part of language learning and mobile devices can play a role in enhancing vocabulary learning. Several studies have also shown the impact of mobile devices on vocabulary learning (e.g., Abbasi & Hashemi, 2013; Agca & Ozdemir, 2013; Amer 2010; Chen, 2013). Drops, as well, aims to instill motivation in beginners to learn common words in a language. Breaking down the experience into bite-sized chunks of five-minute learning sprints can make a complex learning process accessible and easy. Furthermore, Push notifications and motivational techniques keep learners coming back.

Damanhouri, the co-founder of Drops elaborates on the issue of time limit by arguing that "It is enough for casual learners who travel to a new country and want to understand and speak basic expressions. For more serious learners 5 minutes may be too slow and can seek the app's premium options" (Damanhouri, 2016, para. 4).

Some suggestions can be made for further improvement of this application. Since the co-founders of Drops stated that the application is sufficient for people who want to travel to a new country and understand the basic conversation, it would be a good idea to add some everyday expressions and chunks or even sentences to the lessons, because knowing only vocabulary is not practical and does not enable learners to speak and communicate with others. Even grammar instruction could be added to the app in order to help learners produce structurally proper sentences on their trips. Another recommendation is to add pronunciation test to the activities to make sure that learners have learned the word completely in terms of both meaning and pronunciation. Furthermore, the learners will benefit more if they are provided with some kind of feedback in their learning process

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be lost in the fast-paced world of Drops. There is no preliminary alphabet course. Third, sometimes the images provided for the word are so leading, meaning that the word 'rainy' for instance, is displayed on the screen, but the images that appear are a rainy cloud and a face of a person. So, in this way there is a mismatch among pictures and words in some occasions. Another downside to Drops is related to the syllable specification of the words. It would be a better idea if the syllables of the words were specified and words with one syllable precede the others, because the length of the word will affect the learning process.

Finally, although users can purchase unlimited time for 48$ per year, five-minute

One unique feature of drops is that it gives learners pictures paired with the word you are learning to help stimulate the brain and create language learning connections

blocks mean that they learn at a relatively slow pace. This would not be a problem for the ones who are not in a hurry to learn a language. For those who are very interested in a language and want to take their daily lessons farther, by paying for a fuller version they can boost what they are learning and it allows for multiple language studies, extended/ unlimited lesson times, and/or extra features that assist learning.

Conclusion

Mobile devices like smartphones, have become part of our daily lives, and self-regulated learning can be developed by transforming these devices usage for learning the language. Designed with a pleasing display, a fast pace and a fine balance between gaming and learning, Drops is a great app for learning another language. The thing that makes Drops distinguishable from other language learning apps is that it is extremely engaging and it keeps you constantly focused on the lesson

Vocabulary learning is an important

Evaluation

Drops is a user-friendly application which in five minutes teaches learners new words and tests them by using various activities that keep learning interesting. A wide range of topics is also provided for the users of this application. It is also notable that Drops works both online and offline, and therefore removes the necessity for an Internet connection. One unique feature of drops is that it gives learners pictures paired with the word you are learning to help stimulate the brain and create language learning connections. Besides, the colors used in the activities are vibrant and attractive, and the style of memorization is very effective. This would be a perfect option for visual learners who learn and remember better when the materials are colorful and visual such as flashcards, images, illustrations, posters and so forth (Kumar, 2017). No matter what word category you are in, the older words are repeated so that you do not forget them. Repetition has been considered as one of the best ways to learn a new language. The importance is verified by Ghazi Saidi and Ansaldo who argue that "Since 1631, the most successful methodologies in L2 teaching and learning have included repetition and imitation of words" (2017, p. 1). The way that learners have to match and spell words in so many ways keep the brain active and working to learn everything.

