



**HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS**

**Hugvísindasvið**

# **Mobile Apps for Learning English**

*A Review of 7 Complete English Course Apps: Characteristics,  
Similarities and Differences*

**Ritgerð til B.A.-prófs**

**Iðunn Andersen**

**Apríl 2013**

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**Enska**

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## Ágrip

Viðfangsefni þessarar ritgerðar eru smáforrit fyrir snjallsíma sem kenna enskunámskeið. Markmiðið var að bera saman mismunandi námskeið eftir fyrirfram ákveðnum viðmiðum til að greina einkenni þeirra, á hvaða sviðum námskeiðunum er ábótavant og á hvaða sviðum þau eru sterk. Sjö smáforrit sem fundin voru á *Google Play* smáforritasölu síðunni urðu fyrir valinu. Með þessari rannsókn kom í ljós að það virðist vera að lítil áhersla sé lögð á kenningar sem lúta að tileinkun annarsmáls við þróun kennsluefnisins og að þrátt fyrir mismunandi nálganir og aðferðafræði þá var undirliggjandi tækni sem námskeiðin byggðu á ávalt sú sama. Vegna vanhæfni tölvutækninnar til að skilja tungumál byggðu öll smáforritin á fyrirfram forrituðum möguleikum á ílagi (e. input) og frálagi (e. output). Þessir annmarkar gerðu það að verkum að samskiptaæfingar sem ekki voru fyrirfram forritaðar voru af skörum skammti. Sum smáforritanna tengjast netsíðum sem bjóða upp á „social networking“ en sá möguleiki er ekki enn til staðar innan forritanna sjálfra. Aðeins eitt smáforritanna gat gefið upplýsta svörun (e. feedback). Vegna annmarka tölvutækninnar bar nálgun smáforritanna á enskukennslu mörg einkenni atferliskenningarinnar.

Að lokum bendi ég á það að leit að góðum smáforritum sem kenna ensku á *Google Play* er tímafrek og að erfitt geti reynst að skilja hafrana frá sauðunum. Ég legg áherslu á að hröð þróun snjallsíma og mikið framboð smáforrita kallar á frekari skoðun á þeim forritum sem í boði eru til að finna þau sem skara framúr og auðvelda þannig öðrum leitendum s.s. nemendum og kennurum að finna forrit sem þeim hentar.

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# 1 Introduction

We live in a world that moves fast and the technological advances happen at such speed we have difficulty following. In only a few years the mobile market has changed drastically with the advent of smartphones and the number of people that own these kinds of devices is growing at a fast rate especially among young people. According to a Pew study in 2012, smartphone ownership among American adults has increased from 35% in May 2011 to 45% in September 2012, and in the age group of 18-29 smartphone ownership is 66% (Rainie).

With the smartphones a new market of mini-software called apps (short for applications) has appeared and is growing at an incredible speed. Apps are easily available online. The app stores *iTunes app store* and the *Android Market* (now *Google Play*) opened in 2008 and now only a few years later *Google Play* offers over 675.000 apps and *iTunes app store* has over 700.000 apps available to consumers (De Vere). Amongst this incredible number of apps there is a great variety of apps intended for students of foreign languages (or L2). The areas of language the apps are designed to teach can range from teaching only vocabulary or pronunciation up to being well constructed language courses. These apps are numerous and seem to have in common that they are not based on any known theory of second language learning or pedagogy and confine themselves to only one or two areas of language.

In my BA-thesis in Spanish Language Teaching I wrote about second language learning theories with reference to Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) and what kind of language learning applications were available for the learning of Spanish in the *iTunes app store* and *Google Play* (both online). In this essay I examine L2 learning applications in much more detail and this time set the focus on the applications available for the student of English.

Following this introduction, is a chapter about CALL history, pedagogy, teacher training and the current state of the art CALL technology. In chapter 3 I describe how the study was conducted. I limited the search to the Android market or more specific to apps available in the *Google Play store*. I further limited the search to applications that appeared to offer complete language courses. From 12 potential language course applications I found, I selected seven for further investigation. I reviewed each of the seven apps according to a list of criteria that can be divided into three main categories: app's background and pedagogy, skills and types of exercises the app uses to teach those skills, and finally the platform used and popularity. From there I discuss and compare the apps built on the information I gathered

with my investigation in order to find out the apps' characteristics, their differences and similarities and on which areas they are strong and where they are lacking. The aim was to shine a light on how the developers use the technology to teach English and what ways they use to break out of the limitations technology places on language software as well as to see what approaches to language teaching they take in terms of pedagogy and study material. I also look at various factors that influence user's choice of apps as well as factors that influence the apps' popularity. Lastly I identify the apps I consider offer the best language learning courses in terms of "best practice."

I conclude that the courses for language learning as applications for downloading all try to make language learning easy, easily accessible and fun. They offer various approaches and methodologies to language learning with study material that emphasize different aspects of language learning either linguistic or for communicative purposes. The technological limitations none the less have the effect that the underlying technological structure is always the same although the different developers incorporate some new technology such as voice recognition and intelligent feedback, and methods (social networking) to overcome the computer's incapability to "understand" unexpected input and to reply with an output that has not been pre-programmed. Some of the developers try to incorporate constructivist aspects to the courses with emphasis on communication and cooperation but because of technological limitations the apps are predominantly behaviouristic.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>In behaviouristic Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) the computer is used as a tool for providing the learner with an instructional material and is characterized by repetitive language drills often referred to as "drill and practice" (Warschauer).



## **2 Learning Languages through Computers**

### **2.1 Brief History of CALL**

The beginning of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) dates back to the 1960s. In the early years language learning on computers was mainly confined to language laboratories at universities (Davies et al.) and the learning took place on big mainframe computers. PLATO (Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operations) was developed at the University of Illinois and was the most refined learning software of early CALL (Chapelle and Jamieson cited in Bangs and Cantos 223). With the advent of the microcomputer in the late 70s and the microcomputer boom of the 80s CALL became more accessible to the general public (Davies “Computer assisted language learning”), as well as being embraced by many schools in the UK, the rest of Europe, the US and Canada (Davies et al.). The period from the 70s to the 80s has been referred to by Davies as Dumb CALL (Davies et al.) because the computers did not offer sound or video. Because of these technical restraints most of the software of that time could be called behaviouristic and offered drill-and-practice exercises (Davies et al.).

In the 1990s, multimedia software entered the scene. Computers had soundcards and the screen resolution got better. At first the video quality was very poor but that changed with the advent of more powerful computers. New software that made use of this new technology became available on CD-ROM (Davies et al.), such as LINC for advanced learners (Davies “Introduction to multimedia CALL”). However, substantial number of CALL software was still focused on drill-and-practice type of exercises (Davies et al.).

Also in the 90s the World Wide Web became accessible to the general public. At first the web was slow and did mostly offer one way communication from the web to the user and the websites mainly contained plain text and still images. During this time online CALL returned to behaviourist exercises of drill-and-practice and-point and-click for a while or until the web technology caught up with what was available on CD-ROM and DVD (Davies et al.).

Around the turn of the millennium the sales in tutorial CD-ROM fell which can partly be explained by the easy access to the Internet and the possibility of finding tutorial material online that could also possibly be free (Bangs and Cantos).

In 2000 the broadband became more widely available which improved the Internet speed and allowed for a better delivery of audio and video material. That same year blogs and podcasts appeared (Davies “Computer assisted language learning”). Major changes came with the Web 2.0 (Davies et al.) which is a term used for the “collection of technologies aimed at

enhancing creativity and collaboration, particularly through social networking” (Beatty). Then the web traffic ceased to be one way and the normal user was able to share, interact and socialize online through different web-based communities such as wikis, blogs, social networks and virtual worlds. Today many of the Web 2.0 applications work like the software one installs on computers and the user can access his/her work wherever there is an Internet connection. The wide variety of Web 2.0 tools available has raised questions on how they can be effectively used for foreign language learning and teaching (Walker, Davies and Hewer).

CALL is a broad and an ever changing discipline. Beatty defines CALL as “any process in which a learner uses a computer and, as a result, improves his or her language” (7). The reason for this broad definition, as he further explains, is that it covers the wide range of current practice in the field.

There is a wide scope of ICT tools that can be put to use in L2 learning and one of the areas is Human Language Technologies (HTL). Davies (“Computer assisted language learning”) predicts that HLT will likely make an increased impact on CALL in the future. This area of CALL includes Natural Language Processing, Machine Translation, Corpus Linguistics and Speech Technology and is usually called Intelligent CALL (ICALL) (Gupta and Schulze). Other current major growth areas within CALL Davies (“Computer assisted language learning”) mentions are: Discussion lists, blogs, wikis and social networking; Computer Mediated Communication (CMC), Virtual worlds, particularly Second Life; Podcasting; and Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL).

Mobile assisted language learning (MALL) is a sub-discipline of CALL which makes use of mobile devices such as smartphones and tablet computers for language learning (Walker and Davies). These devices can be described as mini-computers that allow the learner to install applications (mini-software) of their choice from the various online app stores. In these stores there is a great variety of language learning apps that can be used offline or need an Internet connection. In this essay, we will be looking at some of the English learning software (apps) available for mobile learning in more detail.

## **2.2 Pedagogy and CALL**

Various theorists have made an effort to “classify CALL programs, phases of CALL and approaches to CALL” (Davies et al.). Warschauer identified three phases of CALL from the pedagogical perspective: Behaviourist (1960-1970s), Communicative (1970-1980s) and Constructivist/Integrative (1990s-) which take into account both technological advances and

pedagogical approaches in CALL at each phase (Fitzpatrick and Davies). Warschauer later changed the names and dates of the phases to: Structural CALL (1970-80s), Communicative CALL (1980-1990s) and Integrative CALL (21<sup>st</sup> century) (Bax). A new phase Warschauer explains does not mean the rejection of the software or methods of previous phase but becomes a part of the new phase.

The first phase, behaviourist/structural was based on behaviourist theory and characterized by repetitive drills regularly referred to as drill-and-practice (Warschauer). Bangs and Cantos explain that during the first years of computer assisted language learning CALL's theoretical base built heavily on behaviourist theories and the first decades of CALL were characterized by a strong belief in the technology which was thought to be the answer to the difficulties of foreign language learning. "[T]he latest language teaching technology became synonymous with the latest language teaching pedagogy" (222) and emphasis was put on the newest technology and little attention paid to research in foreign language pedagogy for CALL (Bangs and Cantos).

Beatty summarizes behaviourism as follows:

Behaviourism takes the view that the learner comes to the learning progress with little or no background knowledge. Strict objectives of what is to be learned are broken into instructional steps and rules. Learning activities are sequenced from simple to complex with frequent reviews and tests of key points. Failures or mistakes lead the learner to repetitions of key parts of the program or remedial activities. The control of the sequence or program is usually with the program, not the learner (98).

Beatty further explains that the behaviourist aspects in CALL material commonly consist of "stating the purpose of the program or task, offering reinforcement through text, images, audio, animations and/or video and providing a marks system for each task summarized at the end with grades or some other statement of progress" (93).

The teaching paradigm of this time has been called an "instructional mode" (Phillips cited in Bangs and Cantos 224) and by Underwood (cited in Bangs and Cantos 224) "wrong-try-again." The students answered the questions asked by the computer which was not only considered an aid but could stand alone and required little intervention on behalf of the teacher (Bangs and Cantos). Behaviourism was criticized as a pedagogical model for SLA for being an overly simple approach and the boring and de-motivating repetitive drilling practices are cited to have been the main reason for the failure of that learning system (Beatty).

Bang and Cantos note that by the mid 1980s “some people among the CALL community” (222) were beginning to recognize how little use the language learning software of that time made of foreign language pedagogy and by the late 80s researchers were stressing the importance of methodology over technology. Now the emphasis in second language learning in general was put on communicative competence which meant that the learner should not only know how the language system in itself works but also know how to use it appropriately in the many different social situations in which the learner might find himself/herself (Bangs and Cantos).

This description falls neatly to the second phase Warschauer identified: the Communicative phase (1980-1990s). This phase rejected the structural approach to language learning behaviourism preached and called for an authentic communication. John Underwood was among the chief promoters of the communicative approach (Warschauer). Underwood (cited in Bangs and Cantos 224-25) listed some basic principles for the methodology:

- Meaningful practice rather than mechanical practice.
- Receptive skills (listening and reading) before productive skills (speaking and writing).
- Use of target language (little use of native language).
- Implicit rather than explicit grammar.
- Modelling instead of correction.
- Low-anxiety atmosphere.

These ideas gave life to some software prototypes that put the pedagogy before the technology. This new approach then made use of the new multimedia technology of the 90s (Bangs and Cantos). But then, as Davies pointed out came a period of backward stepping to behaviourist CALL while the Internet technology was catching up with what the CD-ROM and DVD offered such as sound and video quality (Davies et al.). Later on the Internet, with its many possible study activities such as web-research, e-mail communication and chat, caused that many institutes almost suspended the use of learning software. This can partly be explained by the fact that learning software has often been perceived as to “lack pedagogical rigour to a greater or lesser extent” (Bangs and Cantos 226).

Warschauer remarks that the communicative CALL also became under scrutiny and critics felt that “the computer was still being used in a hoc and disconnected fashion” (n.pn.). The communicative language teaching theory and practice was being re-evaluated and

educators “were moving away from a cognitive view of communicative teaching to a more social or socio-cognitive view, which placed greater emphasis on language use in authentic social contexts which then led to the third phase which Warschauer called integrative CALL” (Fitzpatrick and Davies 27).

The third phase Warschauer identified is thus called integrative CALL. There are two major technological breakthroughs that, according to Warschauer, are steps towards integrative CALL: the multimedia computers and the Internet. The multimedia computers allowed for the use of various media such as sound, video, text, images and animation on the same machine simultaneously. Further multimedia software made it possible for the user to move around easily within the program following different links. The Internet on the other hand opened up the world of authentic communication through synchronous or asynchronous correspondence using tools such as e-mail or programs like MOOs (Warschauer).

Beatty does not make special reference to the communicative or constructivist/integrative phases Warschauer identifies but discusses the constructivist instructional model. According to him the rejection of the behaviourist model partly influenced the move toward the constructivist model of instruction. He summarizes constructivism as follows:

In a constructivist model, the learner is assumed to come to the classroom with a range of experiences and a wealth of (sometimes imperfect) knowledge. It is assumed that knowledge is an objective interpretation of ideas and that such interpretations are best developed through the learner discovering and struggling with ideas.

Constructivism is a problem-oriented learning approach in which the learner is expected to construct his or her own reality based on a personalized understanding of the learning materials, often through analysis and synthesis of ideas. The role of the teacher is as a facilitator of learning, rather than as an expert. Instead, expert advice is culled from a variety of authentic sources, including knowledgeable individuals. Mistakes are encouraged if they help with learning (105-6).

Beatty further notes that computers are the ideal instrument for behaviourist models of learning because of their binary logic while constructivist model is better suited to “facilitate collaboration and negotiation of meaning” (107).

