

## O11

# The use of learner language input and its impact on mobile language learning

The present report contains two main sections:

1. Evidence-based reports (pages 1 to 8)
2. Focus group reports (pages 9 to 15)

*NB: Depending on the availability of the app in its different formats (at the time of testing), the two sections contain reports from various partners.*

### 1. EVIDENCE-BASED REPORTS

#### **GENERAL FACTS & FIGURES**

130 completed answers (105 female to 25 male respondents mainly aged between 18 and 30 except 15 aged 31 to 60. 110 have obtained their A-levels, 19 a bachelor degree and 1 a master's degree. Around 40% are following a language course, another 40% is learning a language on his own and the 20% remaining use the two learning methods.

Each country has then submitted its data and all the national reports have adopted the following structure:

***Country facts and figures***

***Study conditions***

***Use of learner language input and its impact on mobile language learning***

## **BELGIUM**

### **FACTS AND FIGURES**

Our Belgian higher education sample is composed of 53 respondents all aged between 18 and 30. These learners are language or business communication university students and all follow the same undergraduate course of advanced English skills aiming at a B2+ level of language. The ratio between the male (11%) and the female participants (89%) reflects the distribution of male and female language students in the country.

45 students are undergraduate learners, 7 others have already obtained a bachelor degree and 1 of them is a postgraduate student. Although all the respondents follow English courses at university, 12 of them state that they are also learning the language on their own, in what is considered informal learning. Their mother tongue is, for the vast majority, French.

As far as learning languages with technologies is concerned, nearly half the respondents (23 = 44%) already use language learning apps such as Duolingo, Speaky, Quizlet or online dictionaries like Wordreference and Linguee. They nearly all use them at home even though 8 of them also use them at school and 4 on public transport. From Table 1, it can be observed that the use of these apps is quite varied; still, half of the language learning apps users state they do not use these mobile tools on a regular basis.

Table 1. Frequency of language learning apps use in Belgium

1 = Never	2	3	4	5 = all the time
4	8	5	5	1

### **STUDY CONDITIONS**

A group of 70 university students were provided with a presentation of the tool and its functionalities and were asked to use the app, more specifically to complete at least one written task and explore the tool. They had then to fill in a 5-minute online survey and to hand in an assignment in which they could comment on their experience. There were some limitations to this study since the iOS version of the app was not available and since some options were not fully functional yet (viz. 'Types' and 'families' in 'related ratios and indices'). Also, a more longitudinal approach would have allowed for more results in terms of impact on language learning and on attitudes towards the use of the tool.

### **USE OF LEARNER LANGUAGE INPUT AND ITS IMPACT ON MOBILE LANGUAGE LEARNING**

90% of the participants downloaded and used the app on their smartphone whereas the remaining 10% tried it on their tablet. After having tested the TELL-OP application, the learners were asked to give their opinion on various aspects of the app thanks to a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

From the results in Table 2, it appears that the feedback given on the learner language input has had a quite significant influence on their perception of the learning process. Indeed, the participants first believe that the app provides useful information. More specifically, it raises their awareness on how to use vocabulary when writing a text and on the role of vocabulary frequency in language learning. To a lesser extent, the app also raises their awareness on how vocabulary and grammar combine to form a consistent text. Finally, they feel that the TELL-OP app might help them improve their knowledge of the target language.

Besides, the pedagogical approach chosen by the TELL-OP team is validated by the participants, who consider that the tutorial is useful and that the purpose of the app looks clear to them. It can also be said that, according to the respondents, the app corresponds more to an informal learning environment than a complement to a language course. This confirms our thoughts on the growing importance of mobile language learning.

Although the participants acknowledge the usefulness of the app, its functionalities and the pedagogy underlying the creation of the app, they highlight some technical flaws that seem to influence their intention of using the tool in the future. In fact, the project and its time constraints did not allow us to develop an optimal app that could meet our participants' expectations and include more functionalities (as a reminder the project was initially submitted as a three-year project but was funded for two years only). The results indeed indicate that the app is not perceived as very useful nor user-friendly for learning and, more importantly, that it lacks interactivity and more meaningful activities. Technically speaking, the tool does not really work optimally (or at least not the way the user would want it to sometimes). Finding the information is not considered as an easy process and using the app does not raise substantial awareness on how to use online resources to improve a foreign language. Moreover, the learners do not feel they can become more autonomous in their learning thanks to the tool. Therefore, the participants state they would not particularly recommend the app nor continue to use it.

