

MOBILE-BASED CHATTING FOR MEANING NEGOTIATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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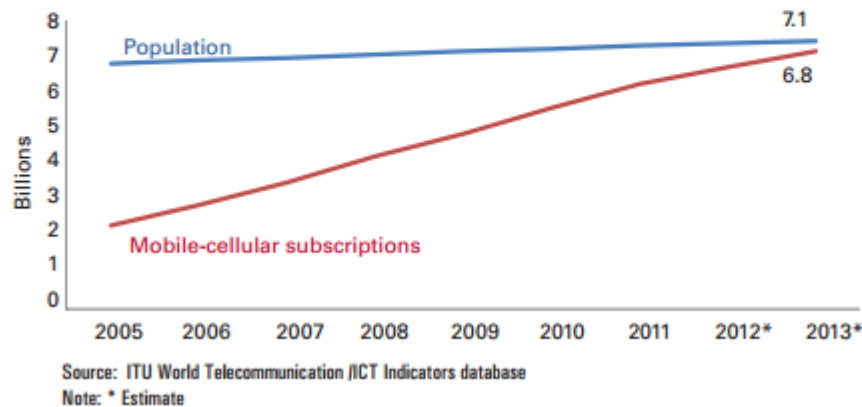


Introduction

- Use of mobile devices has risen considerably in latest years

6.8 BILLION MOBILE-CELLULAR SUBSCRIPTIONS

As the number of subscriptions approaches global population figures mobile-cellular growth slows



Source: International Telecommunication Union (ITU):

<http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/facts/ICTFactsFigures2013-e.pdf>



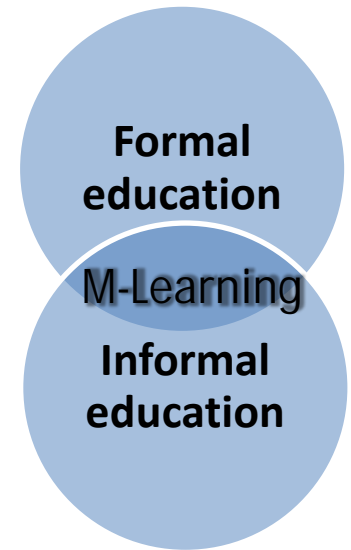
Introduction

- Implications of “Mobile learning” (Kukulska-Hulme & Traxler, 2005):

- Learner mobility



- Devices naturally mobile



Mobile-based alternatives in the foreign language classroom

- Increasing interest in MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning)
- Special issues in journals:
 - *ReCALL* (Shield & Kukulska-Hulme, 2008)
 - *Language Learning and Technology* (Sotillo & Stockwell, 2013)
- Hundreds of apps for language learning:
 - Dictionaries, games, courses
- General software applications used for lang. learning:

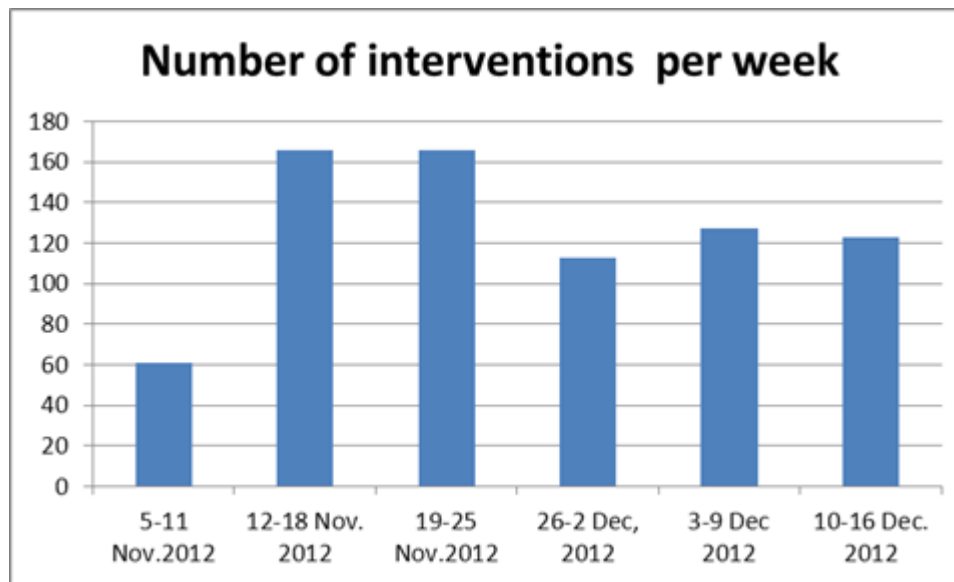


Research methodology

- Mixed approach (Qualitative & quantitative)
- Participants & procedures:
 - 85 volunteers, initial learners of German as a Foreign Language (DaF)
 - Bachelor students at Spanish National University for Distance Learning (UNED)
 - Reasons for choosing WhatsApp:
 - Free
 - Popular
 - Works on majority of smartphones
 - Groupings: 5 groups following these criteria:
 - Students' topics of interest expressed in pre-questionnaire
 - Homogeneity in terms of n. of participants
 - Heterogeneity in terms of language level