> **Drops is a user-friendly application which in five minutes teaches learners new words and tests them by using various activities that keep learning interesting**

With this application, learners do not need to type out words; they simply match words with objects or tap on letter combinations to spell out words, which saves more time for learning. Drops is designed in a way that learners navigate the interface using only rapid swipes and taps. Furthermore, there is almost no ads in Drops. Ads remove the fun out of the process, especially when they are notified with several pop-ups. There is only one ad displayed at the end of the session, and that is only if you click "x" on the window offering you more time.

Compared to other language applications like Rosetta stone and the amount of content learners are provided with, the paid version of Drops is rather inexpensive, with about $48 per year. This is of course true for the non-Iranian learner who can actually pay the fee. There are plenty of more expensive programs that charge you not only when buying the program, but also a monthly fee when using it. An example of such applications is Rosetta Stone. Besides, to have access to about 100 topics in various languages is incredibly beneficial.

In spite of all the positive features of this application, there are still some cautionary notes. First of all, Drops is a vocabulary app only. It does not focus on grammar. It places a strong emphasis on building vocabulary through nouns, and pays little attention to grammar, usage and conjugations. Furthermore, learners will not be tested in speaking and pronunciation. For that reason, learners who are looking to become completely fluent in a language should consider Drops as a supplement resource. Second, Drops is related to the logographic languages like Japanese, Chinese, or Korean. Users have to know the alphabet of their target language or else they will

In order to relieve some of the pressure of learning a new language, Drops offers two opportunities daily by cutting the learning time into two five-minute bursts. There are also multiple opportunities to get more session time. By maintaining a daily streak, learners can earn time bonuses from forty to three hundred seconds and get extra time added to their daily lesson.
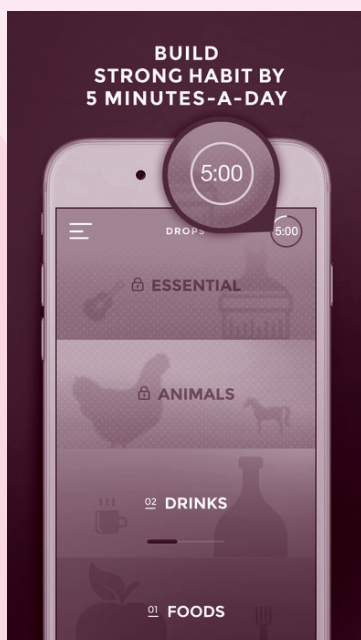

Figure 9. Five minutes a day

Technology has the potential to not only provide access to resources for learning in a superficial sense, but also to offer increased affordances for autonomous learning

An interesting feature of Drops is that the learners' idea is asked at the end of the session and they can write a report and share their thoughts about the whole

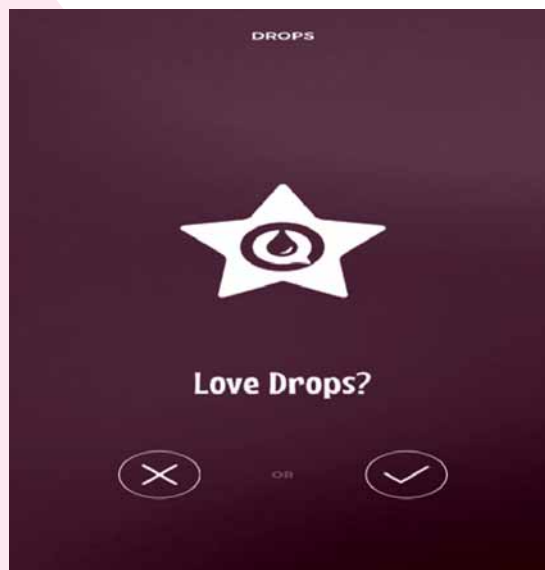procedure, whether they like the app and its features or not.

Figure 10. Asking learner's idea

At the end of the lesson, learners can view their stats, including accuracy percentage and streak bonuses, as well as review the words used in that session.

