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Let's move: mobile learning for motivation in language acquisition

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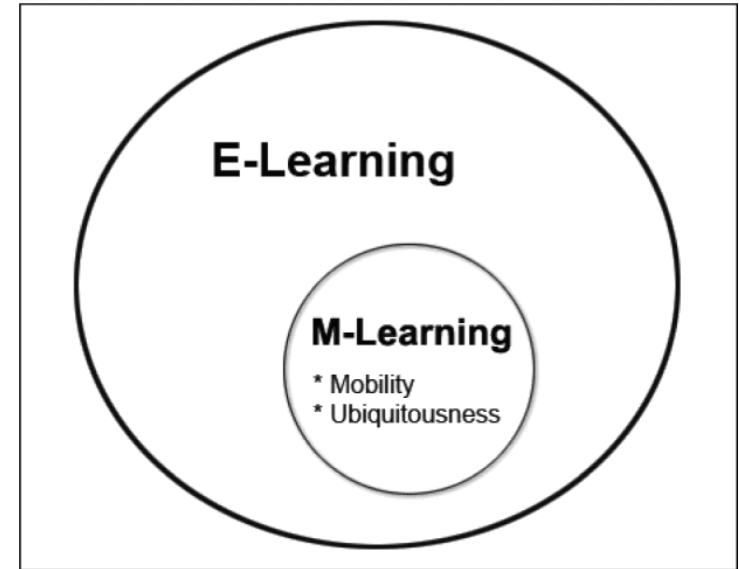
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Mobile learning (m-learning) is undergoing a rapid evolution, supporting a variety of fields, and whose major features are the potential for the learning process to be personalized, informal and ubiquitous.

In this sense, Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) can be considered a solution to break learning barriers in terms of time and place and promote out-of-class instruction.



But

✓ **Do learners feel motivated to use mobile devices to learn languages?**

✓ **How effective is mobile technology for language learning?**

Literature Review: *Main theories and results so far*

- ✓ Mobile assisted language learning (MALL) as a subarea of mobile learning (mLearning) is supporting a range of fields, including second language acquisition. [1].
- ✓ Recognized the potential for the learning process to be personalized, informal and ubiquitous, some of the characteristics of mobile learning were summarized a decade ago by Ogata & Yano (2005) [2].

As educators need to understand how mobile technologies can be effectively used within and outside the classroom and develop effective methods and materials, we find an emerging field of research. [3]

[1]. Pachler, N., Bachmair, B., Cook, J. (2010). *Mobile Learning. Structures, Agency, Practices*. London: Springer.

[2] Ogata, H., & Yano, Y. (2005). Knowledge awareness for computer-assisted language learning using handhelds. *International Journal of Learning Technology*, 5(1), 435-449.

[3] Kukulska-Hulme, A., Shield, L. (2008). An overview of mobile assisted language learning: From content delivery to supported collaboration and interaction. *ReCALL*, 20(3), 271-289.

Despite **shortcomings** in mobile instruction [6] (small screen size, limited presentation of graphics, dependence on networks transmission) **some of the main conclusions obtained so far** from MALL can be summed up as:

✓ Effectiveness for delivering language materials and solution to break learning barriers and promote out-of-class instruction (Thornton & Houser , 2005 [7])

✓ There is a large number of approaches and theories used in MALL, most of these derived from the cognitive psychology [8] computing research and language acquisition theories.

✓ In general, theories are still imprecise, and based on descriptive studies as Godwin-Jones (2011) [9] and Al-Jarf, R. (2012) [10] illustrating the current state of the art, the devices used and how case studies are developed.

✓ In terms of the gained linguistic knowledge and skills, most of the current studies examine vocabulary acquisition, listening and speaking skill (Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008).

[6] Albers, M., & Kim, L. (2001). *Information design for the small-screen interface: an overview of web design issues for personal digital assistants*. *Technical Communications*, 49 (1), 45-60.

[7] Thornton, P., & Houser, C. (2005). *Using mobile phones in English education in Japan*. *Journal of Computer Assisted L.*, 21, 217-228.

[8] Cheng, S.-C., Hwang, W.-Y., Wu, S.-Y., Shadiev, R., & Xie, C.-H. (2010). *A mobile device and online system with contextual familiarity and its effects on English learning on Campus*. *Educational Technology and Society*, 13(3), 93-109.

