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Exploring trends, motivations and behaviours in the use of mobile devices for language learning in a higher education distance learning setting

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How to cite:

Demouy, Vale; Kan, Qian; Kukulska-Hulme, Agnes and Eardley, Annie (2015). Exploring trends, motivations and behaviours in the use of mobile devices for language learning in a higher education distance learning setting. In: Eurocall 2015, 26-29 August 2015, Padua, Italy.

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Version: Not Set

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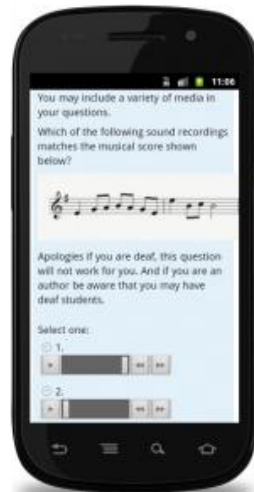
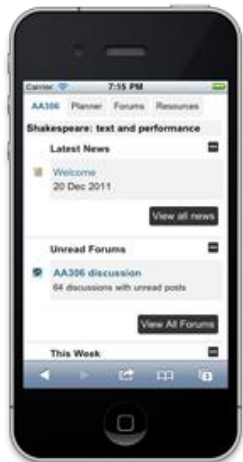
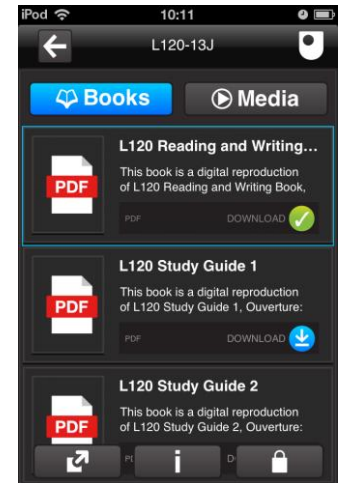
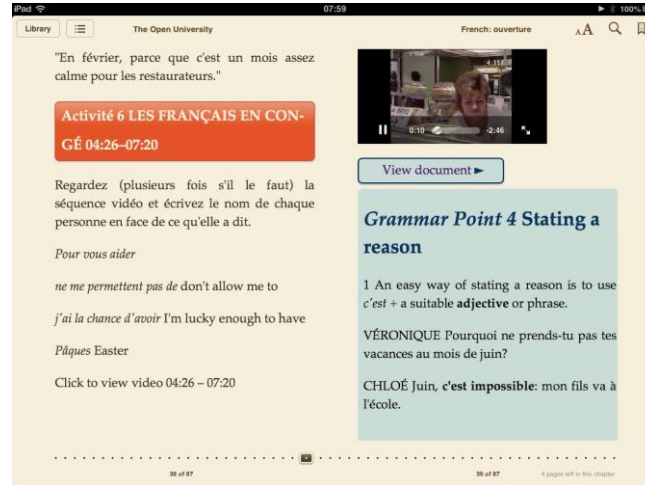
Exploring trends, motivations and behaviours in the use of mobile devices for language learning in a higher education distance learning setting

Valérie Demouy, Qian Kan,
Agnes Kukulska-Hulme
and Annie Eardley

Optional use of mobile devices and resources in language study at the OU



- Mobile VLE
- ebooks, ibooks
- OUAnywhere
- iTunesU
- apps



Research questions



- What are students' motivations for using (or not using) mobile devices to support their language learning?
- What are their preferred activities, apps and resources?
- Are mobile language learning activities a scheduled feature in their language learning, or more opportunistic?
- Do they consider they are spending more time on language learning as a result of using mobile devices?
- How do they see their use of mobile devices evolving and what resources or services would they like to have available to them in the future?