Despite the criticism the behaviourist model has received a lot of CALL material still relies heavily on behaviourist instruction methods and software design which can partly be explained by how easily the behaviourist model adjust to the computer technology. The new

web technologies are however offering teachers as well as learners new ways to shape future learning (Beatty).

Davies points out that “[t]he one thing that has become evident in the history of new technologies is that pedagogy and methodology are slow to catch up with each major breakthrough” (Davies et al., sec. 3.7). In the light of the rapid technological change we have experienced and are currently experiencing it should not come as a surprise that pedagogy and methodology tend to lack behind. It takes time for new technology to catch on and for the researchers and teachers to get to know it, to understand its potentials and learn how to effectively implement it in teaching. In next section we will look at teachers’ education in reference to CALL.

### **2.3 Teachers and CALL**

The fast changing technical environment also affects foreign language teachers interested in using CALL in their classroom. Hong looked at various surveys and from them identified three factors that influence teachers’ integration of CALL in the classroom: (1) teacher education, (2) individual factors such as the “L2 teachers’ general computer literacy skills or teachers’ attitude toward and confidence in computer technology” (61) and (3) contextual factors that include the technological situation in the school the teacher works at or access to computers, that is how well/badly equipped the school is with computers and other technology as well as the schools support to the implementation of CALL technology.

The first two factors: teachers’ education and the individual factors are directly connected. Studies have shown that teachers are reluctant to use CALL in their classroom if they lack knowledge and training in how to implement the technology (Hong). Kessler points out that in order for teachers to be able to judge how to implement CALL technology effectively in their classes they must be explicitly trained in CALL. He stresses that there is a demand for teachers with some technical knowledge but still “training continues to predominantly be acquired in an informal or a[n]d hoc manner through conference workshops, in-services, personal reading and other forms of self-edification” (23). Kessler further adds “that formal language teacher preparation programs have largely neglected to equip their graduates with the related knowledge and skills they need to enter today’s technologically advanced language classroom” (23). Hong however points out that national guidelines in the US stress the importance of including technology education in the teachers’ programs and the teachers’ education programs (US) have begun to integrate CALL classes.

Hong further notes that several researchers feel the small number of CALL classes offered during the teachers' program (often only one or two) are not "sufficient for L2 teachers to experience a variety of CALL technology and to understand the pedagogical potential of CALL technology" (58), and that "they do not believe that a small numbers of courses or workshops can contribute, as expected, to L2 teachers' use of computer technology in the classroom" (58). Northrup and Little (cited in Kessler) stress that instructional technology needs to be an ongoing and an integrated part in teachers' preparation programs if to be successful.

Kessler notes that the use of CALL within language programs is becoming more common and because of that teachers need to improve their knowledge of CALL in terms of methodology, practices, history and possibilities to be able to make informed decisions regarding the use of CALL based on knowledge of pedagogy and technology and how these come together in CALL instruction. He further suggests that teachers' educators experiment with approaches to teaching CALL to find out what best suits their students.

Lastly the contextual factors that include how technological situation at the school the teacher works and the schools administrations support or lack of it for the implementation of CALL technology, according to Hong have the least influence of the three factors she identifies on teachers' use of CALL in the classroom.

Just as with the pedagogy and methodology the teachers' face the difficulty of keeping up with technology and although there is a growing demand for technology savvy teachers the educational programs do not offer sufficient preparation for the great variety of CALL tools available which then again influence the teachers' confidence in implementing CALL tools in their classroom. The support or lack of it as well as the state of technology at the schools the teachers teach at also has its influence. The problem of keeping up with technology will surely continue to have influence in CALL as we can assume that technology advances will keep on in the future. In the next section we will look at CALL technology.

## **2.4 CALL Technology: The State of the Art**

In the ever evolving computer technology world it is interesting to look at what computers are presently capable of performing when it comes to language teaching software. Meskill explains that early CALL software was predominantly based on the input-output model of instruction which entails that the software prompts an input from the user and then responds to the users input according to a pre-programmed list of rules or possible answers. The user

could be asked to fill in blanks or give an answer to prompts or questions by choosing from multiple-choice answers. The answers were then followed up with feedback (that is right or that is wrong). The user then followed the pre-programmed path of drill exercises and tests that usually focused on the form, that is, grammar and vocabulary (definitions, spelling and recognition). Later versions of this type of software included management tools that allowed for the progress of individual students to be followed. As computer technology became more advanced software development expanded but continued to use the basic structure of the restricted input-output system due to the limitations of then current technology. Beatty notes that “many programs being produced today feature little more than visually stimulating variations on the same gap-filling exercises used 40 years ago” (12). Meskill (122) listed in 2002 what computers can and cannot do:

Can	Can't
Judge answers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple choice</li> <li>• Fill in the blanks</li> </ul>	Judge unexpected input
Provide feedback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correct/Incorrect</li> <li>• Remedial sequences</li> <li>• Suggestions and encouragement</li> </ul>	Provide feedback beyond a predetermined, and therefore limited, list of messages
Record: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learner's writing</li> <li>• Speech</li> <li>• Progress</li> </ul>	Give feedback that addresses unexpected input; in other words, meaning
Provide comparisons for self-check: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text, pictures, audio segments, video</li> <li>• Spectographs</li> </ul>	
Promote critical and creative thinking	Engage learner in rich negotiation of meaning characteristic of face-to-face interaction
Motivate task persistence	Motivate depth and quality of engagement characteristic of human interaction

This is a 10 year old list, but not much has changed since 2002. Human language is a complex system that comes alive with human communication. To understand a conversation between individuals requires the understanding of various factors beyond the language forms and words, such as social, physical, cognitive, and experiential. And as the table above shows this is the area in which computers and software fall short (Meskill). Computers are not capable of understanding human language. Interestingly despite the great technological



advances of last decades the software basic structure still remains the same. The computers cannot respond to unexpected input and neither can they give improvised feedback because they do not understand language. Next we will look at a field within CALL that deals with the deciphering of human languages.

Within the area of Human Language Technologies (HLT) there is much growth in research on Natural Language Processing. The field uses advanced technology to “decipher” language with formal models built on “standard toolkits of computer science, mathematics, and linguistics” (Jurafsky and Martin 5). These models (such as state machines, rule systems, logic, probabilistic models and vector-space models) then use a small number of learning algorithms. Smith (quoted in Gupta and Schulze, sec 5.1) defined algorithm as:

[...] a formal procedure that always produces a correct or optimal result. An algorithm applies a step-by-step procedure that guarantees a specific outcome or solves a specific problem. The procedure of an algorithm performs a computation in a finite amount of time. Programmers specify the algorithm the program will follow when they develop a conventional program.

With the use of these models and algorithms the NLP technology can disambiguate formal issues regarding phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics and discourse (Jurafsky and Martin) which has potential for CALL. Although NLP technology can use mathematics to find patterns in human languages it, just as traditional CALL software, lacks the “understanding” of the full complexity of languages and therefore cannot place judgment on much of the structural or the social or cultural aspects of language.

Other technology that falls under HLT includes speech synthesis, speech/voice recognition and machine translation. Speech synthesis has come much further than speech recognition and in today’s world it is becoming increasingly common not to distinguish between a human voice and that of a synthetic nature. The speech recognition technology, although not as advanced, as speech synthesis has become useable in CALL in recent years. Machine translation is also improving but it is still far from perfect (Gupta and Schulze).

Lastly I will mention a new field within CALL called MALL that uses mobile applications for learning languages. The apps (applications) are mini-software that give access to the software material either through download or Internet connection to a web-based platform. The field of mobile apps is very new and because of that information about what technology the mobile language learning apps use is scarce. The English language learning apps I review in this essay, however, generally use traditional CALL technology with behaviourist elements but some also incorporate some constructivist functions (social

networking) and more advanced technologies such as voice recognition or intelligent engines. This investigation is however limited to only 7 apps and does not give a general idea of what technology language learning apps use.

The history of CALL already stretches over more than five decades and the changes in hardware and software have been tremendous in that period. During that time CALL teaching models have evolved from behaviourist to constructivist or socio-cognitive models of teaching yet theory is generally slow to catch up with the ever and fast evolving technology. The demand for technology savvy teachers is growing but the teacher's education programs are not meeting the demand with enough CALL classes to familiarize the teachers with the great variety of CALL tools. Despite the great technological advances tutorial software developers still face the same limitations that the computer's inability to understand language and binary functions pose upon them. We are now in an era of a fast evolving mobile technology which promises augmented autonomy to the learner who can easily find inexpensive tutorial software online without the intervention of a teacher. Teachers could however, easily make use of these kind of software in their teaching given they are prepared to implement them and have access to information about the variety of English language tutoring apps. That brings us to the main topic of this essay, which is a review of a few chosen mobile tutorial applications available to adult learners of English.

### 3 The Study

The goal of this study was to investigate the availability of apps that teach English as a second or foreign language. Further the aim was to review and compare some of the apps to find out what they teach, how they teach and what technology they use in order to see on which aspects they are different and on which they are alike, where they are lacking and what they do well.

The study began with a search on *Google Play store* which turned up astonishing number of apps that claim to teach English. I gathered information about 47 apps that according to their *Google Play* profile descriptions might be of interest. I organized the apps into groups according to what they mainly focused on teaching built on what I could see from the *Google Play* profile. I then limited the review to only one of those groups: apps that teach complete English language courses. In all I downloaded and tried 12 apps which I then cut down to 7 apps that I fully investigated and wrote about.

#### 3.1 Search Method

The search was focused on finding mobile apps that teach English. The search and gathering of information was both done on a laptop computer and a Samsung Galaxy SIII smartphone. Because the smartphone runs on an Android operating system the search was limited to Android applications and further to the *Google Play store*. At first I searched for all English teaching applications within the education category on *Google Play* using both keyword search and browsing the suggested apps which turn up next to each app's description. Then I looked at the app descriptions, screenshots from the apps, rating and comments from users. I gathered the information about the apps that might be worth investigating further in a file and sorted them by apps that teach mainly one of the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), vocabulary, other (grammar, verb trainers etc.), and then apps that teach complete language courses. I found far more apps than I could test and write about in this essay so I decided to focus on the apps that taught complete language courses. The results from that first search gave me eleven apps but when I began to try out the courses five fell out because they were not good enough or didn't meet the criteria and were replaced by one new that also was found by keyword search and browsing on *Google Play*.

It is important to note that searching *Google Play* to find an app can be troublesome. Firstly the store does not offer any subcategories to the education category and very limited advanced search options. When searching the store it is possible to make the search more

effective by, for example, placing keyword phrases within double quotation marks (“learn English”) and to limit the search by placing the minus sign before a word you don’t want in the results (-children, -travel). Other search options were to limit the results to prices (free, paid or all), safe search by degrees (off, low, medium, strict), to devices (apps compatible to my smartphone) and then sort the result by relevance or popularity. I could not find any directions or guidelines about how best is to search the store on the *Google Play* website (or elsewhere for that matter). So for an inexperienced searcher who is unaware of the common search strategies such as the before mentioned, accessing particular kind of apps in the store can be difficult and inefficient.

Another thing that makes searching *Google Play* difficult is that there is no consensus on keywords or search terms for similar apps among developers. Developers need to find and try out keywords that work for their app in order to score higher on the search ranking list. The search engine algorithm ranks first keywords that appear in the apps title, then the frequency of the keyword in the apps description and thirdly the number of “net” installs of the app (apps installs – apps uninstalls) (Android App Marketing and Google Play). Therefore it depends on the keywords which each developer chooses to include in the app’s title and description what turns up as well as the app’s popularity, and the searchers ability to foresee what keywords are likely to be used for the particular kind of app he/she is looking for. But the chosen keywords can also turn up great amounts of apps that the user is not looking for. Like for instance the key words “learn English” which are the keywords four out of the seven apps I review include in their title turns up at least 1000 results (according to *Google Play* search engine). Therefore it can be like searching for a needle in a haystack if the searcher is looking for something particular without knowing the name of the app or the developer. Moreover, after the searcher has found an app that might be useful judging from the apps profile on *Google Play*, after testing it the searcher might find it unsatisfying and have to start the search all over again.

After I had found the apps I wanted to investigate further I gathered information from developers’ websites, the apps themselves, from personal communication with the developers or their staff, and from the *Google Play* profiles.

### **3.2 Criteria to Limit the App Search in *Google Play***

When I began the research, I decided to look for English teaching apps, only in the education category in *Google Play*, which were listed as free and taught one of the four skills (reading,

writing, listening, speaking), vocabulary or included whole language courses. The apps I was looking for should have as a target audience young adult and adult English learners interested in learning the language. This excluded from the search apps that teach a few phrases to get by on vacation or focus on grammar exercises. That meant that all children apps, phrasebooks and grammar apps were out and also apps like dictionaries and translation apps that can be used as helping tools when learning a language but are not designed especially to teach the language. Because of the great many apps that fall within these limitations and are available on *Google Play* I decided to further limit the investigation to apps that teach complete English language courses that incorporate teaching in various language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), are intended for adult or young adult language learners and are listed as free.

### **3.3 Criteria to Evaluate the Selected Apps**

The review of the complete course apps was based on a certain predetermined criteria for evaluation of how the apps differed and in what ways they were similar. Only complete English language courses were considered. Firstly I found out who the developers were and who were behind the development of the course structure and material. Then I examined the methodology, teaching techniques and motivational tools and what type of feedback was used in the course and if the methodology had been based on any particular theory. After that I looked at the app itself, what it teaches and the level of the material. From there I go on to describe the app's content and skills the lessons teach which I divide into: vocabulary/phrases, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, writing, speaking and grammar. Then I go over what types of exercises the app offers, such as fill in the gap and multiple-choice questions. Then I look at how much material is offered as a free trial and how much it costs after that. Lastly I look at how often the app has been downloaded (its popularity), how it has been received and rated by users and their comments, both good and bad. Lastly I write about my own experience and perception of the app, both the study material and technology. In short, the following criteria were used as a basis for evaluation of the applications:

Background and pedagogy	Study material and exercises	The platform and popularity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developers</li> <li>• Theory</li> <li>• Methodology</li> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Feedback</li> </ul>	What is taught? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary/phrases</li> <li>• Listening Comprehension</li> <li>• Reading Comprehension</li> <li>• Writing</li> <li>• Speaking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Platform (downloaded, web-based)</li> <li>• Prices (subscriptions, prices and free material)</li> <li>• Translation languages</li> <li>• Language proficiency levels</li> <li>• Popularity (download rate, average rating, users' comments)</li> </ul>

Following are the apps chosen for evaluation as titled in *Google Play*: Learn English with Busuu!, Curso Completo Inglés Wlingua, English Hello-Hello (Phone), Learn English, eTeacher – Learn English, Learn English – Voxy, and English Lessons – GymGlish. The results of the evaluations will be presented in the following chapters.