In conclusion, the beta version of the app constitutes but a first step to a more developed and fleshed out application. The positive aspects evaluated by the users should be developed further and the criticisms expressed should prompt us to provide additional tasks and facilities in case further funding is allocated to future developments.

Table 2. Evaluation of the TELL-OP app and language awareness in Belgium

Survey statements	Mean	SD
I will continue to use the app	2,02	1,07
The app is meaningful and interactive	2,6	0,88
The app works the way I want it	2,6	0,99
I would recommend the app	2,62	1,13
I am more sensitive to how texts are constructed	2,64	1,06
The app works properly	2,75	1,27
I am more aware of how I can use online resources to improve a foreign language	2,79	1,1

I am satisfied with the app	2,81	0,92
The app should be used part of a language course	2,83	1,28
I can be a more autonomous language learner	2,83	1,1
On the app, it is easy to find the information you need	2,92	1
I am more aware of how vocabulary and grammar combine to form a consistent text	2,92	1,07
The user interface is attractive and user-friendly	2,92	1,12
The app is useful for learning	2,91	0,97
The app might help me improve my knowledge of the target language	3,04	1,07
The app should be used independently	3,21	1,1
The tutorial is useful	3,28	1,08
The app provides useful information	3,36	0,88
The purpose of the app is clear	3,4	0,97
I am more aware of how we use vocabulary when writing	3,72	0,99
I am more sensitive to the role of vocabulary frequency in language learning	3,85	0,77

## **GERMANY**

### **FACTS AND FIGURES**

The facts and figures section for the test of the German version of the TELL-OP application is missing, due to uncompleted survey answers given by German participants.

## **SPAIN**

### **FACTS AND FIGURES**

Our Spanish higher education sample is composed of 27 respondents whose age varies between less than 18 and 30 years old. These learners are first year English degree students at the University and all aim at a B2+ level of language. The ratio between the male (7.41%) and the female participants (92.59%) reflects the distribution of male and female language students in the country.

As it has been stated above, all the respondents are doing first year in English degree at the university; besides the university classes, 11 of them (40.74%) state that they are also doing English courses and 8 (29.69%) say that they are learning on their own, while 8 (29.69%) claim doing both, in what is considered informal learning. Their mother tongue is, for the vast majority, Spanish (88.89%).

As far as learning languages with technologies is concerned, nearly half the respondents (48.15%) already use language learning apps such as Duolingo, Babbel, Tandem or online dictionaries like Wordreference and Linguee. Nearly all of the subjects that claim to use apps use them at home. From Table 3, it can be observed that the frequency of use of these apps is quite varied; still, half of the language learning apps users state they do not use these mobile tools on a regular basis.

Table 3. Frequency of language learning apps use in Spain

1 = Never	2	3	4	5 = all the time
0	6	6	1	0

## STUDY CONDITIONS

A group of 55 university students were provided with a presentation of the tool and its functionalities and were asked to use the app, more specifically to complete at least one written task and explore the tool. They had then to fill in a 5-minute online survey. There were some limitations to this study since the iOS version of the app was not available and since some options were not fully functional yet (viz. ‘Types’ and ‘families’ in ‘related ratios and indices’). Also, a more longitudinal approach would have allowed for more results in terms of impact on language learning and on attitudes towards the use of the tool.

## USE OF LEARNER LANGUAGE INPUT AND ITS IMPACT ON MOBILE LANGUAGE LEARNING

92.59% of the participants downloaded and used the app on their smartphone whereas 3.70% tried it on their tablet and 3.70% on both. After having tested the TELL-OP application, the learners were asked to give their opinion on various aspects of the app thanks to a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

From the results in Table 4, it appears that the feedback given on the learner language input has had a quite significant influence on their perception of the learning process. Indeed, the participants first believe that the app provides useful information. More specifically, it raises their awareness on how to use vocabulary when writing a text and on the role of vocabulary frequency in language learning. To a lesser extent, the app also raises their awareness on how vocabulary and grammar combine to form a consistent text. Finally, they feel that the TELL-OP app might help them improve their knowledge of the target language.