Methodology



- Online surveys in 2013, 2014, 2015
 - Sample of 8 language modules (across 5 languages and 4 levels)
 - Sent to approx. 1000-1500 students each year
 - Participation rates of 11% to 36% for individual modules
 - **Each year around 115-231 respondents said they were users of mobile devices for language learning**
- Follow-up semi structured interviews, recorded and transcribed (8 Beginner students, so far)

Survey participation summary



	2013	2014	2015
Number of students sent the survey	1,525	1,262	1,006
Percentage of complete responses	15.9%	28.2%	17.8%
Number of students using mobile devices	143	231	115

Phase 1: questionnaire & interviews



- **Questionnaire in 3 parts:**
 1. **How students got started** (device, resources, activities, circumstances)
 2. **How they use their mobile device** (activity, context, frequency, examples, perception of impact on learning)
 3. **What they would like more of in the future** (resources, activities, tools)
- **Interviews:**
 - How students integrate mobile devices in their learning (context, study style)
 - How they practise listening and speaking skills & use apps and resources for vocabulary and grammar

Phases 2 and 3: slightly revised questionnaire (2014-15 results)



- Follow-up question to the answer 'no' to using mobile for language learning: *why not?*
- New question on 4 language skills practised
- New question on resources & apps used the most
- Changed questions on *how they got started...*
... to a question specifically about
their initial motivation for using their mobile device for language learning

Results of how they got started/ their initial motivation



- In 2013 a common response was:
“I use my device regularly and wanted to see what it could do for language learning”

- In 2014 and 2015: as above, but also:



“I wanted to fill in or maximise gaps in my daily schedule to practise my language skills”



“I wanted to use the OU Anywhere app”
(the in-house app for offline access to learning resources such as ebooks, audio, video)

Some findings: devices and skills



- Main 2 types of device used for language learning:
smartphones and tablets/iPads

- Main skills practised:

listening and reading



- but not necessarily by preference?

High on their wish list: resources/apps for speaking and listening practice and more interactivity