Figure 11. Tracking the progress

The next exercise includes unscrambling letters to practice spelling. Learners have to pull down letters in the right order like in Figure 5. Another spelling exercise requires learners to swipe along or tap on the letters in the right order as in Figure 6.

An example is provided in Figure 7.

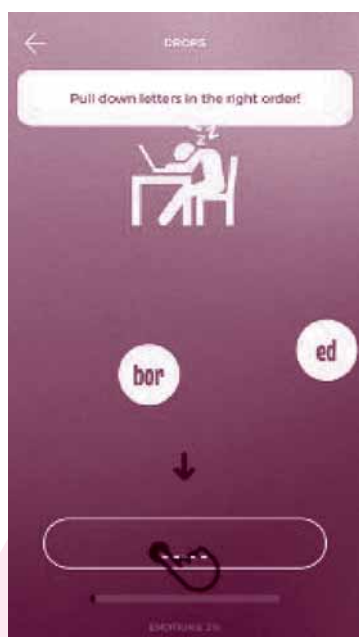Figure 7. Correct or incorrect word association

Figure 5. Spelling activity

Figure 6. Spelling activity

Tapping on the right choice to indicate whether the word that comes with the picture is correct or incorrect is another type of exercise included in the lessons.

One more activity involves tapping on the right bubbles to pair the correct match. Six bubbles appear on the screen. Three of them contains a picture and the other three have the words. A sample is provided in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Pairing correct matches

numbers, transportation, relations, body, colors, emotions, pronouns, navigation, mathematics, baby, car, marriage, agriculture, ecology, magic and fantasy, pets, prison, bicycle and jobs, to name a few.

The app is gamified, meaning that it is designed in a game form using quick swipes to keep the users in tune with the rhythm. After the learner has chosen the topic, the first word will appear with its picture along with a voice narration pronouncing the word. Drops pronounces each word and phrase throughout the lesson. If the language chosen is not English, the English translation of the word is also provided. The first task that appears is shown in Figure 2. Learners can drag the word down to learn a new word, or drag up if they would rather skip it.

is presented. The lessons demand focus and the fast pace of the game keeps the user challenged in reacting quickly when recalling the words. The methods used to design the app are based on memory techniques (Damanhouri, 2016). Therefore, the exercises seem more like quick games rather than classroom worksheets. Various exercises such as visual association, spaced repetition, adaptive learning and quick pace learning are provided which will be discussed in detail further in the paper.

Visual association is matching pictures to their translations, sometimes two pictures are shown and sometimes four. The examples are provided in Figures 3 and 4.
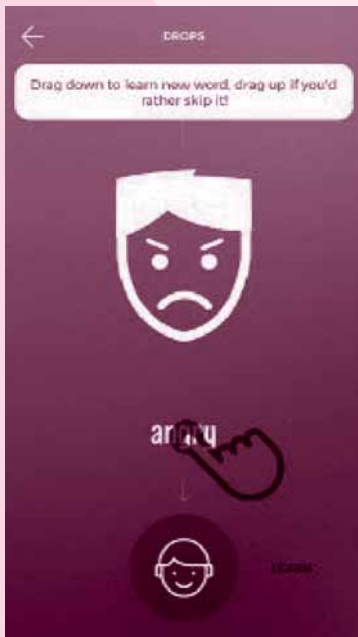

Figure 2. First word appearance

When 5 minutes is finished, learners have to wait 10 hours until the next session begins. Each lesson takes five minutes a day. During that time, a number of new words will be introduced and a set of exercises
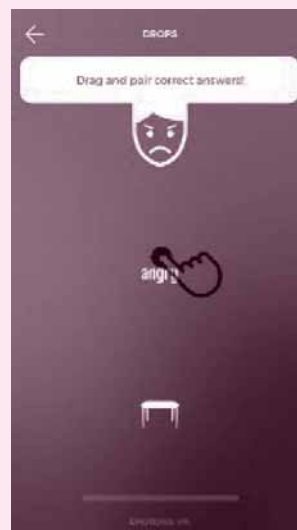

Figure 3. Visual association

Figure 4. Visual association

learners to have access to resources in out-of-school contexts. As a result, there is now a much richer appreciation of the role of learning outside the classroom, mainly in terms of the time learners spend learning, practicing and using the language in non-formal learning environments.