Besides, the pedagogical approach chosen by the TELL-OP team is validated by the participants, who consider that the tutorial is useful and that the purpose of the app looks clear to them. It can also be said that, according to the respondents, the app could be included as

a complement to a language course. This confirms our thoughts on the growing importance of mobile language learning.

The participants acknowledge the usefulness of the app, its functionalities and the pedagogy underlying the creation of the app. The results indicate that the app is perceived as useful and user-friendly for learning. Technically speaking, the tool works the way they want it. Finding the information is considered an easy process and using the app raises awareness on how to use online resources to improve a foreign language. Moreover, the learners feel they can become more autonomous in their learning thanks to the tool. Therefore, the participants feel they would recommend the app and would continue to use it.

In conclusion, the beta version of the app constitutes but a first step to a more developed and fleshed out application. There was a general positive perception of the aspects evaluated by the users, although several improvements could be implemented in case further funding is allocated to future developments.

Table 4. Evaluation of the TELL-OP app and language awareness in Spain

<b>Survey statements</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
I will continue to use the app	3,4	0,9
The app is meaningful and interactive	3,4	1,1
The app works the way I want it	3,4	0,9
I would recommend the app	3,9	0,9
I am more sensitive to how texts are constructed	3,5	0,8
The app works properly	4	1,1
I am more aware of how I can use online resources to improve a foreign language	4	1
I am satisfied with the app	3,9	0,9
The app should be used part of a language course	3,7	0,9
I can be a more autonomous language learner	4	0,9
On the app, it is easy to find the information you need	3,7	0,9
I am more aware of how vocabulary and grammar combine to form a consistent text	4	1
The user interface is attractive and user-friendly	3,7	1,1
The app is useful for learning	3,7	1
The app might help me improve my knowledge of the target language	3,8	1,1
The app should be used independently	4	0,8
The tutorial is useful	4,2	0,9

The app provides useful information	3,9	0,9
The purpose of the app is clear	4,2	0,9
I am more aware of how we use vocabulary when writing	4,1	0,8
I am more sensitive to the role of vocabulary frequency in language learning	4,4	0,7

## UK

### **FACTS AND FIGURES**

50 completed questionnaires (35 female to 15 male respondents; 37 are aged between 18 and 30, 13 are aged 31 to 60. 38 have obtained their A-levels, 12 a bachelor degree. Around 2 are following a language, another 47 is learning a language on his own and the 1 remaining use the two learning methods.

All fifty students were convenience sampled in the hallway of our main building on campus. These learners are studying all courses at the university and have to be proficient in English to become enrolled here. The ratio between the male (15) and the female participants (35) generally reflects the students at the university. 38 students are undergraduate learners; 12 others have already obtained a bachelor degree. None of the participants were using learning technologies for language learning.

### **STUDY CONDITIONS**

An email was sent to all the language facilitators at the university as well as our ESL MA lead and no response was received at all. The project lead had the app on her phone and sat in the hallway of our newest building, Commons, on four separate days and invited students to come and try out the application as they walked by. This worked surprisingly well but many of the students were not studying languages in a course as there was no way to sample them. The learners played with the app while the project lead asked them questions from the survey. The survey was then filled out online by the project lead after a quantity (usually 10 or so) had been gathered. The email campaign and in class search had failed and this was the only way to complete the project. This means that there are serious limitations of the UK portion, mainly in that this was a convenience sample and the learners did not have more than 10 minutes experience on the app.

### **USE OF LEARNER LANGUAGE INPUT AND ITS IMPACT ON MOBILE LANGUAGE LEARNING**

100% of the participants tried the app on the phone of the project lead. After having tested the TELL-OP application, the learners were asked to give their opinion on various aspects of the app thanks to a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Table 5. Evaluation of the TELL-OP app and language awareness in the UK

<b>Survey statements</b>	<b>Mean</b>
I will continue to use the app	2.78
The app is meaningful and interactive	3.06
The app works the way I want it	3.1



I would recommend the app	3.14
I am more sensitive to how texts are constructed	3.3
The app works properly	3.28
I am more aware of how I can use online resources to improve a foreign language	3.34
I am satisfied with the app	3.3
The app should be used part of a language course	3.12
I can be a more autonomous language learner	3.26
On the app, it is easy to find the information you need	3.36
I am more aware of how vocabulary and grammar combine to form a consistent text	3.34
The user interface is attractive and user-friendly	3.32
The app is useful for learning	3.34
The app might help me improve my knowledge of the target language	3.12
The app should be used independently	3.26
The tutorial is useful	3.28
The app provides useful information	3.34
The purpose of the app is clear	3.24
I am more aware of how we use vocabulary when writing	3.32
I am more sensitive to the role of vocabulary frequency in language learning	3.34