## 4 English Language Course Applications (Apps)

In this chapter I will evaluate seven apps that I have selected from the *Google Play store*. These apps have it all in common to be fully fledged English language courses except for one (*eTeacher*) that was intended as supplement material/exercises to English language courses (Nahlik). None the less I decided to include that app in this discussion because this software's origin dates back to the 1980s (Nahlik), and gives a valuable insight into how language learning software were constructed in that period of CALL.

The apps evaluation is organized into four sections: the company, methodology and motivation; the app's study material and exercises; subscriptions, prices and free material and the app's reception and comments.

The apps are generally listed in Goggle Play store under long titles which include keywords because of how the search engine works. I will however only refer to them by their brand names which are also included in the title on *Google Play*. The only exception is *Learn English* from Anspear that keeps its complete *Google Play* title because it is short. The apps are evaluated in the following order: *Busuu*, *Wlingua*, *Hello-Hello*, *Learn English*, *eTeacher*, *Voxy* and *Gymglish*. The full titles are included in the apps' overview tables in appendix 3 and screenshots from the apps taken from their *Google Play* profiles can be found in appendix 2.

### 4.1 Busuu

#### 4.1.1 The Company, Methodology and Motivation

The *Busuu* app forms a part of a website (busuu.com) which is an extensive online language community of over 25.000.000 users that offers language courses in 12 languages ("Busuu.com Mobile Apps").

According to busuu.com the founders were tired of the traditional way of learning languages which they thought was too expensive and boring and so they decided to create their own learning material based on image and sound and allowing learners to learn directly from native speakers and to offer parts of the material for free. If the user chooses he/she can pay for a Premium Membership and gain access to additional functions and material ("About busuu.com").

To make language learning less boring the busuu team created a website that seems to be a combination of a game, language learning and social networking. The user can be studying several of the 12 languages *Busuu* offers simultaneously and download apps for each

language. The user receives busuu berries when he/she finishes sections of the learning material, courses, corrects other user's exercises etc. and the amount of berries the user has earned is visible to his/her friends within the community so they can work as a motivational tool for the users. The berries can also be used to challenge a friend to complete a section of the course before you do and gain 50 berries or lose and have 50 berries deleted from your account. There are many more uses for the berries but essentially they are motivational.

Another motivational tool is the language garden where the users see his/hers language tree grow as he/she finishes more and more of the course. Errors committed by the users in the review exercises appear as insects in the garden so the user needs to work on the errors and correct them in order to get rid of the insects so they won't eat up the user's language tree. A user can also receive funny animated rewards for his/her language garden for finishing tests and courses and apples for correcting other's user's exercises. ("Help"). Moreover, *Busuu* send the user regular study reminders to motivate the user to keep on learning. The app can be synchronised with the website so the work done on the app affects the language garden and the busuu berries ("Busuu.com Mobile Apps").

#### 4.1.2 *The App's Material and Exercises*

The *Busuu* app is a downloaded app and does not require an Internet connection. The user can however register to the *Busuu* website which offers online language courses and sync his/her progress to his/her online course progress. But the app can also be use completely separate from the website ("Busuu.com Mobile Apps").

The app does not offer all the functions and material that can be found on the website (like pronunciation exercises, pdf learning material and podcasts) but the material is none the less substantial and covers 150 topics related to everyday life. The material is designed for beginners to advanced intermediate learners (A1 – B2) and includes 3000 words and key phrases (if all additional material has been bought or the user is a Premium member) ("Busuu.com Mobile Apps").

The app is divided into four proficiency levels (A1 – B2) and within each there are multiple sections that cover different everyday-life topics and grammar. Each topic includes three or four exercises. First there is a vocabulary exercise supported by flashcards containing an image and the written word/phrase. A native voice pronounces the word/phrase and the user can press one button to hear a whole sentence containing the word/phrase.



The second exercise contains a short spoken and written dialogue from which the user needs to answer three multiple-choice questions concerning the information discussed in the dialogue. When the topic of the section is grammar the multiple-choice questions ask the user to select the correctly written sentence according to the grammar topic being practiced.

The third is an exercise in writing where the user gets questions to answer like “How are you right now? How do you feel?” and is given three images for inspiration. The practice is then essentially to build a short sentence or two that includes some of the vocabulary covered in that particular section. The written exercise is then sent to the online community for feedback from a native speaker that is also a *Busuu* user. For these exercises the user needs to have registered to the *Busuu* website. Not all topics include this exercise.

Lastly there is a review of the unit with three types of exercises: pairing of a spoken phrase with a written one, to build a sentence that has been used in this section from a word scramble, and pairing a phrase in English with the interface language counterpart. The user does not have to finish each exercise correctly to move on to the next one. If the review has not been completed satisfactorily the app highlights the mistakes and tells the user that it would be best to do the review again. The app then saves the users mistakes under a tab called “my mistakes” for the user to review and practice again (Busuu).

It is important to note that within the app are no grammar rule explanations. The grammar topic being covered at each time is practiced by the user but never explained to him/her. The name of the sections indicates which grammar topic will be covered: “Personal Pronouns 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> singular (I, you, he, she) Grammar” or “to know (I know, I don’t know) Grammar” and the section is built up the same way as the vocabulary sections (Busuu).

#### *4.1.3 Subscriptions, Prices and Free Material*

The only way to know the subscription prices is to register on the website. For the first few days after the user registers, *Busuu* offers a discount on the Premium account. One month costs €15.99 and 12 months €69.99 without the additional discount but these prices have, none the less, some unexplained discount of the standard price (“Join now”). The Premium members gain access to all the material on the website as well as on the app (“Busuu.com Mobile Apps”).

The app includes 20 free lessons and four of them are grammar lessons. The additional material can be bought within the app as well as an extra travel language course. To see the prices for the additional material the user needs to begin the buying process within the app

and register his/her credit-card number in *Google Play* (this only needs to be done once) before he/she can see the prices. The additional material for each level and the travel course is sold in separate packages and costs €3.99. All the free material has advertisements flashing within the screen but the bought material is free of advertisements (Busuu).

#### 4.1.4 *The App's Reception and Comments*

The *Busuu* app has been downloaded between 1.000.000 to 5.000.000 times in the *Google play store* in the last 30 days (7 Feb. 2013). The average rating of over 35 thousand people for this app is 4 ½ star out of 5 and most of the comments are very positive. The users that complain are those that have technical issues, such as with the setting of the interface language and those who feel that they have been deceived because the app is not completely free (“Learn English with busuu.com!”).

The app is visually appealing, well organised and easily navigated. My experience with the app is that it was rather slow and some of its functions did not seem to work as they should, like the review result button. I also came across a technical inconvenience when I did the writing exercise on my phone because the keyboard that pops up when I need to write something covered more than half the screen. Because of that I could not see what I was writing and nor could I move the window I was writing in upwards on the screen so I could see it above the keyboard. Furthermore, I did not receive feedback from other members of the community for my writing exercises which raises the question if the social community generally gives feedback on exercises or if the reason could lie in the fact that I have not yet built up a network of friends on the website.

Another technical problem is the interface language. The 12 language classes *Busuu* offers (English, Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), French, German, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese (Brazil), Russian, Spanish and Turkish) are also the possible interface languages on the app (Busuu). For a learner of English that does not speak any of the other interface languages this app does not deliver its potentials. If the user's phone interface language is set on English (or Icelandic) the app automatically sets English as an interface language and the user cannot change that unless changing the interface language on the phone to any of the other languages *Busuu* teaches. If the interface language is English many of the exercises that should appear in two different languages (like the pairing practices) appear only in English and the user is asked to pair words or phrases that are both the same. Therefore, for the full experience the user needs to know at least one of the other languages *Busuu* teaches as well.

All in all this is a language app that essentially gives practice in vocabulary and phrases that moves no further than onto the level of the sentence and short dialogues. And the listening comprehension and practice on that same level. Although the app covers many topics the amount of study material and exercises each lesson includes is very limited, there are no extra materials and no feedback beyond a colour indication of correct and incorrect. Despite of that the website's and the app's popularity indicates that the gaming and social networking method is appealing and motivating to language learners but a study needs to be done on the quality and effectiveness of the study material itself.

## **4.2 Wlingua**

### *4.2.1 The Company, Methodology and Motivation*

The language course is developed by the company Wlingua but there is no information on the website about the company itself or the people behind it. This course is intended for Spanish speakers only.

The *Wlingua* methodology combines the techniques of gradual exposure to the language, spaced repetition and listening assimilation to teach the language. The course has been designed in a way that the learner is gradually exposed to the language. Every new lesson introduces new material but presents it by using already learned grammatical rules and vocabulary. All lessons do however introduce new vocabulary as well. The technique of spaced repetition means that all the exercises the learner finishes are revisited a few days after they are completed and then at gradually longer intervals after that, leaving time for the student to practice new phrases and vocabulary. As for the listening assimilation the course includes that all phrases and vocabulary are accompanied by a British English and American English pronunciation. Moreover, lessons in phonetics are included in the course to help the user understand how to pronounce the words (“Información del curso”).

Aspects of the course that might be motivating for the user include the star system. The user receives points when he/she finishes exercises correctly that builds up to stars. Each star gained adds extra free hours to the Premium account (“FAQs”). The exercises however do not offer any motivational feedback beyond the colour indication of right and wrong. Other motivational aspects are the possibilities to visually follow the progress (only on the website), and to receive diplomas. To receive a diploma the user has to have finished a level with the minimum average grade of 6.5 (each lesson is graded) (Curso Wlingua). The website does include social networking (not the app) but that part of the website is not used in the same

motivational way as is done on the *Busuu* website. And lastly *Wlingua* sends regular study reminders to keep up the user's motivation.

#### *4.2.2 The App's Material and Exercises*

This app is a complete English course for Spanish speakers from beginners to advanced intermediate learners (A1-B2) but the developers say they are working on a program for the advanced levels (C1-C2). The course is a multiplatform course so the user can study through a computer (PC, Mac or Linux), on Android mobiles and tablets (2.1 or newer) and on iPhones, iPods and iPads ("FAQs"). The user needs to have an active Internet connection, all the learning material is stored online and because of that the user can pick up on his/her studies where he last left of on any mobile device or computer he/she chooses ("Curso Completo").

The whole program consists of 600 lessons, 150 for each level (from level A1 to B2) that include phrases in British English and American English, spaced repetition, vocabulary and phrases exercises, grammar exercises and readings. The levels are structured according to the Common European Framework guidelines ("FAQs").

Each lesson covers a certain theme which can be about a particular grammar phenomenon, conversational matters, English culture and more. The lessons include various types of exercises e.g.:

*Pronunciation exercises:* To practice pronunciation the phonetic lessons give instructions on how to pronounce some words by giving the phonetic transcription of all words. Then the user can listen to the British and the American pronunciation and practice with the pronunciation trainer by recording his/her own voice and comparing with the model provided.

*Reading exercises:* The user selects the correct word or a sentence to fill in a numbered gap within the text. Other exercises require the learner to decide if a list of statement about the information given in the text is true or false.

*Grammar exercises:* The grammar exercises include choosing the grammatically correct answer for a sentence from two options; gap filling; or matching sentences with the correct phrases to form a grammatical sentence.

*Vocabulary and phrases exercises:*

Vocabulary translation: These exercises include connecting English words with their translation in Spanish; to select a word in English that corresponds to a word

shown in Spanish; to write the first letter of all the words given; and to write the complete word.

Listening to vocabulary: These exercises include choosing the English word that matches the Spanish word just dictated; to choose the correct Spanish word that corresponds to the English word just dictated; to write the first letter of the word given; and to write the complete word.

*Phrases:* These exercises include building sentences from a word scramble; to write the first letter of all the words in a sentence and; to write the whole sentence.

*Video exercises:* The user is asked to complete the sentences heard in the video, that is, to fill in the gaps (“Información del curso”).

#### 4.2.3 *Subscriptions, Prices and Free Material*

Wlingua offers two types of accounts: Basic and Premium. The basic account is free and with limited access to the lessons, grammar exercises and readings but full access to parts of the course such as the vocabulary exercises and the British and American accent sound files. The premium account gives access to all the material and activities. The Premium account is optional and costs less than 10 Euros a month (1 month subscription costs 9.97 € and 12 months costs 59.97€). All users, however, need to create an account to be able to use the course for which only an e-mail address and a password is needed. The account is necessary for the program to become personalized and to enable it to follow the progress of each user. This also makes it possible for the user to keep on studying from the place where he/she left off on any device. All users that sign up get a 30 days trial access to the Premium account that changes automatically to a basis account after the trial period has passed (“FAQs”).

#### 4.2.4 *The App's Reception and Comments*

The Wlingua Android app has been downloaded between 500.000 and 1.000.000 times in the last 30 days (11 Feb. 2013) and has been very well received by users that are impressed by it and even just the free part of the app seems to be satisfying. The only negative comments are concerned with the app requiring an Internet connection. The average rating is 4.7 out of 5 (“Curso Completo”).

After trying out the app I have not come across any technical difficulties, everything seems to work beautifully. Everything that can be done in the course on a regular computer seems to be also possible on the app except for parts of the social functions (chat and to invite

friends to join), the numbers and irregular verbs trainers and the ability to visually follow the progress of study and read the detailed information about the course. The user can do all the alterations he/she needs within the app, such as: change the proficiency level of study and test his/her level of English, reset the account or delete it. The user can set the app to teach American or British pronunciation or both, choose between normal or slow speed of speaking, activate or deactivate the audio and choose between pre-downloading the audio files or not. There is also the option of adding personal information and changing the password, send a message to *Wlingua*, suggest changes or new features for the course, see the prices, get diplomas, visit *Wlingua's* Facebook and Twitter sites, look words up in a dictionary enter a consulting library and see how many stars the user has gained.

The app functions like a real website that is very easy to navigate. The control bar sits at the top of the window, even when the user is within a lesson, which makes it easy to move around within the app. This is also important because while within a lesson most of the exercises do not allow the user to fast-forward through it but he/her needs to finish them properly, all answers that are wrong have to be done again until they are completed and correct. If the user stops within a lesson he/she can resume it later where he/she left off. What I particularly liked about this app is that explanations about how to do the exercises are always just a click away and after finishing an exercise the user can revisit the vocabulary, grammar and phonetic lessons without having to redo the whole lesson. The only downside is the lack of feedback.

All in all, this is a great multiplatform language course that works great as an app and does not cost much. The course is conventional and the way it is set up demands of the user to pay attention to the lessons in order to be able to finish the exercises.

## **4.3 Hello-Hello**

### *4.3.1 The Company, Methodology and Motivation*

*Hello-Hello* is an online and mobile language teaching company that unites language learning with social networking. The company developed their methodology in collaboration with *The American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages* (ACTFL), “which is the largest and most respected association of teachers and administrators of all languages at all levels” in The United States (“About us,” Hello-Hello.com).