In order to get the most out of the time spent on learning, developing autonomous learners is of paramount importance. Developing learner autonomy is a process engaging students in assuming responsibility for their own learning. It is not surprising, given the emphasis on student-centered pedagogy and on accommodating student diversity. The dramatic increase in online resources, network services, and educational software together provide new opportunities for self-directed autonomous learning.

Extensive usage of mobile devices has spawned numerous mobile applications in English language learning, yet lack of information on many of the apps is evident. The necessity for research on the available apps, therefore, is of the essence to the present theories related to MALL. The present study, thus, narrows the focus down on one such app, Drops, and explores its potentialities for second language learning.

Description

To use Drops, users must download it from Google Play/ iTunes and install it on their Android/iOS devices. Next, learners are given a list from which they can choose their target language. The list provides learners with 28 options: Arabic, Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin), Danish, Dutch, English (American and British), Esperanto, French, German, Hebrew,

Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Portuguese (Brazilian and European), Russian, Spanish (Castilian and Latin American), Swedish, Tagalog, Turkish and Vietnamese. The app has a dictionary which includes more than 1700 words that are relevant for 60 percent of everyday conversation (Jones, 2017). Compared to similar apps on the market, Drops provides a wide range of languages.

After choosing the target language, the learners are provided with two options to choose their language proficiency: Beginner and Intermediate. In this study we are taking the English course, and for the sake of argument we will put the curser on Intermediate (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Language levels

Next, a list of topics is presented to the learners from which they can choose. The first topic is related to food and is available; other topics are locked until the learner makes progress and unlocks them. The topics include food, drinks, essentials,

Application details

- é Application name: Drops
- é Developer: PLANB LABS OU
- é Product type: Smartphone application software
- é Category: Education
- é Language(s): multilingual
- é Level: Beginner/ Intermediate
- é Media Format: APK/IPA
- é Age rating: 4+
- é Operating system: IOS/ Android
- é Hardware requirements: Smartphone
- é Size: 95.4 MB
- é Price: Free

Introduction

We live in a world in which technology permeates every aspect of our lives. The growing use of technology has been also changing second language (L2) teaching and learning. Technology makes learning engaging, flexible, and heuristic. Additionally, it boosts productivity and efficiency (Halverson & Smith, 2009). As Reinders and White (2011) have aptly pointed out, "technology has the potential to not only provide access to resources for learning in a superficial sense, but also to offer increased affordances for autonomous learning," (p. 1). They maintain that technological advancements have increased "opportunities for interaction, situated learning, and support for learning outside formal contexts," (p. 1). Moreover, technology can provide a source of real language, inspire creativity and bring new opportunities to people, and motivate learners to produce more language (Stanley, 2013).

Mobile and hand-held devices such as smart phones, tablets, laptops and various audio and video players stand out among the technological innovations, thanks to their practicality and popularity (Nushi & Eqbali, 2018). In fact, mobile assisted language learning (MALL), a subset of e-learning, is a rapidly growing field with promising implications for language learning (Pachler, Bachmair & Cook, 2010). Mobile phones with user friendly interfaces, ubiquitous access and improved data storage and retrieval capacities offer a good platform for learning (Gabarre, Gabbarre, Din, Shah, & Karim, 2014; Godwin-Jones, 2011; Miangah & Nezarat 2012). Jalalifarahani and Ghovehnodoushan (2011) also write that "among the most noted affordances for MALL is ubiquitous access to learning anytime at any place that the user has reception" (p. 527). The idea of learning an L2 anytime and anywhere through the use of mobile devices can provide motivation owing to the fact that the learners shoulder the responsibility of their own learning process, which in turn gives them a feeling of authority over the process (Thornton & Houser, 2005). Furthermore, this flexibility makes it possible for adult learners to minimize their unproductive time, which may enhance their work-education balance.