[9] Godwin-Jones, R. (2011). *Emerging Technologies. Mobile Apps for Language Learning*. *LL&T*, 15(2), 2-11.

[10] Al-Jarf, R. (2012). *Mobile technology and student autonomy in oral skill acquisition*. In J. Díaz-Vera (Ed.). *Left to my own devices: Learner autonomy and MALL innovation and leadership in English language teaching* (pp. 105–130). Bingley, UK: Emerald Group. Retrievable from, <http://dx.doi.org>

But how effective in terms of motivation (and consequently learning) is mobile learning as a support of f# language instruction on students with different backgrounds (degrees, ICT Experience, etc.)?



To cover this objective (*comparing motivation and preferences in mobile learning before and after using a language learning APP*), we conducted the research at the University of Extremadura (the introduction of a mobile language app) during 8 weeks.

Study data:

Students: more than 60 Learners from the fields of engineering and teacher training from two Faculties of University of Extremadura.

Tools: *Taplingua Inc*, a language APP running under Android and created by a San Francisco based startup.

***Download Taplingua on your mobile phones (Play store)**

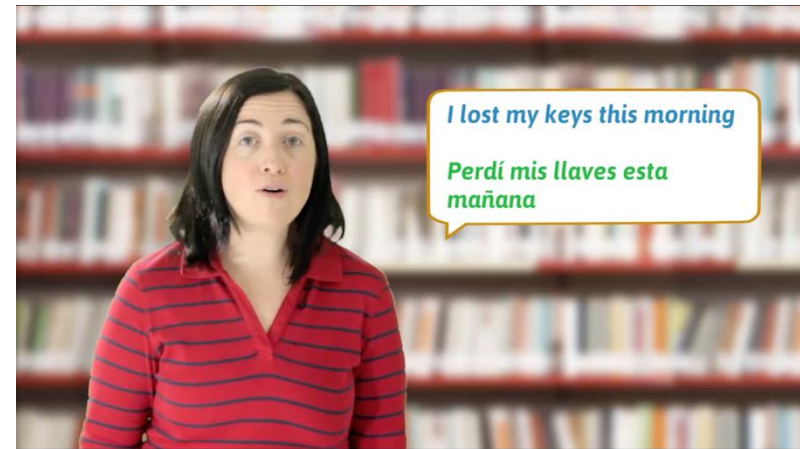
Task and activities: The App uses practical situations, video explanations, interactive games, “flipped classroom”, mobile learning in micro lesson format and task-based projects.



Taplingua, a new APP for mobile language learning.

The Taplingua App includes visual explorations of short videos categorized in 81 levels from A2/ B1 levels. They are divided into 3 modules:

LISTEN practical situations led by native speakers of English such as asking for a coffee or buying a plane ticket. **LEARN** focuses on explanations related to structure, grammar & vocabulary related to the situation described in the listening module and **PLAY** which is based on exercises to practice the aforementioned skills.



Level 1.1 - At the café - pronouns



LISTEN



LEARN



PLAY

The **shortness of the videos** is one of the major benefits which allow learning in small bites whenever short periods of time are available. The videos are used to practice listening, reading, writing. After the video explanations (Learn), the app offers games to practice each level and skills.

Speaking, however, is practiced with individual tutors via videoconference.

Example of an explanation: at the supermarket (Learn)



Lesson_44_Tutorial.mp4

Before the exposure to TapLingua:

- ✓ a high percentage of the population of this study, belonging to different learning fields, uses apps on their phones on a **daily basis**.
- ✓ however, most of apps are related to **leisure** (sports, news, photos and videos, music, lifestyle, etc) and only in a few cases educational ones were preferred.
- ✓ When **educational applications** are used, they are essentially dictionaries and translators.

Under this context, Taplingua was presented to the piloting group in order to motive them to use digital language learning resources as a support of the language content established in each course syllabus.