*Hello-Hello* uses immersion methodology to help the user gain functional language knowledge for day-to-day situations. They follow the Notional-Functional Approach to

language learning by teaching the user to communicate in real-life settings. New vocabulary and phrases are introduced in the context they might appear in real communicative situations. And each lesson introduces gradually more complicated and advanced vocabulary and phrases that build on and reinforce what has come before. Furthermore, their methodology is learner-centred as the platform allows the learner to practice at his/her own time and speed (“Methodology”).

When it comes to motivating the user, there is not anything particular that stands out. The social networking that the website offers and receiving feedback from other users on the written and spoken exercises might be considered as motivating but this factor is not available on the app. Moreover there is no feedback on the other exercises except for whether they are correct or incorrect. However, the materials accessibility which can all be downloaded onto the device and practiced wherever without an Internet connection, augments the user’s autonomy and possibly motivation.

#### 4.3.2 *The App’s Material and Exercises*

The study material is based on conversations using American pronunciation that are designed to prepare the learner to communicate with English speakers in various day-to-day situations (HH English). The course is for beginners and is on levels A1-A2 (Gontijo). The course consists of 30 lessons that are divided into three proficiency levels and is offered in 7 different languages. The English app offers 8 translation languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, German, French, Chinese and Dutch. The Android phone app has all the same lessons as the website and can be used completely on its own without an Internet connection (HH English).

The website also works as a social network similar to *Busuu*. The users can engage in an audio, video or written live chat with other users and some of the exercises in the lessons are sent to friends within the community for feedback from native speakers of the language. These exercises can both be written and dictated but are not yet available within the app (HH English).

Each lesson is divided into 8 sections. The first section is always a dialogue dictated with real voices that covers the situation that will be practiced throughout the lesson, these can be for instance to learn to describe one’s family or tell where one lives. The second section asks the user to listen to the dialogue again and read the transcription at the same time. The third section gives the transcription of the dialogue in both English and one of the 8

languages offered as languages of translation in settings and he/she listens to the dialogue for the third time. In the fourth section the user is asked to listen to the dialogue, sentence for sentence, and after each one try to pronounce it out loud. The user is not given the option of recording his/her own voice and listen to his/her own pronunciation. In the fifth section the user listens again to the dialogue, sentence for sentence, and is asked to write each sentence after it has been pronounced. The sixth section is a vocabulary lesson where part of the dialogue is shown and words or phrases underlined. The user can click on the underlined words/phrases and a pop-up window appears with the word and a list of other words related to it. If the user is working on the website he/she can save the words he/she wishes to flashcards but that function is not available on the app.

The last part of the learning sequence divides into two sections of exercises. In the former exercise the user is given a phrase and must choose the correct response to it from four possible options. This exercise is designed to see if the user understands how to use the phrases in a real conversation. The latter exercise is divided into three exercises: The user can record the dialogue of the lesson and send it to a friend for feedback; The user can write a dialogue about the same subject as has been covered in the lesson and send to a friend for feedback, and finally the user can record his/her own written dialogue and send to a friend for feedback. These three exercises, as said before, are not available on the app as yet. While working on the lessons the user has always the option to take notes and save them for later review. Apart from the lessons the app offers flashcards with 19 different topics. Those flashcards are supported by audio but not by images as they include only written words (HH English).

#### *4.3.3 Subscriptions, Prices and Free Material*

The course is available both as an online course on the *Hello-Hello* website and as an app for phones and tablets (“About us,” [Hello-Hello.com](http://Hello-Hello.com)). The *Hello-Hello* website does not sell subscriptions to the study material but offers it all for free. The user only needs to register to the website. The Android app on the other hand only offers one lesson free and then the user needs to buy the 29 remaining lessons for \$1.99 each or all the lessons at once for \$14.99 (HH English).



#### 4.3.4 *The App's Reception and Comments*

The *Hello-Hello* Android phone app has been downloaded between 10.000 and 50.000 times in the last 30 days (17 Feb. 2013) but receives only 3.1 out of 5 stars. There are only few comments from users (that I can see) and most are negative. People feel like they have been cheated because the app is advertised as free but only offers one of the 30 lessons for free. One said the app is too slow and another that it doesn't work on his/her phone. One positive user says it has helped him/her to brush up on his/her accent ("English Hello-Hello"). Judging from the negative comments, which mostly complain over the cost and not over the app itself the average rating has more to do with the marketing technique than the study material.

The app itself functions very well and is easy to navigate. The only critique I have is that the lessons are shown in a small frame where the text is crammed in, in small font instead of making use of the screen size. Because of that the text can be difficult to read and the user can only see parts of it at a time. The reason the developers design the app this way might be because the screen size varies a lot on mobile devices and they want to meet the needs of more users. Whatever the reason the user experience is worse for it.

This language course does not teach any grammar but focuses on advancing the users communication skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and vocabulary without explaining how the language system itself works. Complete beginners who have no base in grammar and limited vocabulary might find this app too difficult at first but as it is intended for beginners the developers encourage users not to give up and to do the lessons repeatedly until they feel prepared to move on to the next lesson ("English Hello-Hello"). Furthermore, an important part of the course's value of practice is lost in the app because the social networking factor is not a part of the app. The study material is however well organised and practical as it offers a good practice in English, especially in listening and vocabulary/phrases related to day-to-day situations.

### 4.4 **Learn English**

#### 4.4.1 *The Company, Methodology and Motivation*

The company behind *Learn English* is called Anspear and was founded when two companies united forces: FoneFonics which is a company with knowledge in "the operation and application of mobile technologies," and Pearson Publishing, that has a long experience "in the development and effective use of technology in education" ("About us," Anspear.com). Anspear has designed software for mobiles and tablets that is specialized for creating

language learning applications. The company has used this software to author its own language learning applications as well as in cooperation with others (“Overview”).

This particular “application was authored by Anspear, but the content was reviewed by a range of language teachers who were mainly teaching English to immigrant families in the UK” (Hakimi, 19 Feb.). When designing the application the developers made use of the UK’s *Adult Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Core Curriculum* for the reason that the application was initially designed with immigrants in mind that “needed English to access health services, employment and education in the UK” (Hakimi, 19 Feb.).

There is nothing that is particularly motivating in the app, no chart to follow the progress, no bonus/star system and the feedback is limited to colour and sound indications of correct and incorrect and a comment after each lesson telling the user if he did well or if he should try again. The only thing that could be motivating is that the app does not need Internet connection and can be used whenever wherever after the lessons have been downloaded.

#### 4.4.2 *The App’s Material and Exercises*

Unlike other applications I have looked at this app stands alone, that is, it is not a part of a bigger online website. The proficiency level this application teaches is at A1/A2 (Hakimi, 20 Feb.). The complete app has 11 topics that include: shopping, eating and dining, home, family and friends, travel, free time & leisure, at school, at work, health, and nature and environment (“Learn English”).

The Topics then have subtopics that vary in number. Each topic offers various exercises that include:

*Vocabulary:* The user is shown a words and a related image. Then he/she hears the word pronounced and can record his/her own voice to compare and save the word to flashcards for later review. There is also a vocabulary exercises that asks the user to put the words in the correct order according to meaning (e.g. morning, noon, evening).

*Spelling:* The user hears a word pronounced and sees an image, and then he/she needs to fill in the missing letters of that word.

*Word games:* The user completes mixed exercises such as, multiple-choice questions and to select an image that corresponds to a word or a phrase.

*Listening comprehension:* The user listens to a short piece of information without a supporting script and then needs to answer multiple-choice questions about the subject.

*Reading comprehension:* The user reads a short text and then needs to answer multiple-choice questions about the information in that text. Another type of this exercise is read information from calendars and phonebooks and then answer multiple-choice questions about the information given.

*Grammar exercises:* The grammar is not explained specifically, only practiced by filling in a gap by choosing from three options.

*Word order/sentence structure:* The user has to build a sentence from a word scramble.

After all exercises the app gives the user a feedback telling him/her if he/she did well or should look at it again. The user cannot fast-forward through the exercise but has to answer correctly in order to move on. Additionally the app includes flashcards and audiovisual dictionary with all the words from the vocabulary practices. Within the dictionary the user can record his/her pronunciation and compare to the native pronunciation (Learn English)

#### 4.4.3 *Subscriptions, Prices and Free Material*

This app is not a part of a bigger website that sells subscription. *Anspear* offers the first three topics of 11 for free and all the additional material can be bought for only £0.69 from within the app (Learn English).

#### 4.4.4 *The App's Reception and Comments*

The app has been downloaded between 10.000 and 50.000 times in the last 30 days (29 Mar. 2013) and receives the average grade of 4.4. All comments are positive except for one that complaints about it not being free ("Learn English").

The app is well organized, easy to navigate and it is visually relaxed and appealing. The user can choose between 18 different translation languages (see table 3 in appendix 3) including Danish (Learn English). This is the first app that I look at that offers a translation into a Nordic language. Furthermore, even if the user chooses English as his/her translation language the app works perfectly, the practices do not become useless because there are no exercises that ask for the translation between languages. But it goes without saying that choosing English as a translation language makes it more difficult to understand and the user might need an English/native language dictionary although the images sometimes explain well enough the meaning of the word/phrase.

The interactive exercises are similar to what other applications are using: the conventional multiple choice questions, gap filling (always with multiple options) and word ordering (drag and drop). What is lacking is that the grammar is not explained only practiced and there is no feedback on the voice recording. The feedback for the other exercises is limited to correct and incorrect, or well done or do better. There is also no practice in free writing or free speaking which is of course due to technical difficulty to give feedback and that the app does not connect to a website with a social network like *Busuu* and *Hello-Hello*. What is particularly good is that it is possible to hear all words and phrases pronounced where ever within the lessons, the dictionary and the flashcards

## **4.5 eTeacher**

### *4.5.1 The Company, Methodology and Motivation*

*eTeacher* is developed by Nahlik Soft, a polish software and publishing company founded in 1990. They specialize in educational software and *eTeacher* was the first program they created for learning English. The company has received many rewards for their educational programs and has been a Microsoft Partner since 2006 (“About us and contact”).

The idea of this software was conceived in the 1980s and was not based on any theory or methodology. This software was not intended to replace the teacher or the traditional language course but to create a supplement material. The material is organised into exercises (drills) and tests which are intended to make more effective and fun the learning of vocabulary, grammar and language use. The developer, Krzysztof Nahlik uses his intuition and experience as an English teacher when creating the projects and exercises which he tests on his students and “[s]ome native English teachers always participate in the recordings of pronunciation and final checking of the exercises” (Nahlik).

When it comes to motivation the funny comments (both negative and positive) are supposed to be motivating as well as the optional sound effects (for example cheers and boos). These effects are intended to add fun to completing the exercises and tests (Nahlik) and are the only feedback given to correct or incorrect answers.

#### 4.5.2 *The App's Material and Exercises*

The *eTeacher* app offers a range of exercises and tests on many proficiency levels: beginner 1 and 2, lower intermediate 1 and 2, intermediate grammar, upper intermediate 1 and 2, advanced and proficiency.

At the app's initial page the user has four options: to choose proficiency levels, topics, options and help. After selecting difficulty level the user sees all the exercises pertaining to that level and can do the first four of them (of each level) for free. By selecting the topics option on the front page the user gets to choose between two topics: travel and vacation and work and study. The level of the exercises pertaining to these topics is mixed and the first four exercises of each are free.

Under options on the first page the user can make changes regarding sound, sound effects, comments and pronunciation as well as select the language of translation (*eTeacher*). The app offers twelve translation options: English, Polish, French, German, Spanish, Arabic, Japanese, Hindi, Korean, Portuguese, Russian and Chinese (Nahlik). Under the help option on the front page the user can read about the app and its functions (*eTeacher*).

When accessing an exercise the app asks if the user wants to launch it in a "learn" or "test" mode. In the learn mode all questions the user answers wrongly will be repeated later in the exercise which can only be finished by giving correct answer to all the questions. In the test mode the user can only answer each question once and is rated on the scale of 1-6 according to the percentage of correct answers at the end of the test.

There are five kinds of exercises which all have different logo according to the type of exercise in question. Furthermore, all the logos have different colours depending on the level (*eTeacher*).

The exercises are the following:

- "Listen to the material and then choose the correct answer." After listening to the material the user reads a part of a statement about the material which he/she then needs to complete by choosing one of five options. The correct answer is not pronounced.
- "Choose the word or phrase which best completes the sentence." In this exercise the user can select between four possible options to fill the gap. The correct answer is not pronounced.
- "Choose the proper caption for the picture." In this exercise the user gets five options to choose from and if the answer is incorrect the program highlights the correct answer in green and the incorrect in red. The correct answer is then pronounced.

- “Drag the words and put them under the corresponding pictures.” In this exercise, as in others the incorrect answers are highlighted in red and the correct in green, the correct answers are not given but the user can tap each of the pictures and hear the correct word pronounced.
- “Type the name of the object in the picture.” In this exercise the user only sees the picture and gets no further help. If he/she answers incorrectly the correct word appears in green and is pronounced (eTeacher).

When the user either gives a correct or an incorrect answer in the exercises the app criticises the performance with both negative and positive comments and sound effects. This function of the app always comes before the correct answer is pronounced and can be bothersome. This function, however, can be turned off in the settings (eTeacher).

#### 4.5.3 *Subscriptions, Prices and Free Material*

This app is not a part of a big website with subscriptions. The app offers 432 exercises and 44 of those are free. The only way to buy the additional material is from inside the app itself but there is no way to see the price for each package (level or topic) without giving up a credit card number (that is, to have already registered a credit card number at *Google play store*). Each level has to be bought separately and costs £1.49 which makes the total cost for the app £16.39 (eTeacher).

#### 4.5.4 *The App’s Reception and Comments*

The *eTeacher* Android app has been downloaded between 10.000 and 50.000 times from the *Google Play store* in the last 30 days (19 Feb. 2013) and receives 4.3 stars out of 5. The user’s comments are few and mostly good and there is no critique about the learning material or technical issues concerning the app (“eTeacher – Learn English”)

This app does not give any lessons about the language such as explaining grammar or pronunciation but only offers exercises which implicitly teach the rules and the characteristics of the language. This app is great as an additional practice for English student. It can greatly augment the user’s vocabulary, gives practice in listening comprehension, spelling and grammar.

The technology used in the exercises is simple and well known: drag and drop, gap filling by choosing from already prepared options, multiple choice questions and typing a

certain word into a box. There are no pronunciation exercises or free writing with feedback that require for more complicated technology.

The app is all in all very accessible and easy to navigate, it offers exercises of many different levels and the user can easily follow his/her progress within levels and topics because all exercises have a check list to show what has been completed (the learnt mode, the test mode) as well as showing the mark received for the exercise. The app functions perfectly and the exercises are just as useful when the app is set to English as a translation language as in other languages. Therefore the app could easily be used by native speakers of other languages than the app offers. Although this app is not a complete language course, it can be very useful as supplementary material.

## **4.6 Voxy**

### *4.6.1 The Company, Methodology and Motivation*

*Voxy* is an innovative language learning website whose team of linguists and scientists have designed a platform that changes everyday life activities, and news items into personalized language learning material (“¿Por que Voxy?”). This course is only intended for Spanish speakers.