## 2. FOCUS GROUP REPORTS

### **BELGIUM**

The following analysis is based on written feedback from 55 second-year university students majoring in English. They have been asked to perform one task on the TELLOP app and to comment on it in a one-page essay. We have summarized their input and divided it into three categories based upon the fact that it relates to either the task itself, the results the users were presented with or the technological aspects of the app. Contradictory feedback has been highlighted by putting the text in **bold**.

#### 1. TASK

Pros	Cons
Varied and numerous topics	No “blank theme” option
<b>Aimed at learners from all levels</b>	<b>CEFR levels aren’t clarified anywhere</b>
One of the rare apps that focuses on an entire essay (instead of words or expressions)	Only one type of exercise
<b>Several languages</b>	<b>No Dutch</b>

#### ✓ SUGGESTIONS

- Add a topic-free option for pupils to enter any text they want and get the results/Allow users to suggest their own topics
- Add more exercises: gap-fills, quizzes, collocation tests, etc.
- Address more skills

#### 2. RESULTS

Pros	Cons
Access to dictionary, collocations and synonyms	Easy to access the results but users don’t know how to use them (percentage of verbs, adverbs, etc.)
Classification of words into CEFR levels	The only feedback is on a “word” level, compounds, phrasal verbs, syntax, grammar, register, style, etc. aren’t taken into account
<b>Could help autonomous learners within the framework of a class or not</b>	<b>Not considered as a tool to be used autonomously</b>
Indication of word repetition	“academic” design
Raises awareness regarding language level, repetitions, parts of speech	Some results are impossible to understand without extensive explanations
Personalized results	Won’t help beginners improve their skills, more geared towards more proficient users
innovative	

#### ✓ SUGGESTIONS

- Present the results in the form of a graph/Showing the general level of the assignment

- Add a feature that would compare essays and show the user's evolution/mark or show some form of appreciation of the task
- Add a highlighting feature (for a word that comes up too many times in the text for instance)

### 3. TECHNOLOGY

Pros	Cons
<b>Simple and user-friendly layout</b>	<b>Layout is unattractive and complicated</b>
Tutorial	Some words seemed to be listed in the wrong category
In tune with modern technologies	word limitation (220 exactly)
Free	The app only detected words, not expressions or phrases
<b>Mobile &gt; accessible anywhere</b>	<b>A computer-based app or website would be much more user-friendly and suitable for a writing task.</b>
Allows for autonomous learning > motivating	Android only
	Not prompted to configure settings from beginning
	Many items are classified as "unknown" in the CEFR taxonomy
	All levels are listed under one another which makes the app hard to navigate
	Needs constant internet access and often disconnects the user
	Difficulties signing in
	The phone dictionary auto-corrects English words into the learner's set language
	Spellcheck and grammar check missing

#### ✓ SUGGESTIONS

- Add the following features to help the user during the writing process:
  - o dictionary search
  - o translation
  - o synonym-recommendation
  - o spellcheck
  - o grammar check
- Improve the design: colors, sounds, avatars ...
- Add a progression bar
- Add a "lost your password?" button
- Add a help icon, tutorial, or video to explain how to interpret the results
- Make the app point out mistakes but not give the answers until the text is submitted to force the users to look for them themselves / Make the app point out mistakes and suggest alternatives
- Add a "save work in progress" button (or auto-save?)

## GERMANY

The following analysis is based on feedback from 2 first-year university students currently taking a German class (A2 level). They have been asked to perform some task on the TELLOP app and to comment on it following a set of questions prepared by the home team. We have summarized their input and divided it into three categories based upon the fact that it relates to either the task itself, the results the users were presented with or the technological aspects of the app.

### 1.TASK

Pros	Cons
Interesting essay questions that everyone can relate to and everyone will find a topic that he/she wants to write about	Only one feature available for the analysis of German essays
You can assess your own proficiency level	Mistakes could be reinforced if they are not pointed out correctly in the app
Gets you into a routine of writing at a very early point in your language learning experience	Too difficult for learners in an early stage (A2)
Systematically practice in the areas that you do not excel at.	Language learning always requires the interaction with other people (teachers, students, native speakers).