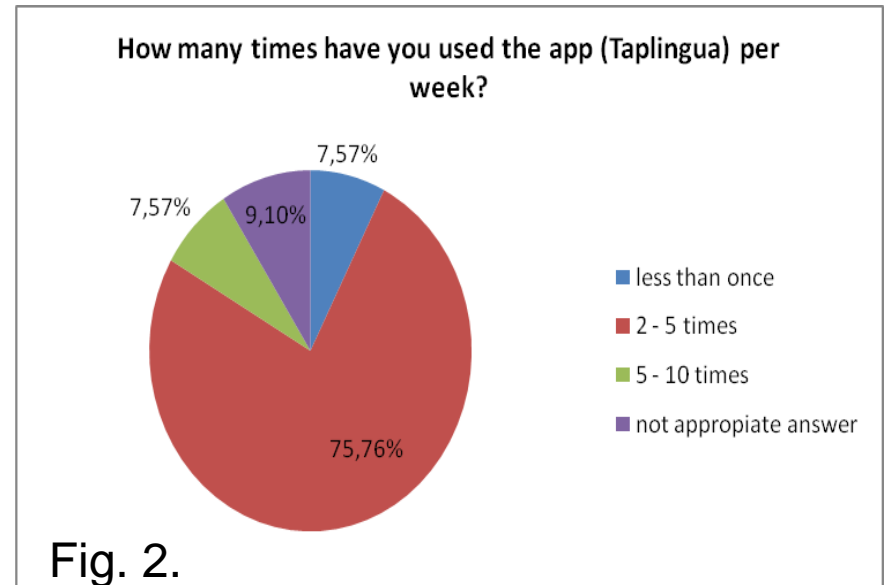
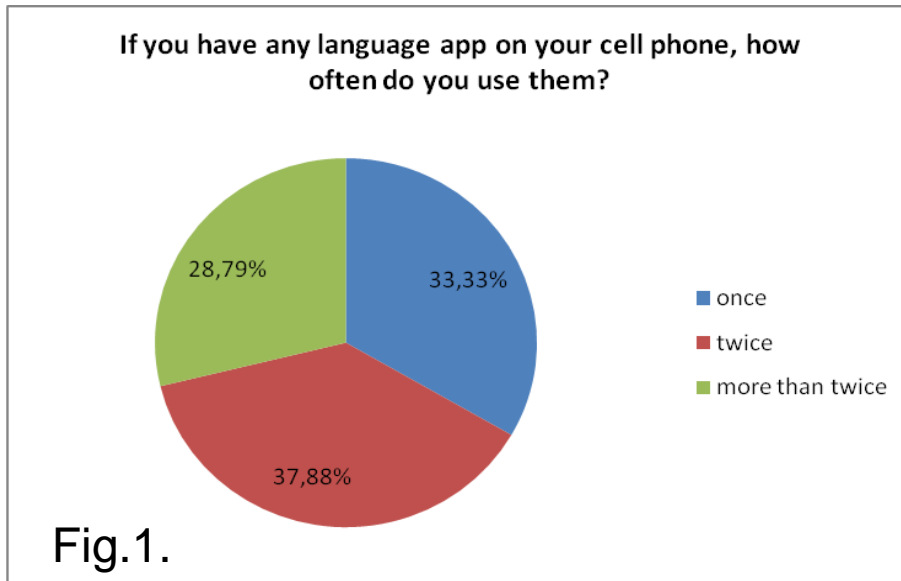


Results: An overview on Mobile learning and motivation

After the exposure to TapLingua:

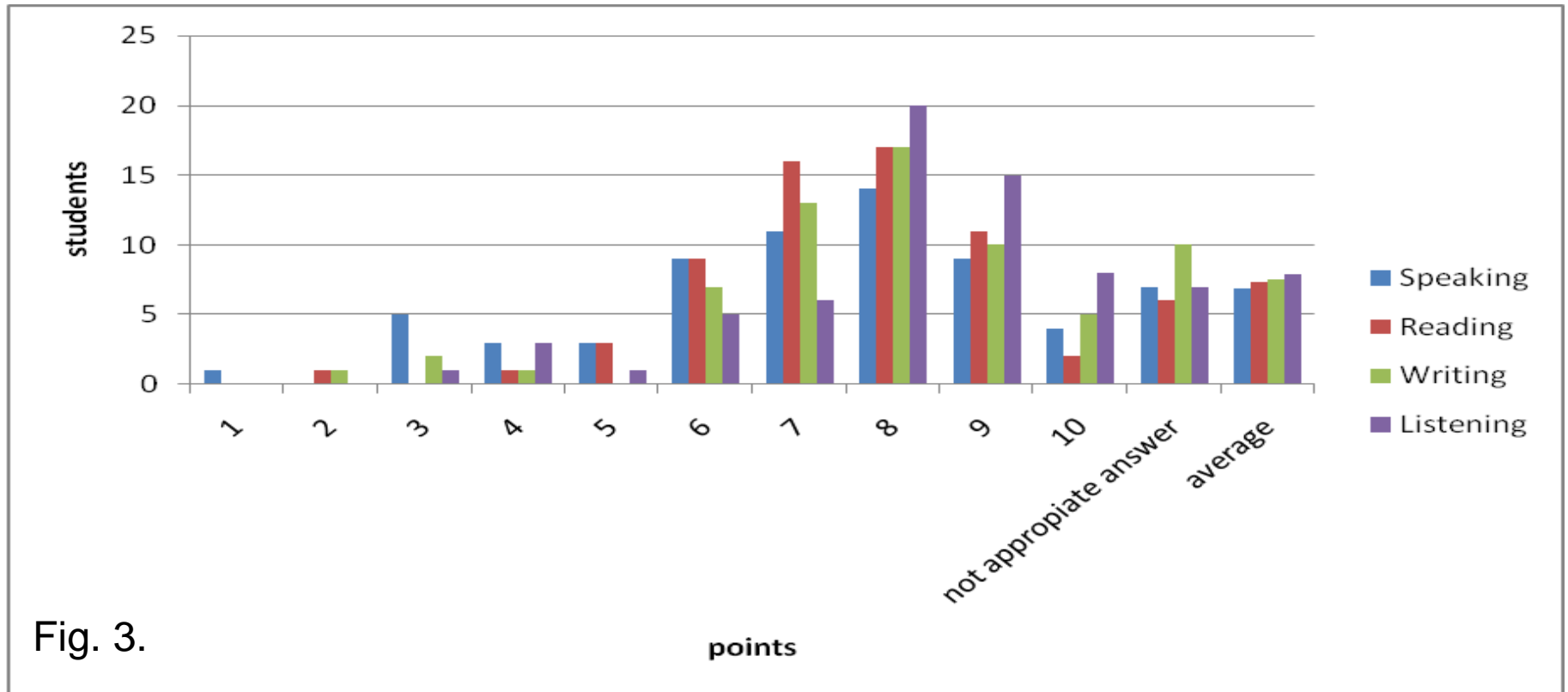
To measure the motivational effects of Taplingua on students, we studied the frequency of use of language apps.

✓ From the only 28% of those who had used mobile language apps more than twice a week before the experiment (Fig.1.), the number of times using Taplingua per week increased between twice and 5 times, reaching 75,75 % of students (versus 28%) (Fig. 2.).



✓ As for the preference about the language skill to practice, the opinions are homogeneously distributed, though a slight preference for **reading**, **writing** and **listening** is observed (Fig. 3.).

Students feel that the app would also help them improve their oral production.



Results: other outstanding findings

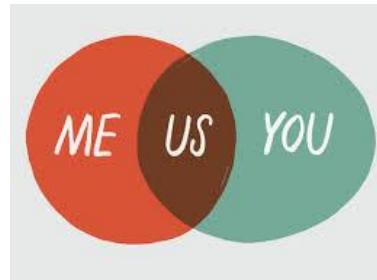
✓ More than 80% would use taplingua to keep improving their English.

This percentage could make us think this tool helps increasing students' motivation towards foreign languages, and more specifically, mobile assisted language learning.



✓ Most students now understand how games can be used to learn languages, and would play and compete using Taplingua with friends.

This could be seen as a will for collaborative learning, since the application allows users to play together and compare results. From the total population under study, only four students scored with less than five their will to play and compete with others while learning languages.



Conclusions

1. MALL research is needed to be able to distinguish the field from other kinds of technology-assisted learning, such as CALL.
2. Empirical research investigating the possible changes in learning strategies and styles when employing mobile devices is also needed.
3. This study reveals the advantages of implemented educational apps in traditional learning contexts to enrich the general syllabi (stimulating students & all target groups to exploit language apps to complement their process of learning acquisition).
4. Motivation to learn has resulted, in general terms, in higher engagement leading to positive learning outcomes.
5. Motivation is a volatile concept, not all students are motivated in the same way, however, in that research most students expressed their interest in using educational applications as part of a traditional second language learning format class.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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