*Voxy’s* methodology is to use the possibilities the technology offers to give the learner personalized access to learning material, immediate feedback and the possibility to follow his/her progress in order to improve the learning experience and to motivate the learner.

According to *Voxy* the adult second language learner needs authentic material in the target language and to do exercises that are relevant to the real world as well as to receive immediate feedback on errors. And for this to be realized the learner is exposed to real life material and conversations and is given the chance to practice speaking. Additionally, *Voxy* uses the method of distributed practice that is; to study often but for shorter periods each time and that way the learner can maintain their level of proficiency and can improve their English (“Método comprobado”).

According to the *Voxy* website their “pedagogy is based on Contextual Language Theory, which has demonstrated that a ‘learner’s interest’ and ‘the richness of contextual clues’ significantly accelerates learning” and their “curriculum is built around Corpus Linguistics, the study of language in corpora or ‘real world’ text” (“Faq”). In designing the curriculum, the *Voxy* developers “received help from advisers from the best educational institutions in the acquisition of a second language and in cognitive sciences” (“Tour”).

The *Voxy* language course has motivating factors such as the personal progress reports that help the learner locate the areas on which he/she needs to concentrate as well as to send the learner study reminders and personalized advice to help the learner reach his/her goals and to maintain motivation (“Tour”).

The feedback is limited to colour indications of right and wrong and after each lesson the app tells the user how high he/she scored (%) and advises him/her to do the exercise again if it is badly done or congratulates him/her for a job well done.

#### 4.6.2 *The App’s Material and Exercises*

*Voxy*’s website material is accessible and synchronizes with mobiles and tablets apps so the learner can pick up on his/her studies where ever he/she left off on which ever device (“¿Por que Voxy?”). The platform only teaches English to Spanish speakers (“Faq”), and the material is suitable for beginners to advanced learners (“Learn English – Voxy”). Moreover, *Voxy* uses advanced technology like image and voice recognition and GPS which is used to access relevant vocabulary (“¿Por que Voxy?”).

*Voxy* has three ways of presenting material. (1) *Voxy* works with Bloomberg and The Associated Press to get authentic material to create lessons that are relevant to the learner’s everyday life. (2) *Voxy* also uses the GPS technology in smartphones to help the user get the vocabulary he/she needs in particular situations. They find where the phone is at, whether it is at a bank or a restaurant and then send the user material that is relevant to that particular location. (3) And lastly *Voxy* converts popular songs into interactive lessons.

The user selects lessons according to his/her interest, be it business, technology, art and culture, health or sports, which then are always followed by an exercise. This way the user can avoid learning material that does not interest him/her. On the website the user finds his/her personal report which shows his/her progress in reading, writing, vocabulary, listening comprehension and grammar, he/she can also choose how many times a week he/she wishes to study and sign up for online personal classes with a native tutor (“Tour”).

The same news can be found on the *Voxy* app as on the website but the exercises on the website for each text are longer and it is possible to have the news read out. On the app’s front page the user can choose to learn (take lessons), practice or do assessment. By pressing the learn button the user gets to choose between lessons in three categories: news, music or phrases. The news is then divided into six different topics: headlines, business, technology, entertainment, health and sports. The basic account gives limited access to the material so the



non-paying user only gets access to the headlines. The user, however, gets unlimited access to the music material which includes songs from many different artists. The phrases category is divided into four topics: eat and drink, vacations and travel, health and beauty, and products and service. The non-paying user only gets access to the first topic which then again is divided into 5 subtopics.

The news and music category lessons have underlined words that the user can press on to get their meaning, listen to a pronunciation of the word and record own pronunciation to compare. Then both categories are followed by the same type of exercise: three multiple choice questions from the text's vocabulary and one about the text's subject. When practicing the phrases the user can press each phrase to hear the pronunciation and records and listen to his/her own pronunciation of the phrase and compare. After practicing the user can do a spelling exercise where he/she listens to a word or a phrase and needs to fill in the missing letters. Correct letters are shown in green and incorrect are in red.

When the user finishes a lesson, more exercises appear under the assessment button on the front page. For the news and music lessons the exercises include to fill in words that are missing from the text (the same text as was read in the lesson) by selecting the correct option from a list of words. This exercise is followed by an exercise where the user hears a word or a phrase from the text and has to write it without seeing any letters from that word. This is also the only type of exercise that appears for the phrases lessons.

Lastly the practice button leads to two types of exercises: the *Voxy* talkie and the memory trainer. In the *Voxy* talkie the user reads and listens to a word or phrase and then records his/her pronunciation. The app then tells the user what word his/her pronunciation sounded like. The memory trainer functions as audio supported flashcards that have been created from the lessons already studied and are used to reinforce vocabulary. Other functions the app offers is to buy classes from a native speaker and to buy a premium subscription (*Voxy*).

#### *4.6.3 Subscriptions, Prices and Free Material*

The user can have a basic account that is free and includes five lessons a week, vocabulary exercises, limited mobile access and limited pronunciation help. Or subscribe for a month, year, two years, or for life. A single month costs \$9.99 with the price going down with longer subscription, a year subscription is \$6.67 a month and the life subscription costs \$249.99 (“Elige un plan”).

#### *4.6.4 The App's Reception and Comments*

The *Voxy* app is very popular in Spain and Latin America and has been downloaded between 100.000 and 500.000 times in the last 30 days (20 Feb. 2013). The average rating the app receives is 4.7 out of 5 stars and most users' comments are positive. There are however some negative comments such as that the app is only for Spanish speakers with no English version, that it is not free and that the user, if not careful (and not Spanish speaking) might be charged almost 10 dollars for it and some do not like that the app asks for many permissions such as to have access the video/camera and send the user SMS ("Learn English – Voxy").

The *Voxy* app took some time to get used to but after a while it is clear and easy to navigate. I had however some technological problems because the app kept shutting down unexpectedly. This tended to happen when I was doing spelling exercises and almost every time I tried to enter the "practice" part of the app which opens to a pronunciation exercise that gives the user feedback on his/her pronunciation. The voice recognition, when I could try it without the app shutting down, was however not accurate and the only feedback was to show me a word that the app registered me pronouncing with no additional advise.

*Voxy* teaches English without explaining the functions of the languages but translates some vocabulary. The exercises that come with each lesson are short and few. Those include multiple choice questions and space filling by selecting from a list of options, writing words or short phrases, listening comprehension and pronunciation exercises.

The approach *Voxy* takes is interesting and unlike all the other applications/websites I have seen. Their method, they claim, is well based in second language learning and pedagogical theory and they work with specialist in the field ("Tour;" "Faq"). The Contextual Language Theory that they base their methodology on is however not among traditional SLA language theories (Arnbjörnsdóttir, Personal communication).

### **4.7 GymGlish**

#### *4.7.1 The Company, Methodology and Motivation*

*GymGlish* was established in 2004 by the English teachers Antoine Brenner and Benjamin Levy. The programs technology and pedagogy was designed, edited and developed completely by A9 SARL. The English teacher Andrew Arnon leads a team of English

teachers and creative writers who develop and edit the teaching material (“About GymGlish”).

*GymGlish*’s methodology consists of creating specialized learning material with a storyline and use technology to personalize the content, exercises and feedback according to the user’s needs and wishes. *GymGlish* uses an artificial intelligence engine called A9expert to create individualized lessons built on previous lessons completed by the user by taking into account his/her “English level, aims and objectives and capacity to memorize new terms and concepts.” The engine also gives instant feedback to each lesson with corrections, explanations, answers to vocabulary requests made by the user, the score, personalized advices and more (“Personalization”). Furthermore the A9expert calculates according to each user’s needs the optimal spaced repetition of material to guarantee long term memorization (“Memorizing and revising”). Additionally the user has access to his/her own personalized workbook where he/she can see all the points already studied and follow his/her progress (“English lessons on the Internet”).

*GymGlish* motivates the user by sending him/her daily lessons (all weekdays) to his/her e-mail and app. The lessons are designed to be fun, filled with jokes, humour and maybe most importantly a storyline which helps motivate the learner. Personalized lessons which are tailored to the user’s needs and wishes, direct and personalized feedback and the possibility to follow the progress are also motivating features of this course (“Motivation is key”).

The feedback for each lesson includes detailed explanations of both incorrect and correct answers, the user’s score, vocabulary definitions and extra study material related to the errors the user made (*GymGlish* (1.0)).

#### 4.7.2 *The App’s Material and Exercises*

The course’s material is built around a fictional story about the Delavigne Corporation which is a San Francisco based perfume company. The lessons cover all kinds of different scenarios that can occur within the professional surroundings. Each weekday the user gets sent a new lesson with the next mini chapter from the story accompanied by short exercises and vocabulary. The story is different for every user because it adapts to the user’s level and the topics he/she has asked to receive (“GymGlish English Lessons”). The lessons are only in English and there are no translation options. The user needs to be at least at A2 level to enjoy

the course material which can adapt to the Common European Framework levels A2-C2 (Breuza).

In order to get the app to work the user first needs to register on the website for the free trial period or subscribe. Then the user can open the app and write in the e-mail address given when registering. Within few minutes an e-mail will arrive with a link to validate the *GymGlish* Mobile account. Shortly after the validation the first lesson appears on the app. After that the user receives lessons both by e-mail and they appear on the app. New lessons only appear when the lesson before has been finished and submitted.

The app is easy to navigate. At first there is only the first lesson on the app but then it builds up as the user completes more lessons. The newest and unfinished lesson is always on the front page titled “Today’s lesson” and the older lessons and comments are under the “Previous lessons” tab. To enter settings there is a small wheel in the upper right corner. There the user can change the e-mail address, turn notifications on or off, sign out and more.

The first few lessons have additional information about the course and exercises that help the user get accustomed to the platform and by the fourth lesson the user gets to choose his/her interests that are divided down to: (1) priorities (listening comprehension, reading comprehension and business English), (2) business (negotiations, meetings, jobs & employment and more), (3) life (travel, cultural differences, health, real estate and more), and (4) accents (American, Scottish, Chinese and more). A fifth category is available to those who have signed up for a Pro version of *GymGlish* (exclusively for businesses (“GymGlish shop”)) which further personalizes the course according to the user’s professional field (management, banking, sales, health and medicine and more). The user can always change the interest settings later in his/her workbook.

Each new lesson after the first lesson begins with revisiting the incorrect answers from previous lesson and some study material related to the mistake that might be useful to the user. Then the vocabulary the user asked for from last lesson is revisited. After that the new lesson begins.

The lessons usually have 2 or 3 sections plus a grammar test. In each section the learner either listens to or reads parts of the story. The reading comprehension and listening comprehension (no script) sections are frequently followed by an explanation of a word or two from the text or dialogue followed by exercises that test the users understanding of the general content and vocabulary. Then all the vocabulary from the reading exercises is listed and the user can tick the words he/she needs the definition of which then will be sent in the correction feedback e-mail (which comes directly to the app). Lastly grammar exercises are

presented. All the exercises are multiple-choice questions and require the learner to either fill in the gaps from a list of possible options or write the correct word or word form in the gap.

The feedback message includes the users score for the exercises, the vocabulary definitions requested, explanations (contextual, vocabulary and grammar) for all the answer, correct and incorrect and extra study material that relates to the errors and the user might find useful. Also there is the script of the dialogue accompanied with the audio and the user can again choose the vocabulary he/she wants explained, this time including the dialogue (GymGlish (1.0)).

#### *4.7.3 Subscriptions, Prices and Free Material*

The user can try the lessons for 7 days before deciding to subscribe or not (Gymglish). Total number of free lessons is 10 (GymGlish (1.0)). Then the user can choose between the *GymGlish* (basic) and *GymGlish* Premium subscriptions. The premium subscription offers more personalized lessons and services. For the basic subscription the price is €29 per month if the individual chooses to pay as he goes. For 6 months (up to 120 lessons) the price is €20 per month and for 12 months (up to 240 lessons) €15per month. In the Premium subscription 6 months cost €40 per month and 12 months cost €30per month The “pay as you go” subscription automatically renews itself but the longer subscriptions have to be renewed by the user (“Gymglish shop”).

The company also offers subscriptions for businesses, universities as well as for language schools and teachers/tutors for blended learning (one-on-one, by phone, group lessons etc., combined with *GymGlish* lessons) (Gymglish).

#### *4.7.4 The App’s Reception and Comments*

The *GymGlish* app has been downloaded between 5000 to 10.000 times in the last 30 days (27 Feb. 2013) and receives 4.7 out of 5 stars. All users’ comments are very positive (“English Lesson – Gymglish”). It is worth noting that although the app’s download rate is not very high in the *Google play store* the individuals using the platform are over a million and *GymGlish* has more than 4500 client companies and are partners with 30 universities (Gymglish).

My experience with this app was very good. It is very easy to navigate and each lesson automatically appears within it as well as the correction feedback. The course is interesting and funny, I did actually laugh at some of the jokes in the exercises. And it gives a good practice in reading comprehension, listening comprehension (with various accents), good

vocabulary explanations and grammar practices followed by detailed explanations. The exercise setup is similar to what the other applications offer: multiple-choice questions, gap filling by choosing from a list of options and write in the gap the correct word or word form.

What I particularly like is that I can choose the words from the texts I want to know the meaning of as well as the very detailed and good feedback I receive after each lesson. However, what this course lacks are writing and speaking practices. All in all, although this course might be slightly more expensive than the other courses I have looked at it is fully worth that extra cost because the app works flawlessly and is well designed, and the study materials are of high quality, and the course is both motivating and fun.

#### **4.8 Other Applications**

As mentioned in chapter 3, I found a great variety of applications intended for English learners. The larger part of these apps was mainly focused on one skill. I found many speaking/pronunciation apps like *Think English* (1) and *World Wide English* (2) which are sophisticated Australian English pronunciation app from NSW AMES, *SpeakingPal English Tutor* (3) from SpeakingPal, *Speak English* (4) from APPJUUNGS GmbH & Co. KG and *English – SPEAKit!* (5) from SPEAKit and *Sounds: Pronunciation App Free* (6) from Macmillan Publishers Ltd.

There were also great many applications that focused on listening skills. These apps were usually podcasts such as *LearnEnglish Podcasts* (7) from the British Council and *EnglishPodcast for Learners* (8) from tidahouse and *ESL Daily English (podcast)* (9) from IMAPP.

There were not many apps I found that focused particularly on reading. One example is *Read4English Learn English* (10) from Brainglass. And I found no app that offered practice in writing English only apps that offered guidelines on how to write or prepare for IELTS exams such as *IELTS Skills – Free* (11) from Macmillan Publishers Ltd. This app actually offers practice in all four skills (writing, reading, listening and speaking) but as it focuses on teaching how to take IELTS exams and not on teaching the language itself I did not include it in my complete course application review.