vocabulary practice also popular

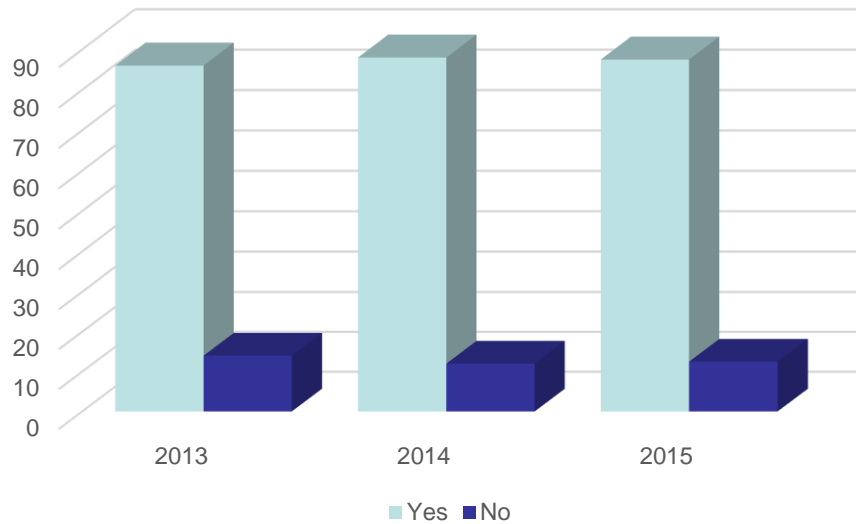
Some findings – apps and resources



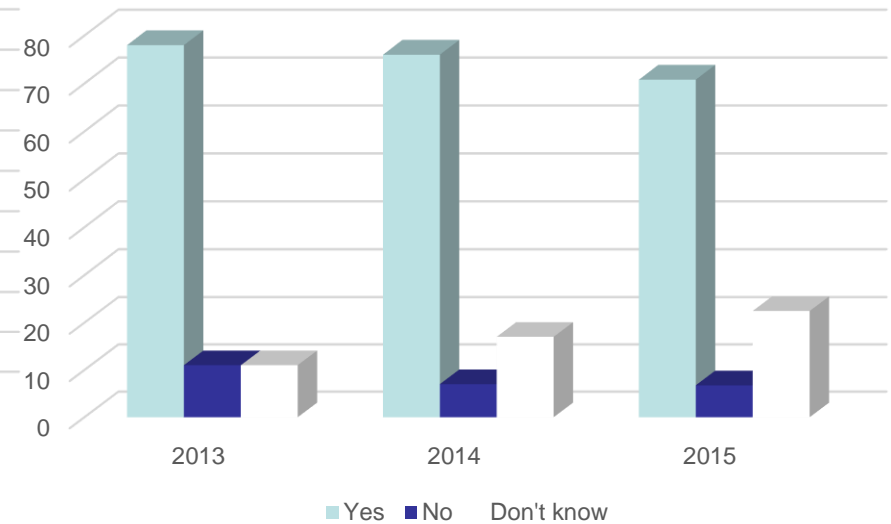
- Most used apps or resources:
 - reference material, language learning websites and apps (e.g. Duolingo, Busuu, Memrise...), authentic materials for reading, and authentic audio-visual resources
 - Many reasons provided by respondents, e.g.:
 - “Ovodo: Movies with subtitles in different languages that also provides slow motion audio tool”
 - “Inforadio.de: Current news and information from Berlin. Just like being there.”



Impact on learning (time/places)



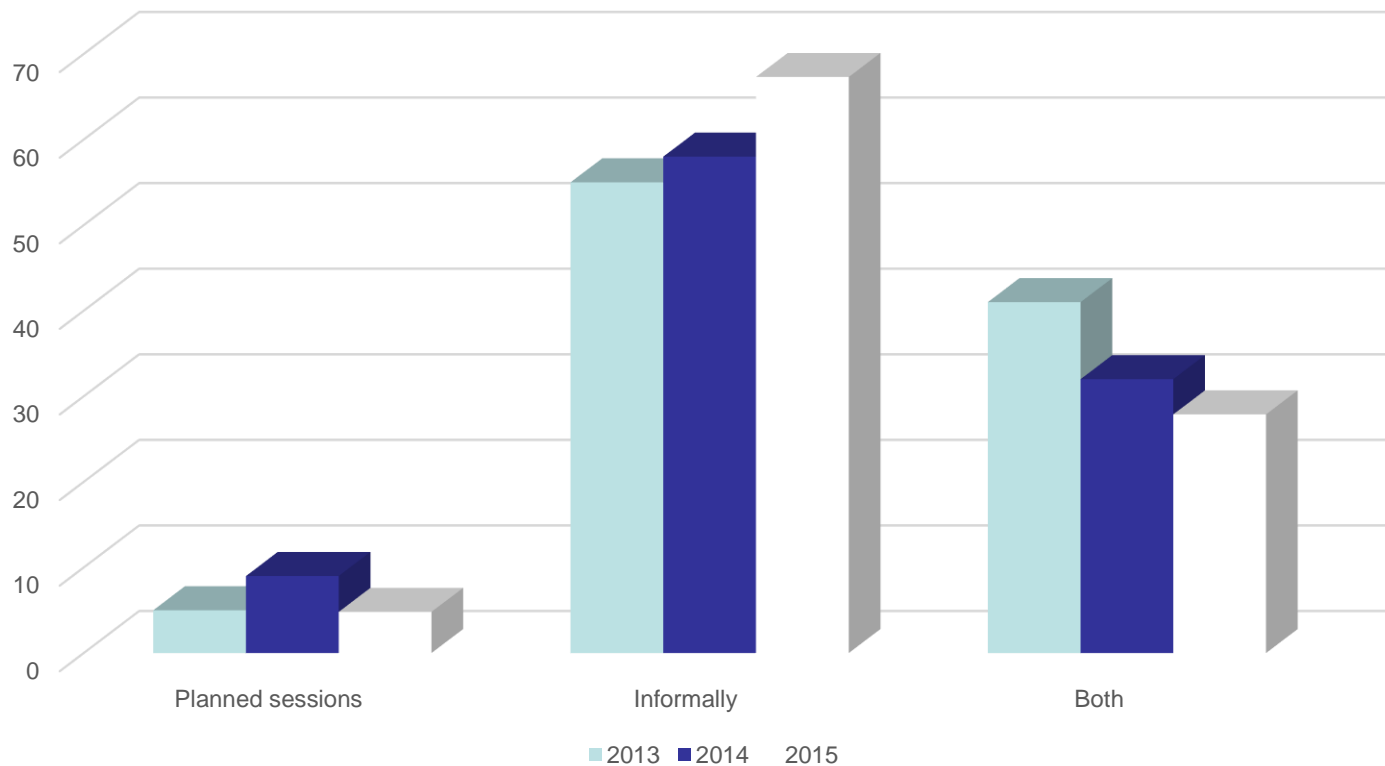
Has the use of mobile devices enabled you to study at times and in places you would not normally have studied in the past?