> The idea of learning an L2 anytime and anywhere through the use of mobile devices can provide motivation owing to the fact that the learners shoulder the responsibility of their own learning process, which in turn gives them a feeling of authority over the process

More recently, and perhaps more liberatingly, mobile technologies also allow

Drops:
A Mobile Language Learning Application to Add to Your Screen

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چکیده

رشد گستردۀ دستگاه‌های قابل حمل و در دسترس بودن آن‌ها، مانند تلفن‌های همراه هوشمند و تبلت‌ها، نحوۀ یادگیری زبان دوم را تغییر داده است. امروزه، نرم‌افزارهای بسیاری وجود دارند که زبان‌آموزان می‌توانند آن‌ها را به‌راحتی بر روی دستگاه‌های الکترونیکی سیارشان نصب کنند و از آن‌ها در فرایند یادگیری زبان کمک جویند. این مقاله به بررسی یکی از این نرم‌افزارها به نام دراپس (Drops) می‌پردازد. دراپس زمان یادگیری در روز را به پنج دقیقه محدود می‌کند و زبان‌های زیادی را، از آلمانی و پرتغالی گرفته تا کره‌ای، آموزش می‌دهد. این نرم‌افزار به گسترش واژگان با ارائه تصویر برای هر کلمه تأکید زیادی دارد. با این حال Drops نواقصی نیز دارد. در این مقاله محاسن و معایب این نرم‌افزار مورد بررسی قرار می‌گیرد.

کلیدواژه‌ها: فناوری، برنامه‌های کاربردی تلفن‌همراه، زبان دوم، دراپس (Drops)

Abstract

The widespread growth and availability of hand-held devices such as smartphones and tablets have changed the way we learn a second language. There are now many applications that language learners can easily install on their portable electronic devices to help them with their language learning. The present study focuses on one such application named Drops. Limiting the learning time to five minutes per day, Drops teaches many languages, spanning from German and Portuguese to Korean. The app places a heavy emphasis on building vocabulary through providing pictorial data for each word. Drops, however, has a few shortcomings and, in this review, the merits and demerits of the app will be discussed.

Key Words: Technology, mobile applications, second language, Drops

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Media Review Template

Title plus author's full name and affiliation

Abstract (not more than 200)

The abstract is a crucial element of any academic article; it not only summarizes your paper but also helps it reach the right audience. Your abstract should be written in both English and Persian; it should appear in block format, single spaced and justified. The abstract should include: 1) a brief (one or two sentence) introduction; 2) the media selected for the review and the significance/ purpose of the review/ selection; 3) major findings and; 4) recommendations.

Media/Application details

The authors should list the product details including:
Publisher:
Product type:
Language(s):

Level:
Media format:
Operating systems:
Hardware requirements:
Supplementary software:
Price:

Introduction (approximately 450 words)

The introduction should give a broad view of the field of educational technology with a focus on the role of technology in second/ foreign language education. It then narrows the focus on the media selected for the review and how and why the review can contribute to second/ foreign language learning and teaching.

Description (approximately 550 words)

The authors need to describe the media tool as accurately as possible, preferably using photos and graphics that make the description engaging and interesting to read. The description should tell the readers about where they can find/download the media, what its different sections are and what the features and purposes/functions of each section are, etc.

Evaluation (approximately 350 words)

In this part the overall value of the media review and its contribution to second/ foreign language is given, followed by its strengths and/or possible weaknesses. The authors can offer their own and research-supported suggestions on how those shortcomings can be removed or taken care of.

Conclusion (Approximately 250 words)

The review ends with a conclusion that summarizes the main points and make specific recommendations on the use of the media for second/ foreign language learning and teaching.

References

References should be up to date and written in APA style. The number of references should not exceed 10.