Finally, the apps that were easiest to find were those that focused on teaching vocabulary like *MyWordBook 2* (12) from the British Council and *Basic English (Phone)* (13) from Hello-Hello and *Learn English with babbel.com* from babbel.com. Although the Babbel app only teaches vocabulary the website offers complete language courses. I however decided

not to include this app in my research because I set the focus on apps that teach complete language courses and this app does not meet that criterion.

A large part of the English learning apps available at *Google Play* were developed by individuals and those apps tended to be of a lower quality than apps developed by institutions or companies. Some of the apps that claimed to teach full language courses I chose not to write about because they either offered too little learning material, they were of a poor quality or they were badly designed and difficult to navigate. Apps that fall into that category are for example *English in a Month Free* (14) from Learn Like Kids and *Learn English: Berlitz* (15) from Avanquest and *50 languages* (16) from 50 languages. And then the before mentioned *IELTS Skills – Free app* (11) that seemed to be focused on exam taking skills more than teaching the language itself.

In this chapter I have reviewed in detail seven apps that teach English and listed others that might be of interest to the reader. In next chapter I discuss further and compare the seven apps.

## 5 Discussion

### 5.1 Theory and Methodology of Apps

Second language learning theory does not seem to be of great importance to app developers. Most of the apps' websites did not mention any particular theory the app was built on but more commonly the developers described the methodology they applied. The only exceptions were *Voxy* which base their approach on Contextual Language Theory which is not a mainstream SLA theory (Arnbjörnsdóttir, Personal communication) and *Hello-Hello* that was designed on the base of the Notional-Functional Approach. This shows the lack of importance the tutorial software developers put on second language learning theory. We can, however, not rule out the possibility that they did base the courses on some SLA theory but decided not to mention it which again suggests that theory does not play a big role in those apps development. Another reason for this could also be that the developers do not think the users are interested or feel that it is relevant to know and to read about theories and are perhaps more open to the methodology.

Not all the app developers give information about the methodology they use. *Voxy* and *GymGlish* put great emphasis on their methodology which is very similar. That is to use technology to give personalized study material, feedback and progress reports and distributed practice. There is however fundamental difference between the study materials they use. *GymGlish* has created a story that the user follows while *Voxy* uses authentic materials such as the daily news and contemporary music. *Hello-Hello's* methodology is language immersion with gradually increasing dialogue difficulty level. Similarly *Wlingua* uses gradual language exposure as well as spaced repetition and listening assimilation. *Busuu's* methodology is to try to make language learning less boring by dressing it in a sound and image based game that is combined with social networking. The *Learn English* developers claim to teach English in a structured way ("Learn English") but leave out all information about their methodology. The material was however originally designed for immigrants in the UK (Hakimi, 19 Feb.). Finally, *eTeacher* does not mention any particular methodology which does not come as a surprise because the app is essentially a drill-and-practice software that only offers exercises and tests and would then be categorised as behaviourist.

As the various theories and methodologies used show, the apps offer variety of different ways to learn English. Generally the developers make an effort to convince the user that their method will work or their language course will make learning English easier or more fun. For example *GymGlish* and *Voxy* spend much space on their website outlining why



their method works and *Voxy* even uses a case study that the company itself conducted at the Miami-Dade College to try and prove that their method does work as they say (“Método comprobado”). *Busuu* tries to appeal to the users that are bored with traditional language learning by implying that their course is fun, easy and inexpensive (“About busuu.com”). The *Learn English* developers claim that their app is “one of the most extensive language learning courses available on mobile phones” on the market (“Learn English”) and *Wlingua* underline that their course provides an easy and frustration free method to language learning that guides the learner towards better knowledge in the English language (“Curso Completo”). *Hello-Hello* say their course is fun and perfect for learning on the go but also emphasise that their course was developed in collaboration with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and assure the user that because of that their “lessons follow an effective research-based methodology” (“English Hello-Hello”). And finally the developer of *eTeacher* makes no special effort to convince the user of how fun or effective their software is but on their website they mention that it is an award winning software in Poland (“About us and contact”)

Naturally the developers try to show their apps, approaches and methods in a good and positive light to give them credibility and draw attention to their product. But at the end of the day their main aim is to sell their product and dry theory and too much talk about methodology might drive some users away. The developers are generally trying to reach users by claiming to be fun and easy, as if they can miraculously make language learning an easy and effortless task and only the developers of *Hello-Hello* stress that their course is based on sound and research based theory. The “fun and easy” approach is perhaps the best way today to reach users and might draw in users that are tired of the traditional classroom way of learning languages and lack motivation to keep on with their language studies. But there is always the question of whether the courses can fulfil that promise and keep the user interested and motivated. In the next section I will further discuss motivation as well as feedback.

## **5.2 Motivation and Feedback**

To keep the language learner motivated can be difficult and to give the learner a meaningful and intelligent feedback is a problematic area within CALL (Felix cited in Arnbjörnsdóttir “Teaching morphologically complex languages online” 81). These issues are dealt with in various ways in the apps. *Voxy* and *GymGlish* have taken the most innovative and technology advanced road to their goal. Both apps use advanced technology to provide the user with

learning material that both suits the user's level as well as his/her interests. The user can then follow his/her progress in a personalized report and the app provides the user with personal advices built on previous progress/lesson history. This feedback helps the user see where he/she stands and what he/she needs to work on and moreover can help motivate the user to keep on studying. The personalized feedback that *GymGlish* offers the user is very well prepared and detailed with explanations on errors and correct answers as well as additional reading material that might be helpful for the user. *GymGlish* is the only app that provides the user with a "systematic intelligent and meaningful feedback" (Felix qtd. in Arnbjörnsdóttir "Teaching morphologically complex languages online" 81) which is possible because the user submits his/her answers to the *GymGlish* intelligent engine (online) which processes the answers (all pre-programmed) and then sends back the feedback. *Hello-Hello* and *Learn English* offer no feedback except for right and wrong and have not incorporated any particular motivational aspects into the apps. On the *Hello-Hello* website the material and exercises are combined with social networking which can both be motivational and provide feedback but that is completely lacking from the app. The *eTeacher* app grades the user as well as using noises, cheering and boos when the user answers which does not do much more than to annoy the user. Luckily this function can be turned off. *Wlingua* also grades the user for each lesson as well as providing progress report, study reminders and diplomas. The user does not get any personalized feedback but is rewarded of his/her good work with motivational stars that add extra free hours to the premium account. Likewise on the *Busuu* app the learner can earn busuu berries for a work well done but unlike *Wlingua* these berries do not give any extra hours but function in a way as money and status sign within the social networking community. Gaming combined with social networking forms a very little part of the app itself that essentially is a downloaded app, but it does sync with the website so the motivation to do the exercises to earn berries and let the language garden grow (a type of visual progress report) is still there. The personal feedback on the app is however limited to right or wrong.

The lack of informative and useful feedback in the apps is due to the technological restraints of only being able to process pre-programmed input and give pre-programmed output. Interestingly the web-based apps fare better than the downloaded apps both in motivation and feedback. Those apps offer study reminders, progress reports and two of them give personal advice and personalized material. The motivational aspect and feedback is however, to a great extent, lacking from the downloaded apps. This difference can be explained partly by the fact that the web-based apps can store infinite amount of information online while the web-based apps have to limit their size. I look in more detail at the pros and

cons of web-bases and downloaded apps in section 5.6.1. In next section we will look at the study material the apps offer and the exercises in particular which is another aspect of the apps where the technology puts great constraints on the developers.

### 5.3 Course Material and Exercises

The courses offer very varied study materials. There are the out of context vocabulary and grammar drill-and-practice exercises and tests (*eTeacher*), study material that is organized by linguistic issues into proficiency levels with little contextual binding (*Wlingua*), study material that covers different day-to-day topics (*Busuu*, *Learn English*), study material that is designed to mimic real life situations and conversations (*Hello-Hello*), study material made from authentic contemporary news and music (*Voxy*) and finally study materials designed to recreate real life situations but within a fictional world and with a story line (*GymGlish*).

Despite the different materials the language courses build on the exercises they offer are generally very much alike. The reasons for this similarity are the limitations the technology poses on the developers. The exercises may be presented in different ways within each course but they are essentially always one of the three following types:

- Multiple-choice questions.
- Drag and drop:
  - Build a sentence from a word scramble,
  - Pairing,
  - Word ordering.
- Fill in the blanks.

This is in line with the type of answers Meskill said computers could respond to, that is multiple-choice and fill in the blanks. I have added the drag and drop category which in a way could also be considered as either multiple choice or fill in blanks. This means that the computers/software still have to rely on a pre-programmed list of possible answers and cannot judge anything unexpected beyond that list. Writing, vocabulary, grammar, and listening and reading comprehension exercises are therefore generally of that pre-programmed type.

*Busuu* and *Hello-Hello* have made an effort to break out of these limitations by adding exercises that are sent to a community of users for feedback. This function is available on the *Busuu* app in the form of writing exercises. *Hello-Hello* is planning on adding writing and speaking exercises for community submission but as for now that is only available on the

website. This method does, however, not guarantee a well prepared or helpful feedback or, for that matter, a feedback at all.

Pronunciation exercises are included in several of the apps. The *Hello-Hello* app requires the user to repeat a sentence according to an example pronounced by a native speaker while *Voxy*, *Wlingua* and *Learn English* use recording technology to allow the user to compare his/her pronunciation to a native pronunciation. *Voxy* is the only app that gives feedback on the pronunciation effort of the user by incorporating voice recognition technology into the app. This function is, however, very limited. The feedback given is restricted to what the software registered the user saying (the word you said sounded like “shopping”) without any further explanations or advises for betterment. Moreover, the app crashed constantly when using the voice recognition function. This shows that the developers have not moved beyond the use of basic technology (recording) if they use it at all with the one exception of *Voxy* that incorporates voice recognition function but with limited success. There are however specialized speaking/pronunciation apps available at *Google Play* worth looking at, some of which I listed in chapter 4. I have not investigated those apps in any detail but they might use some more advanced technology or other methods to teach pronunciation than the language course apps.

Flashcards are the general way the courses use for memorizing vocabulary and the only app that does not include that function is *GymGlish*. The flashcards usually come with images of the term in question and a pronunciation. *Voxy* also gives the meaning of few selected words within the texts. But *GymGlish* takes it further and offers the user to select which ever word or words in the text and receive a definition with the feedback that is sent to the app directly after finishing and submitting each lesson.

All apps include texts for the user to read which are usually short or around two to ten sentences and often accompanied by audio. The listening practices are of similar length and in most cases come with script for the user to follow.

In retrospect the apps mostly use traditional CALL technology for the presentation of the material and the creation of the exercises. The apps functions are limited to the fact that the technology is not capable of processing or fully understanding natural language (be it written or spoken) and therefore unable to give improvised feedback or respond to unexpected input. The technology the developers of these apps use is generally not more advanced than what Meskill listed in her table of what computers can and can't in 2002 (see table in chapter 2) and despite the advances in technology there seems to be a standstill at the basic technological level of language tutorial software development. One of the main difficulties the

developers face is to include the social aspects and real/real-like communication in their courses. This is the subject of next section.

#### **5.4 CALL and the Communicative Aspect of Language**

The communicative aspect of language is perhaps the most difficult to incorporate into language learning software. This is because of the limits of current technology to respond to spontaneous and meaningful communication. As we saw in chapter 2, computers and software have not yet reached the state of “intelligence” to be able to process unexpected input or give anything other than pre-programmed feedback (Beatty; Meskill). Because of that natural communication exercises that are not built on limited input and output options are mostly lacking from the apps.

Some of the app developer, as mentioned in previous section, have incorporated social networking to their courses in order to work around the technological limitations. This way the developers can incorporate into their courses the social and cultural aspects of the language in a natural manner with the exposure to real language and communication with native speaker. The users can engage in conversations with other members of the community and receive improvised feedback which the computer/software is incapable of providing.

*Busuu*, *Hello-Hello* and *Wlingua* all give users the opportunity to connect to other users but that function is only available on the website and not on the app. All actions like receiving feedback for exercises (*Busuu* and *Hello-Hello*) and the chat (written/audio/video), friend search etc. has to be done on the website except for the written exercises on the *Busuu* app that can be sent directly from the app to the community for revision. *Wlingua* offers the social function on its website but the social networking is not particularly encouraged or incorporated into the course program while *Busuu* takes the social networking furthest of the three developers by combining it with a game.

To combine social networking with the languages courses is a clever way to incorporate the communicative aspect to the otherwise limited practice in communication. It can provide good exercise in using the language both written and spoken and if the users make use of the video chat the physical aspects such as face expressions and body language are also included in the practice. The exercises that are to be sent to the community for feedback bring up the question of whether that feedback (given someone will review the exercise) will be good and will help the user improve. None the less, despite the possible low

quality feedback the social networking function might prove to be of great help with learning and also motivating for the user.

Although the social networking function is presently mostly lacking from the apps the technology is already available and used by social networking sites such as Facebook. Already three of the seven apps have these functions incorporated in their websites and therefore it's perhaps only a question of time before more language learning apps' developers realize the potentials that social networking gives to help break out of the pre-programmed frame of teaching. In next section I will look at where the seven apps can be placed as according to the behaviourist and constructivist language teaching models.

## **5.5 Behaviourist or Constructivist**

Beatty wrote about a continuum between behaviourism and constructivism and says that although not all CALL software incorporates all the behaviourist characteristics he identifies (see chapter 2) most features of these software can be placed closer to the behaviourist end of the continuum and then they stretch towards the constructivist end (98).

This is true for the seven apps I have reviewed in this essay. Most of their features are behaviourist such as the learner is expected to bring little or no background knowledge to the learning progress which is true of all these apps because the user does not need to add anything to the material only process the material that the app offers. All the apps break the study material into "instructional steps and rules" which then are "sequenced from simple to complex" (98) and some such as *Wlingua* with spaced repetition, *Busuu* under the "my mistakes" tab and *GymGlish* with personal feedback and advises also incorporate "frequent reviews and test of key points" (98). Beatty also mentions that "the control of the sequence or program is usually with the program, not the learner" (98). This is partly true for the apps which give the user limited control over how the course is structured or in which order the user studies the different lessons but beyond that the programs mostly control the progress. *GymGlish* and *Voxy* give the users most control over the study material but still the user has little or no control within each lesson.

Further, most of the apps also incorporate other aspects of behaviourist CALL that Beatty mentions, that is "stating the purpose of the program or task, offering reinforcement through text, images, audio, animations and/or video and providing a marks system for each task summarized at the end with grades or some other statement of progress" (93). Usually the lessons are organized and titled according to the study topic in question and all the apps use

some kind of audio/visual support. Some of the apps grade the user (*Wlingua*, *eTeacher*, *GymGlish*, *Voxy*) while others give some other kind of progress feedback.

This shows that the English language course apps are predominantly behaviouristic in nature. However, some developers do try to add more constructivist features such as collaboration to the courses in the form of social networking as discussed in previous section, but these efforts are limited. And even though the *Hello-Hello* app is focused on teaching communication in authentic settings, the app is constructed in a behaviourist way with practice limited to pre-programmed exercises like all the other apps.

