tools to use for this purpose."* (Annalisa)

> *"I don't think it can help improve pronunciation or comprehension skills. The app often crashes. It might be used to listen to different accents."* (Carlotta)

- *VOXY* received good comments, since the app allows users to choose the level of competence, goals and it meets the need of both novices and proficient students. Even if some learners found that the price of the monthly subscription was considerably high, many were willing to subscribe, in order to access tutoring services.

> *"Amongst the four apps I have tried, this is the best one, because it can be customized based on your own needs but the subscription price is extremely high. For this reason I would not buy it."* (Emiliana)

> *"I like this app, I would buy it, in order to access the tutoring service."* (Mariana)

- *OPENLANGUAGE* received positive feedbacks, despite many learners did not find it easy to use. Thanks to its large number of sections

[37] Surnames were not included in order to protect privacy

(grammar, culture, exercises, podcasts and tutoring services), it was enjoyed by most of the students. However, some technological issues arose.

> *"OpenLanguage deals with many aspects of the English language. It provides a wide range of topics, according to the level of competence. It can be used for activities in the classroom, together with supporting pronunciation and listening activities."* (Maria)

> *"The app is not updated and therefore it is not compatible with the latest version of iOS. I was not able to use it."* (Lorenzo)

Although some of the apps required subscription in order to access the premium and complete version, most of the learners (75%) were willing to pay a fee for it. Amongst them, a large group (50%) said that they would choose *OPENLANGUAGE* and 40% was interested in *VOXY*. Only a small group of learners was interested in buying premium versions of *BUSUU* and *SPEAKINGPAL* (10%).

Conclusions

The use of mobile devices can be an interesting approach to language learning. It is consistent with the needs and habits of young learners, who deal with technology and digital environments in their everyday lives.[38] Moreover, it enhances ubiquitous, autonomous learning and it may enable the connection of people and environments, creating a network of communication which could result in useful and motivating learning experiences.[39] Nowadays, mobile devices are almost everywhere and mobile language learning is a growing field of study, which provides interesting perspectives for research. Although this study can be considered as a beta test –due to the small sample and the large variety of students involved–, the positive attitude of students and their feedback about the apps they tested during the survey suggest that they are willing to use new media, especially smartphones and mobile tools, for language learning purposes.

[38] Prensky, Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants Part 1, cit.

[39] Cher Ping Lim & Ching Sing Chai, *An activity-theoretical approach to research of ICT integration*, cit. – Ton Mooij, *Design of educational and ICT conditions*, cit.

Appendix
Questionnaire for app evaluation and responses

<table>
<tr><td colspan="6">Domanda 1</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">In base all’utilità, come valuteresti l'app Busuu?
La domanda mira a comprendere quanto l'utente ritiene che l'app possa essere efficace nell'apprendimento dell’inglese. La risposta deve tenere conto del proprio livello di conoscenza dell'inglese e delle proprie aspettative.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Per niente utile</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td rowspan="2">Estremamente utile</td></tr>
<tr><td>16.7%</td><td>8.3%</td><td>58.3%</td><td>16.7%</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Domanda 2</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Classifica la semplicità di utilizzo dell'app Busuu.
La domanda mira a valutare se l'utente comprende facilmente come usare l'app, i comandi da selezionare. La risposta non deve considerare la semplicità/difficoltà degli argomenti o degli esercizi.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Molto difficile</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td rowspan="2">Molto semplice</td></tr>
<tr><td>0%</td><td>0%</td><td>16.7%</td><td>83.3%</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Domanda 3</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">In base all’utilità, come valuteresti l'app SPEAKINGPAL?
La domanda mira a comprendere quanto l'utente ritiene che l'app possa essere efficace nell'apprendimento dell’inglese. La risposta deve tenere conto del proprio livello di conoscenza dell'inglese e delle proprie aspettative.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Per niente utile</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td rowspan="2">Estremamente utile</td></tr>
<tr><td>16.7%</td><td>41.7%</td><td>25%</td><td>16.7%</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Domanda 4</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Classifica la semplicità di utilizzo dell'app SPEAKINGPAL.
La domanda mira a valutare se l'utente comprende facilmente come usare l'app, i comandi da selezionare. La risposta non deve considerare la semplicità/difficoltà degli argomenti o degli esercizi.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Molto difficile</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td rowspan="2">Molto semplice</td></tr>
<tr><td>16.7%</td><td>16.7%</td><td>41.7%</td><td>25%</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Domanda 5</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">In base all’utilità, come valuteresti l'app VOXY?
La domanda mira a comprendere quanto l'utente ritiene che l'app possa essere efficace nell'apprendimento dell’inglese. La risposta deve tenere conto del proprio livello di conoscenza dell'inglese e delle proprie aspettative.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Per niente utile</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td rowspan="2">Estremamente utile</td></tr>
<tr><td>0%</td><td>25%</td><td>50%</td><td>25%</td></tr>
</table>

Domanda 6

Classifica la semplicità di utilizzo dell'app VOXY.
La domanda mira a valutare se l'utente comprende facilmente come usare l'app, i comandi da selezionare. La risposta non deve considerare la semplicità/difficoltà degli argomenti o degli esercizi.

Molto difficile	1	2	3	4	Molto semplice
	0%	25%	41.7%	33.3%	

Domanda 7

In base all'utilità, come valuteresti l'app OPENLANGUAGE?
La domanda mira a comprendere quanto l'utente ritiene che l'app possa essere efficace nell'apprendimento dell'inglese. La risposta deve tenere conto del proprio livello di conoscenza dell'inglese e delle proprie aspettative.

Per niente utile	1	2	3	4	Estremamente utile
	8.3%	16.7%	41.7%	33.3%	

Domanda 8

Classifica la semplicità di utilizzo dell'app OPENLANGUAGE.
La domanda mira a valutare se l'utente comprende facilmente come usare l'app, i comandi da selezionare. La risposta non deve considerare la semplicità/difficoltà degli argomenti o degli esercizi.

Molto difficile	1	2	3	4	Molto semplice
	8.3%	41.7%	33.3%	16.7%	

Domanda 9

Quale/i tra queste quattro app consiglieresti per apprendere l'inglese? (Più risposte selezionabili)

Busuu	SpeakingPal	Voxy	OpenLanguage
58.3%	33.3%	50%	41.7%

Domanda 10

Quale/i tra queste app pensi che potresti continuare ad utilizzare? (Più risposte selezionabili)

Busuu	SpeakingPal	Voxy	OpenLanguage
50%	25%	41.7%	41.7%

Domanda 11

Saresti disposto a pagare un contributo economico per la versione premium di queste app?

Sì	75%
No	25%

Domanda 12			
Se sì, per quale/i app saresti disposto ad acquistare la versione premium?			
Busuu	SpeakingPal	Voxy	OpenLanguage
5%	5%	40%	50%