#### ✓ SUGGESTIONS

- Error analysis
- More features for German
- More versatile tasks (e.g. fill-in-the-gap exercises)

### 2.RESULTS

Pros	Cons
The app provided them with information they would not have received otherwise, except by a teacher in a classroom.	Some of the terminology could be too difficult to understand for people not familiar with language and linguistics.
The information provided is clear and useful, and easy to navigate.	Limited feedback: Only word classes are shown for the German version, both students did not see the relevance of that.
They think the feedback provided is useful for them to improve their language skills.	The results were very often not correct (e.g. articles were classified as pronouns)
The ability to save the texts is quite useful	

#### ✓ SUGGESTIONS

- Further variety of analysis features

### 3. TECHNOLOGY

Pros	Cons
They are generally satisfied with the idea of the app and its potential app	Writing long texts in the smartphone screen is tedious and difficult.
	That the app always logs you out and does not give you the option to stay logged in or a “remember me” button.
	iOS version difficult to install
	The interface of the app is not very appealing to one of the students
	Sometimes headlines of the app were only partially visible on the Windows version and this does not look very professional.
	Umlauts were ignored in the German version.

#### ✓ SUGGESTIONS

- Use the tablet or PC for the app

### **SPAIN**

The following analysis is based on spoken feedback from 5 first-year university students majoring in English. They have been asked to perform some task on the TELLOP app and to comment on it following a set of questions prepared by the home team. We have summarized their input and divided it into three categories based upon the fact that it relates to either the task itself, the results the users were presented with or the technological aspects of the app.

#### 1. TASK

Pros	Cons
Similar to exercises made in class, but better because it shows feedback from their input.	App is not prepared for starting to learn a language, but rather to improve one’s level
They feel they can improve their language skills if they receive feedback AFTER the task.	They think further detailed feedback is needed to fully understand why they made the mistakes
Good for vocabulary learning and writing structured texts.	
Autonomous learning is possible if the learner has some basic grammar notion.	

#### ✓ SUGGESTIONS

- Further options for spelling correction

## 2.RESULTS

Pros	Cons
They feel the app provided with information they would not have received otherwise.	Some of the terminology could be too difficult to understand for people not familiar with language and linguistics.
They think the information provided is clear and useful, and easy to navigate.	
They think the feedback provided is useful for them to improve their language skills.	
The ability to save the texts is quite useful	

### ✓ SUGGESTIONS

- Further variety of exercises (rewritings)
- More variety of themes for the writing assignments
- Vocabulary-centered exercises
- A few guidelines/ examples on sentence and paragraph construction.

## 3.TECHNOLOGY

Pros	Cons
They are generally very satisfied with the app	The tasks are repetitive in the end
Knowing your estimated CEFR level is a positive point.	Writing long texts in the smartphone screen is tedious and difficult.
	Smartphones force you to close the app if you want to open another tool.
	iOS version not available at the moment

### ✓ SUGGESTIONS

- PC version for the app

## UK

The following analysis is based on a group of three undergraduate students who agreed to participate in a focus group after playing with the TELLOP app in an impromptu session between classes. Two were native English speakers and one was from China. The information has been summarized into three tables; Task, Results, and Technology. There is an overall impressions section at the end.

### 1. TASK

Pros	Cons
Helps to practice first and apply language learning after	Writing on app was not easy
Good if you have some background in the language, new students may have a hard time	Maybe a phone is not the best way to use this app
Good to support learning in an informal way or for formal classes with lots of support	App kept crashing and lexical issues were hard to work around

## 2. RESULTS

Pros	Cons
Similar to class where apps have been linked to language learning	The results are not clear
The terminology is helpful due to link to prior experience with language apps	
Feedback is useful for students with more experience (third years)	
App could provide support by completing more tasks.	

## 3. TECHNOLOGY

Pros	Cons
Would be good to link to listening sections, games, and reading text	Smartphone was not great for this app, a computer or ipad would be better for typing sections

### ✓ OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

Seeing what is being developed for language learning

Getting to participate in the group

Least helpful was having to come up with a text to use and not being clear on the results