The constructivist learning model asks the learner to solve problems and build their own reality and meaning from different sources and can make collaboration and the negotiation of meaning easier (Beatty). The technology alone is not capable of fulfilling these criteria because it cannot process unexpected input or give other than pre-programmed output. But the many online tools that are available now are promising and could help to move the language learning software more towards collaboration and negotiation of meaning and that way make the language learning experience more varied and authentic. The apps' developers are beginning to experiment with these new options (social networking) but there are still many possibilities and options waiting to be tried by innovative developers such as forums, blogs, wikis and more that might be incorporated into the courses. But as long as the technology is limited to pre-programmed input and output we can expect the apps to be predominantly behaviourist.

In the next section we move away from the language learning issues and the courses' construction and look at the other factors that might influence the users' choice of app.

## **5.6 Factors That Influence the Users' Choice of App**

### *5.6.1 Web-based vs. Downloaded*

Both web-based and downloaded applications have their positive and negative sides. The web-based apps take up less memory space on the smartphone and can offer much more study material because everything is stored on the Internet. The downside is however that the app requires a constant Internet connection that greatly limits the possibility to practice wherever, whenever unless the user chooses to use 3G which can result in high costs.

When it comes to the downloaded apps the pros and cons are reversed. These apps tend to take up much memory space on the devices and consequently the study material they

offer needs to be limited. On the other hand the user can practice whenever and wherever he/she pleases without worrying about connection or possible extra costs.

*Busuu* (161 lessons), *Hello-Hello* (30 lessons), *Learn English* (11 topics) and *eTeacher* (432 exercises) are all downloaded apps and they all offer limited number of lessons. What these apps have also in common is that they teach grammar implicitly and offer little or no feedback so they do not need to take up memory space for extra explanations.

*Wlingua*, although an online app, has limited lessons (600) but they are much greater in number than the lessons the downloadable apps offer. Moreover, the app offers much extra tutorial material such as on grammar and phonology/pronunciation. The other two web-based apps, *Voxy* and *GymGlish* are what we could call organic. They have unlimited number of lessons that adjust to the users level of proficiency. *GymGlish* like *Wlingua* offers grammar lessons which in case of *GymGlish* are designed by the intelligent engine according to the user's level and needs but the grammar lessons in *Wlingua* follow pre-organised lesson sequences. *Voxy* on the other hand does not offer any grammar lessons.

When it comes to choosing between a web-based or a downloaded app the user's needs and preferences play a big role. For a user that will be using the app on the go and is concerned about costs it might be better to have a downloaded app but at the same time this user will receive less study material. On the other hand, users that own devices with little memory space might opt for the web-based apps as well as users that want more study material and better feedback (only *GymGlish*).

There are many other factors that can influence the users' choice of app such as translation languages, language proficiency levels and apps popularity which we will look at in the following sections.

### 5.6.2 Translation Languages

Curiously all the downloaded apps also offer their courses in many different languages despite their need to limit their size. The web-based apps on the other hand are focused on only one translation language like *Voxy* and *Wlingua* which are for Spanish speakers or like *GymGlish* which comes only in English with no translation options.

The translation languages the downloaded apps offer are generally for the larger language communities such as Spanish, French, German and Chinese. *eTeacher* and *Busuu* offer twelve different translation languages, *Hello-Hello* eight and *Learn English* offers eighteen and is the only one to offer a translation to a Nordic language (Danish). This way the



developers can sell their apps to much greater number of people all around the globe while *Voxy* and *Wlingua* are limited to the Spanish speaking world. *GymGlish* can be used by people in all language communities but because there are no translations available the user needs to have some previous knowledge of the language in order to make use of the study material. This brings us to the proficiency levels each app teaches which we will look at in the following section.

### 5.6.3 Apps and Language Proficiency Levels

The language proficiency levels taught varies from app to app but most are focused on the lowest levels. *eTeacher* and *Voxy* are the only two that offer material on all levels from A1-C2. According to the *Wlingua* developers they will soon be offering their course on all levels as well but at present they offer their course on levels A1-B2 (“FAQs”). *Busuu* also offers levels A1-B2 but *Hello-Hello* and *Learn English* are for levels A1-A2. *GymGlish* is the only app that is not suitable for complete beginners and the user needs to be at least at A2 level to make use of the study material (Breuza).

Of the seven apps, only one is not for the complete beginners and only three are offered at the highest levels. When I was searching for apps I noticed that this seemed to be the general pattern that most developers offer apps at the lowest levels to intermediate levels while it can be difficult to find apps that offer material for the advanced levels. Why that is could possibly be explained by more demand for tutorial software at beginners’ levels than at the advanced levels. Just as in other activities such as studies or sports that require effort and constancy there are more that begin than reach the end and continue. More advanced learners can also use other methods of learning such as social networking and discussion forums which are activities beyond the complete beginner’s ability and therefore the demand for tutorial software at advanced levels is probably less than for the beginners’ levels. Next I look at the apps’ popularity

### 5.6.4 Popularity

There are many factors that can influence an app’s popularity other than the courses they teach such as visibility within the *Google Play* store, amount of free material, app’s quality (not including the study material) as well as the above discussed platforms, translation languages and the proficiency levels they teach.

Of the seven apps I have looked at in this essay *Busuu* seems to be the most popular followed by *Wlingua*. The download numbers are however both very imprecise, especially when the number of downloads grows, and changing from day to day. None the less they can give an idea of the popularity that each app enjoys. Perhaps the best evidence of *Busuu*'s much greater popularity over the other apps is its visibility on *Google Play*. As discussed in chapter 3 the search engine algorithms rank first apps that include the keyword in its title which explains why most of the apps include "learn English" or some other keywords in their title. Ranked second is how often the keyword is found in the apps description and in third rank comes the apps popularity, which is how often it has been downloaded minus how often it has been uninstalled (Fiksu, 2012). When searching for English language tutorial apps on *Google Play* the *Busuu* app is almost always among the top ten results while *Wlingua* and the other apps are ranked much lower by the search engine despite including the right keywords in the title and description. This suggests that the *Busuu* app's popularity (download rate) has great influence on search results. This advantage *Busuu* enjoys surely influences the app's popularity because the more visible the apps are the more likely they are to be downloaded which puts the other apps at a disadvantage. The app's huge online community of some 25 million users also support the app's popularity and is a great advantage over the apps that do not connect to a website. In general, apps that enjoy much popularity are sure to attract many users just because of their popularity but it is important to keep in mind that the download rate does not say how many actually use the app they downloaded.

Users' comments and rating can also influence the app's popularity and the user's choice of app. Most comments the seven apps receive are positive which then again is reflected in the rating which is usually high. The only exception was the *Hello-Hello* app which only received 3.1 of possible 5 while all the other apps were well above 4. The negative comments the apps received were however almost never related to the study material or the courses but most often touched upon technical issues or the fact that the apps were only partly free. Even apps that offered quite a lot of free material such as *Busuu* and *Voxy* received their share of negative comments because the apps were not completely free. Many users were in fact offended by the marketing technique to lure in users by listing the apps as free on *Google Play*. This was especially true for the *Hello-Hello* app that only offers one free lesson which then had this effect on the app's rating (as well as some technical complaints). This suggests that the amount of free material each app offers can have great influence on the app's popularity irrelevant of the quality of the course itself.

Lastly the app's quality can influence the user. The first impression of an app is important therefore the app needs to be well designed visually and functionally as well as to present the study material in an appealing and accessible way so the user does not simply uninstall the app. All the seven apps I have discussed are easy to navigate and function mostly well although some have minor technical flaws (*Voxy* and *Busuu*) and the study material is well organized.

These factors discussed in this section, varied as they are, all influence the user's choice of app and are extremely important because they have impact on the user before the study material. That is if these factors are not to the user's satisfaction he/she might simply dismiss an app which study material is in fact very good and perhaps choose a lesser quality course that has been marketed and presented better. Because of that I stress the importance and need for a good and extensive research on the many English language tutorial apps available that investigates the quality of the study material, the apps' (or/and platforms') effectiveness as well as the general quality of the apps (software). Research of this kind could help both autonomous learners as well as teachers in search of supplement study material for their students find quality apps without having to go through all the time consuming trouble of searching and trying out apps. This essay is a step in that direction by giving a glimpse into the world of mobile applications that teach English. In the next section I list the apps that in my opinion provide the best practice of the seven apps I reviewed.

## **5.7 Best Practice**

The choice of app that provides the best practice will surely be different from user to user. Ultimately, which app is chosen depends on what the user is looking for and what he/she is hoping to gain by the course. After trying out these seven apps and investigating how they function, what they offer and their limitations (without placing any judgment on the quality of the study material itself) there are three courses that in my opinion stand out.

### **5.7.1 Wlingua**

This language course is conventional and teaches the peculiarities of the English language system with little emphasis on communication skills. It offers a great variety of exercises and study material. It explicitly teaches grammar and phonology as well as to offer both American and British pronunciation. This is an extensive course and well organized that uses techniques

such as gradual exposure to the language and spaced repetition. The motivational tools, study reminders, progress reports, grading and diplomas are also good.

This course has, however its drawbacks, and that is lack of feedback, limited connection of study material to the day-to-day life and situations. Moreover, the course is designed for Spanish speakers only. The positive aspects of the course however greatly outweigh the negative.

### 5.7.2 *Hello-Hello*

This language course is rather small and offers only 30 lessons. The focus is on teaching conversational skills for everyday situations with a mixture of listening, reading, speaking and writing exercises. Although the exercises are few and the use of recording technology has not been incorporated into the app's pronunciation exercises the course is very practical and perhaps the course that incorporates most constructivist elements of the seven I reviewed. The online social-networking exercises will hopefully be added to the app soon which will then only add to the users' possibilities to practice real communication. This app does not require an Internet connection so it can be used wherever, whenever and is inexpensive.

### 5.7.3 *GymGlish*

This app/e-mail course is by far the best course in my opinion. The technology used is more advanced than in the other courses and can offer the user a very personalized study material built on the users own preferences. The study material also keeps the user interested because it has a storyline and both the story and the exercises are filled with humour and jokes. What stands out the most is the detailed feedback and personal advises and the follow up on previously made errors at the beginning of each new lesson. *GymGlish* also sends study reminders and keeps an online personal progress report. The downside of this course is the lack of speaking and writing (other than spelling) exercises but everything else is very sophisticated. This course is the most expensive of the seven I have looked at but the advantages are such that for a person looking to improve his/her English I would recommend this course.

## 5.8 Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the various aspects of the seven language learning apps described in chapter 4 and compared them as to find out their main differences and similarities. This investigation has shown that there is little focus on SLA theory and more on methodology. The approaches, methodologies, study material and platforms the developers use varies tremendously yet the apps are all bound by the same technological limitations. The developers use various ways to try work around those constraints such as *GymGlish* and *Voxy* with the personalized study material and *GymGlish* with personalized feedback but the exercises and feedback always build on the same principles of pre-programmed input and output. Other roads out of technological restraint are also taken by *Hello-Hello* and *Busuu* and to a lesser extent by *Wlingua* by incorporating social networking to their courses in order to give the users the chance to practice their communicational skills. This function is however still mostly confined to the courses' websites. Because of the constraints technology poses on language tutorial software the apps present many aspects of behaviourist CALL.

Apart from the language courses and study material there are other factors that influence the users' choice of app. These factors influence the user before the study material and can cause the users to dismiss good courses and choose courses of a lower quality instead. Because how difficult and time consuming it can be to find quality apps a good research on what is available out there is needed to help guide both autonomous learners and teachers to find suitable and high quality English language tutoring apps. Lastly I identified three apps that in my opinion stand out. Those are: *Wlingua*, *Hello-Hello* and *Gymglish*.

## 6 Conclusion

The developers of English language course apps use various approaches and methodologies which all are supposed to guarantee a fun and easy learning process with equally various study material with emphasis on different aspects of language learning. Even though some of the developers use advanced technology, the basic structure of all the apps is bound by the same technological limitations of pre-programmed software which then puts them all at the behaviourist side of the pedagogy continuum between behaviourism and constructivism.

Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is a new field of study within CALL and the growing app development is an area that offers many possibilities for investigation. This essay has focused on English language courses for adults that are available at *Google Play store*. To search the store can be difficult and time consuming when looking for a particular kind of app and the visibility and popularity can greatly influence which app the user chooses.

Most of the developers presented their apps as an easy and fun way to learn languages and offered various approaches and methods although there was not much emphasis on SLA theory. The language courses also offered very varied study material such as every-day-life topics, real news, fictional story and a conversation course built on every-day-life situations. Motivational aspects were incorporated into almost all courses but feedback was usually very limited. All apps used the same pre-programmed technology for the exercises because of the computers incapability to understand unexpected input or respond with an unprepared output. The apps generally gave a very limited practice in speaking and writing. The websites that include social networking manage to include communication but that is not available on the apps. Because of the technological limitations the language courses are predominantly behaviourist because that model of teaching works well with the computer's binary function.

The downloaded apps usually offered many translation languages, limited lessons and lower proficiency levels while the web-based apps were intended for only one language community or only offered in English and offered much greater number of lessons and higher proficiency levels. Apps popularity seemed to be more connected to the platform and visibility on *Google Play* than the study material.

This study offers a glimpse into the world of English language learning mobile applications and throws a light on where the language course apps stand in terms of technology and pedagogy. The number of English language learning apps on *Google Play* is incredible and growing. Online language learning websites are recognizing the potentials of mobile learning by creating apps that connect with their websites, language tutorial software

developers are making their software available for the mobile platform and even individuals are creating language tutoring apps. The technology moves fast and smartphones are becoming more powerful every day. The field of Mobile Assisted Language Learning is an important one to follow because we are heading for a mobile future.