Do you think you are spending more time on language learning as a result?



Are mobile language learning activities a scheduled feature in their language learning, or more opportunistic?



“How do you use your mobile device(s) to engage in language activities?”

Brief focus on learners of Intermediate French (71 respondents in 2015 = largest group)



24% using smartphones (was 11% in 2013)

43% not using mobile devices for language learning (was 64 % in 2013)

Reading 57% (was 37% in 2013)

Top three resources/ apps in 2015

Using reference materials (online dictionaries, translation tools) 70%

Using language learning websites and apps 58%

Using authentic materials 55%

Examples of favourite apps:

Skype - I can keep in touch with my Italian friend easily and cheaply

Spotify for French language songs is cheap and easy

Conjugate French - online app for quick verb conjugation because it's quick and well laid out and has a training element as well.

Duolingo - good for memorising vocab (particularly things like prepositions) as it's very repetitive.

Flashcards - noting down new words, looking them up and then making the flashcards helps me learn.

I use my Kindle Fire to read French novels, some in the original.



Italian Learners' favourites

Babylon
Translator

Babbel

Duolingo

Memrise

Italian Verb Trainer

Easy readers

Kindle

Farlex free dictionary

Corriere Della Sera website

Finally...



Top reasons selected by respondents who are **not** using a mobile device for language learning
(they could select several out of 7 possible reasons, or Other)

1. I prefer using my computer or laptop, my books and module materials
2. I only use my mobile to make phone calls or send text messages
3. **I am not aware of how I could use a mobile device for language learning** (up to 46% in 2014 and up to 33% in 2015, varies by module)
4. My mobile device does not allow me to connect to the internet (up to 33% in 2015, varies by module)
5. I believe my mobile device is not suitable for language learning (up to 33% in 2015, varies by module)



Related publications: our work with OU students using mobile devices for language practice

- Demouy, V., & Kukulska-Hulme, A. (2010). On the spot: using mobile devices for listening and speaking practice on a French language programme. *Open Learning*, 25(3), 217–232. <http://oro.open.ac.uk/24647/>
- Demouy, V., Eardley, A., Shrestha, P., and Kukulska-Hulme, A. (2011). The Interactive Oral Assessment (IOA) project; using Talkback® for practice and assessment of listening and speaking skills in languages. In: ICL 2011 Interactive Collaborative Learning, 21-23 September 2011, Piešťany, Slovakia. <http://oro.open.ac.uk/29658/>
- Rosell-Aguilar, F. and Kan, Q. (2015). Design and user evaluation of a mobile app to teach Chinese characters. *JALT CALL*, Volume 11, No 1, pp. 19-40. ISSN 1832-4215. http://journal.jaltcall.org/articles/11_1_Rosell-Aguilar.pdf

Thank you



Team members:

valerie.demouy@open.ac.uk

qian.kan@open.ac.uk

agnes.kukulska-hulme@open.ac.uk

a.f.eardley@open.ac.uk