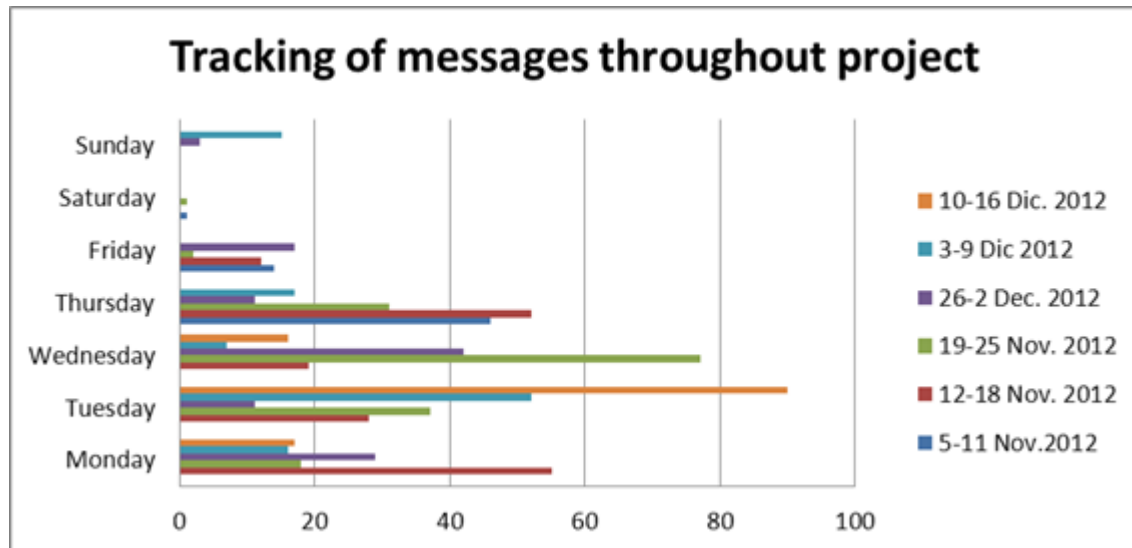
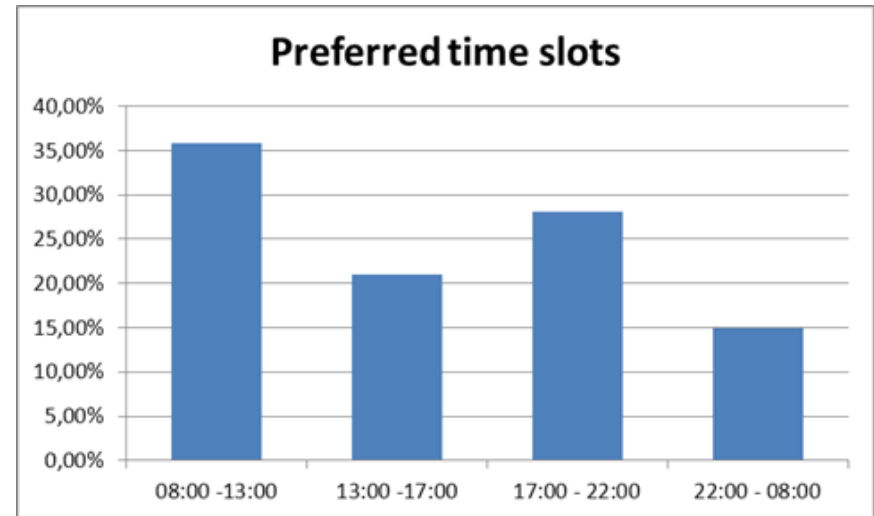
Data analysis – Usage patterns

- Focus on one of the 5 groups
- Initial cool response. Then trend reversed:



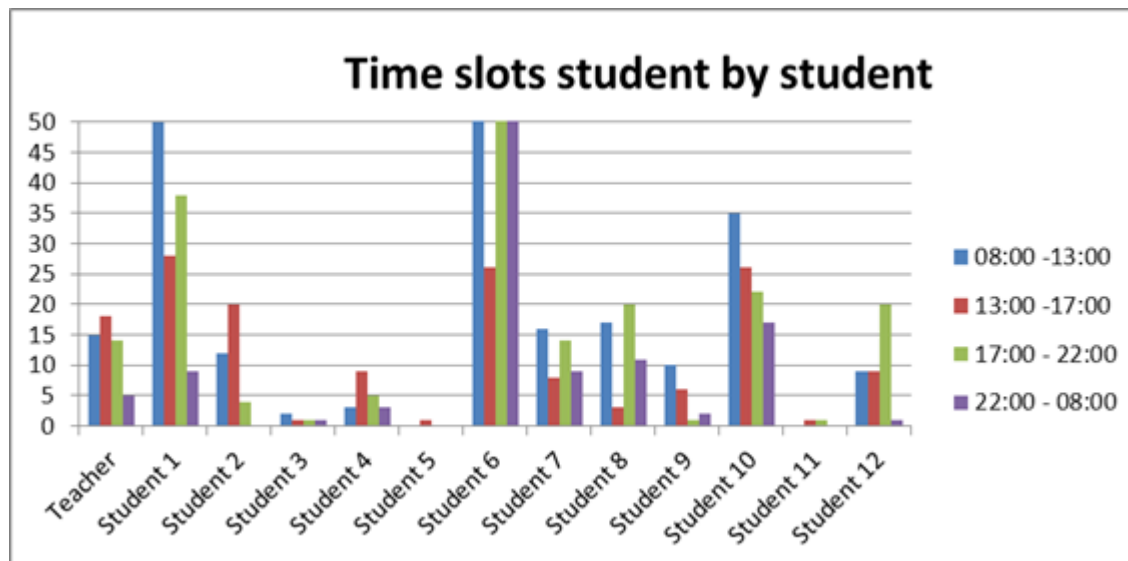
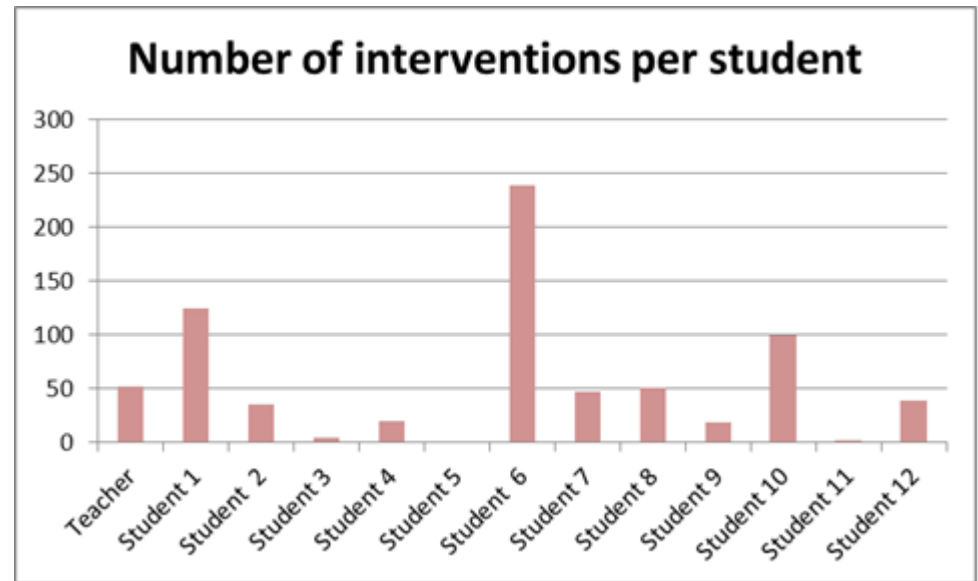
Data analysis – Usage patterns

- Task seen as class-related, to be done during weekdays and if possible within working hours



Data analysis – Usage patterns

- Detailed analysis student by student



Data analysis

– Discourse analysis & meaning negotiation

- Meaning negotiation “a process in which a listener requests message clarification and confirmation and a speaker follows these requests, often through repeating, elaboration or simplifying the original message” (Pica, 1994, p. 497)
- Main discourse functions analysed:
 - Social interaction (greetings & farewells)
 - On-task negotiating meaning
 - Off-task conversations
- Focus on how learners negotiate meanings providing implicit corrective feedback:
 - Clarification requests
 - Confirmation
 - Comprehension checks

Data analysis

– Discourse analysis & meaning negotiation

- Some examples:
 - Social interaction (confirmation by repetition)

Elena M.: **Ich bin in der Arbeit...**
*I'm *in work*

Octavio S.: Ich bin auch heute *ins Büro
*Today I'm also *in the office.*

Carolina F.: **Elena: ich bin bei der Arbeit**
Elena: I'm at work.

Elena M.: **Danke, Carolina. Ich bin bei der Arbeit.**
Thanks, Carolina. I'm at work.

Carolina F.: Ich korrigiere nur um zu helfen ☺ aber ich mache selber Fehler
I correct only to help you, but I also make mistakes.

- Off-task meaning negotiation (clarification request)

Susanne I.: Hallo Emilio! Toll wieviel du geschrieben hast, nur zwei kleine Fehler: ihren Fabriken und heißt Schwäbisch Hall??
Hey, Emilio! Good that you wrote so much, just two insignificant corrections: [...]

Carmen P.: **Hallo Suse! Ich verstehe nicht warum benutzt du die inversion hier "Toll wieviel du geschrieben hast"!**
Hey Suse! I cannot understand why you use here the inversion:[...]

Discussion and conclusions

- High participation / Motivation
- Concentration of messages on working days
- Students fully aware of educational nature of messaging activity
- WhatsApp for foreign language learning effective strategy:
 - Students improved meaning negotiation skills
 - Despite low language level students able to understand & be understood
 - Example-based error correction (\neq explicit, prescriptive error correction)
 - Students suggested to continue with project in future courses
 - Teacher as facilitator:
 - Introduction of topics for discussion
 - Presentation of native-like language models
 - Elicitation of student awareness
- Particularly adequate for beginning L. learners



References

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