Using mobile devices for language learning in a higher education distance learning context: motivations and behaviours

Conference or Workshop Item

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Using mobile devices for language learning in a higher education distance learning context: motivations and behaviours.

Valérie Demouy, Annie Eardley, Qian Kan, Agnes Kukulska-Hulme
Delivering languages at the OU in the last 10 years

From …

To …
Learning with mobile devices at the OU now

- Mobile VLE
- Ebooks, ibooks
- OUAnywhere
- iTunesU
The project

• What are the students’ motivations for using mobile devices to learn the language they are currently studying? Has their motivation changed since they began using the phone/device for this purpose?

• How do they see their use of mobile devices evolving in relation to language learning and what mobile language learning materials, services or resources would the students like to have available to them in the future as part of their studies at the OU?

• Are mobile language learning activities an important (regular?) and scheduled feature in their language learning? Or are they more punctual and opportunistic? And do they spend more time on language learning as a result?
Methodology

• Sample of 8 language modules (across languages and levels)
• Online survey (mostly quantitative data)
• Follow-up interviews (8 Beginners students)
• Participation rates (ranging from 11% to 32%)
• Around 150 users of mobile devices for language learning across all 8 modules surveyed (10% of the participants)
Some consistent findings:

- Main two devices used: mobile phones and tablets
- First resource or service ever accessed: OU language website
- Most dominant activity done: listening, closely followed by vocabulary and grammar practice.
- Some reading but no writing
- High on their wish list: resources/apps for speaking practice and more interactivity
- The affordances of the device and its regular use got them started, not an identified need related to language learning
So what type of resources are accessed then?

• OU language module materials (books in pdf or ebook format, audio files)
• Raw resources in the TL for listening or reading (news, audio books, songs, films, video/audio clips, books etc.)
• Reference tools (dictionaries, verb tables)
• Language learning activities & packages (website & cloud-based apps such as Duolingo, Busuu, Memrise, Babbel, Anki etc.)
Using their device ...

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>in planned sessions</th>
<th>informally</th>
<th>both</th>
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</table>
Impact on their learning:

Has the use of mobile devices enabled you to study at times and in places you would not normally have studied in the past?

Do you think you are spending more time on language learning as a result?
What are the motivations behind the use of mobile devices?

- Enabling frequent connection with the course
- Keeping it fun and light and informal
- Maximising exposure and creating a sense of authenticity and immersion
- Fostering motivation and a sense of progression and achievement
- Promoting autonomy
And about immersion …
References


Contacts

- valerie.demouy@open.ac.uk
- a.f.eardley@open.ac.uk
- qian.kan@open.ac.uk
- agnes.kukulska-hulme@open.ac.uk