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## Appendix 1

### Additional applications in chapter 4

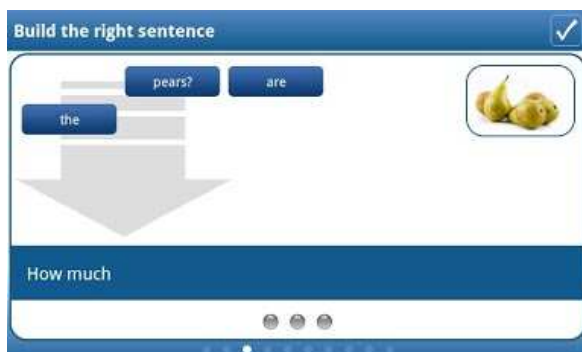
1. <[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ames.cswe&feature=search\\_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5hbWVzLmNzd2UiXQ..>](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ames.cswe&feature=search_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5hbWVzLmNzd2UiXQ..>)
2. <[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ames.worldwideenglish&feature=search\\_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5hbWVzLndvcmxkd2lkZWVuZ2xpc2giXQ..>](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ames.worldwideenglish&feature=search_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5hbWVzLndvcmxkd2lkZWVuZ2xpc2giXQ..>)
3. <[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.speakingpal.speechtrainer.sp&feature=search\\_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5zcGVha2luZ3BhbC5zcGVlY2h0cmFpbmVzLnNwIl0.>](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.speakingpal.speechtrainer.sp&feature=search_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5zcGVha2luZ3BhbC5zcGVlY2h0cmFpbmVzLnNwIl0.>)
4. <[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.appjungs.speak\\_english.android&feature=search\\_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5hcHBqdW5ncy5zcGVha2luZ3BhbC5zcGVlY2h0cmFpbmVzLnNwIl0.>](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.appjungs.speak_english.android&feature=search_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5hcHBqdW5ncy5zcGVha2luZ3BhbC5zcGVlY2h0cmFpbmVzLnNwIl0.>)
5. <[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=air.com.prolog.A5X001IAB&feature=search\\_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImFpci5jb20ucHJvbG9nLkE1WDAwMUIBQjJd>](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=air.com.prolog.A5X001IAB&feature=search_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImFpci5jb20ucHJvbG9nLkE1WDAwMUIBQjJd>)
6. <[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.macmillan.app.soundsfree&feature=search\\_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5tYWNTaWxsYW4uYXBwLnNvdW5kc2ZyZWUiXQ..>](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.macmillan.app.soundsfree&feature=search_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5tYWNTaWxsYW4uYXBwLnNvdW5kc2ZyZWUiXQ..>)
7. <[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=hk.hkbc.epodcast&feature=search\\_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImhrLmhrYmMuZXBvZGNhc3QiXQ..>](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=hk.hkbc.epodcast&feature=search_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImhrLmhrYmMuZXBvZGNhc3QiXQ..>)
8. <[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.tidahouse.englishpod&feature=search\\_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS50aWRhaG91c2UuZW5nbGlzaHBvZCJd>](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.tidahouse.englishpod&feature=search_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS50aWRhaG91c2UuZW5nbGlzaHBvZCJd>)
9. <[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.blogspot.imapp.imvoapod&feature=search\\_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5ibG9nc3BvdC5pbWFWcC5pbXZvYXBvZCJd>](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.blogspot.imapp.imvoapod&feature=search_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5ibG9nc3BvdC5pbWFWcC5pbXZvYXBvZCJd>)
10. <[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.vocab.android.bookshelf&feature=search\\_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsIm9yZy52b2NhYi5hbmRyb2lkLmJvb2tzaGVsZiJd>](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.vocab.android.bookshelf&feature=search_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsIm9yZy52b2NhYi5hbmRyb2lkLmJvb2tzaGVsZiJd>)
11. <[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.macmillan.ielts.skillsfree&feature=search\\_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5tYWNTaWxsYW4uaWVsdHMuc2tpbGxzZnJlZSJd>](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.macmillan.ielts.skillsfree&feature=search_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5tYWNTaWxsYW4uaWVsdHMuc2tpbGxzZnJlZSJd>)
12. <[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.imf&feature=search\\_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5pbWYiXQ..>](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.imf&feature=search_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5pbWYiXQ..>)
13. <[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.EnglishBasicAndroid&feature=search\\_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5FbmdsaXNoQmFzaWNBbmRyb2lkIl0.>](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.EnglishBasicAndroid&feature=search_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5FbmdsaXNoQmFzaWNBbmRyb2lkIl0.>)
14. <[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.babbel.mobile.android.en&feature=search\\_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5iYWJiZWwubW9iaWxlLmFuZHIjaWwQuZW4iXQ..>](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.babbel.mobile.android.en&feature=search_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5iYWJiZWwubW9iaWxlLmFuZHIjaWwQuZW4iXQ..>)

15. <[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.elky.likekids.enfree&feature=search\\_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5lbGt5Lmxpa2VraWRzLmVuZnJlZSJd](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.elky.likekids.enfree&feature=search_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5lbGt5Lmxpa2VraWRzLmVuZnJlZSJd)>
16. <[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.avanquest.berlitz.english.premium.inapp&feature=search\\_result](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.avanquest.berlitz.english.premium.inapp&feature=search_result)>
17. <[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.goethe.f50languages&feature=search\\_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5nb2V0aGUuZjUwbGFuZ3VhZ2VzIl0.>](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.goethe.f50languages&feature=search_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5nb2V0aGUuZjUwbGFuZ3VhZ2VzIl0.>)>

## Appendix 2

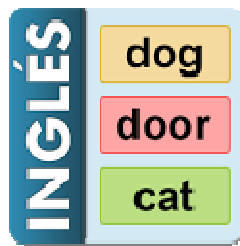
### Screenshots from applications<sup>2</sup>

#### Busuu



<sup>2</sup> All screenshots are copied from the developers' respective *Google Play* profiles

## Wlingua



En tu último acceso no terminaste todos los ejercicios de la lección

[continuar](#)

✓ **Lección 2.0**

**Presentarse a Uno Mismo** **8.8**

✓ **Lección 2.1**

**La Hora: Pregunta y Respuesta** **9.1**

✓ **Lección 2.2**

**There is & There Are** **5.9**

✓ **Lección 2.3**

**Nombres Contables e Incontables**

**Wlingua**

Lección 1.1: Artículos A, An y The

**dolphin** **violin**

**Italian** **umbrella**

**orange** **horse**

**girl** **rabbit**

**chica, niña, chavala, muchacha**

**The house**  
La casa

**The parrot**  
El loro

**The car**

Lección 1.1: Artículos A, An y The

**Escribe una de las formas del verbo TO BE (am, is, are) y completa la oración.**

1 The boys **are** boring.

2 Juan and Carlos **are** tall.

3 I **am** happy today.

4 The cars **are** cheap.

Lección 1.1: Artículos A, An y The

**Elige la forma correcta de las siguientes oraciones.**

1 **He is a teacher.**

2 He's an artist. **He is an artist.**

3 **They are Brazilian.**

4 **It is in New York.**

**A Day at College**

00:20 01:14

Hello all! My name is Jim. I'm the teacher.

Are you Spanish? Where are you from? How old are you? Tell me something about you personally.

Hello, I'm Tom. I'm from the USA. I'm 20 years old. I'm very happy to be in the class.

Hi! My name is Sandra. I'm from the UK. I'm 18. I'm a little nervous today. The class is difficult.

Good morning! I'm Julio. I'm from Spain. I'm 23 years old. I'm athletic. I'm married.

Greetings! I'm Rahman from UAE. I'm 22

**Read the text and decide if the sentences are true (T) or false (F).**

Lee el texto y decide si las frases son verdaderas (T) o falsas (F).

**F** Sandra is from Russia.

**F** Tom is the teacher.

**F** Tom is nervous about this class.

**T** **F** Rahman is 45 years old.

**T** **F** Tom is happy to be in the class.

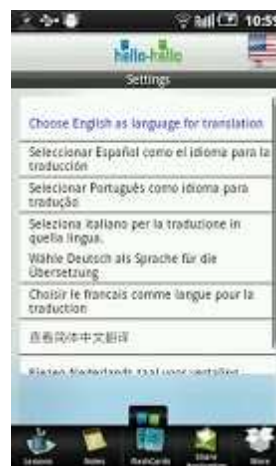
**Wlingua**

Lección 1.1: Artículos A, An y The

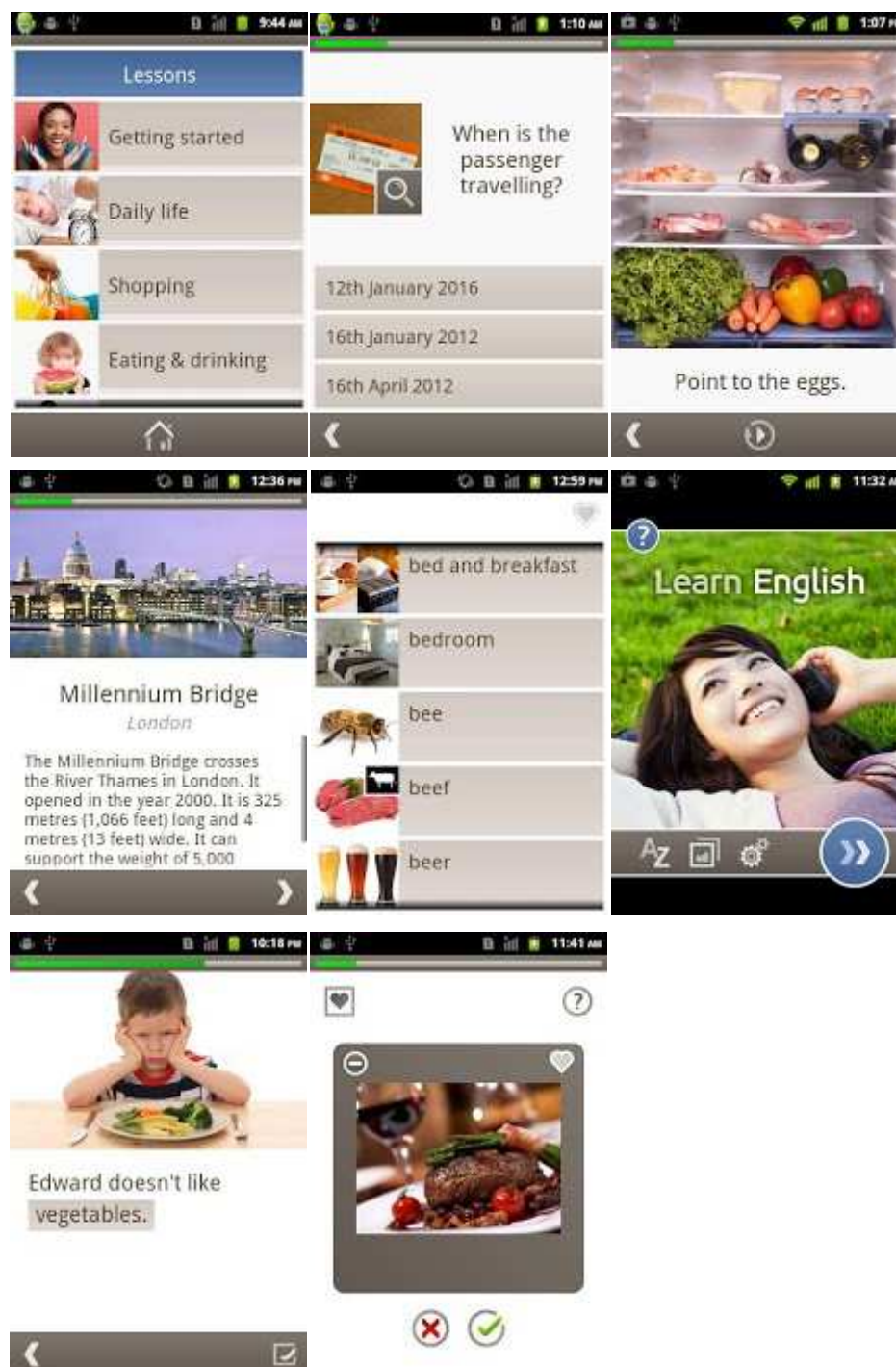
**¡Bien!**



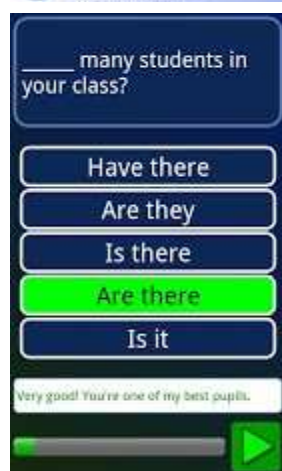
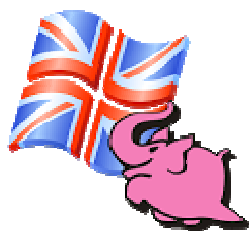
# Hello-Hello



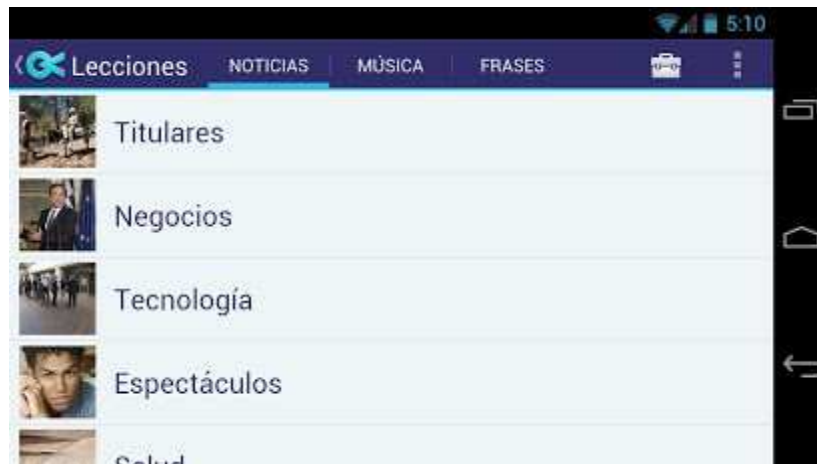
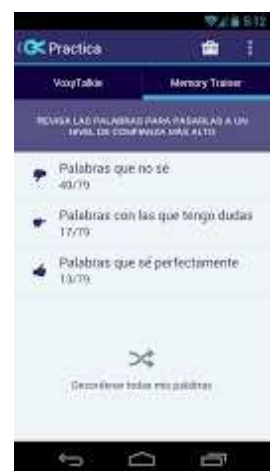
## Learn English



## eTeacher



Voxy







Brian Jones calls Krazy Gidyeon's Global Business Travel Bookings



I am unable to listen to the audio



Smiles And Airmiles

14 March 2013

Brian Jones replies to Bruno Delavigne regarding corporate travel solutions

Lesson	>
Correction	>
Vocabulary	>

Previous Lessons



Smiles And Airmiles

14 March 2013

Brian Jones replies to Bruno D



Smiles And Airmiles

13 March 2013

Brian Jones calls Krazy Gidyeo



Smiles And Airmiles

11 March 2013

Bruno Delavigne sends an e-mai



Corporate Investment Stra

06 March 2013

Icarus Quincy begins his finan



Corporate Investment Stra

05 March 2013

Icarus Quincy knocks on Bruno



STORY

Smiles And Airmiles (Scene 4 of 4)

Brian Jones replies to Bruno Delavigne regarding corporate travel solutions



From: Brian Jones  
(brian.jones@DelavigneCorp.com)  
To: Bruno Delavigne  
(bruno.delavigne@DelavigneCorp.com)  
Subject: RE: Corporate Travel

Good day sir,



COMMENTS

GIVE YOUR COMMENTS (IN ENGLISH OF COURSE!)

SEND YOUR ANSWERS

Your workout is finished Alexandru. Have a good one!

Click on the Send button to submit your answers and finish today's test.

## Appendix 3

### Overview tables<sup>3</sup>

Table 1:

	Developer	Theory	Methodology	Level	Motivation	Feedback
Learn English with Busuu!	Busuu Limited		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Game combined with social networking</li> <li>• Image and sound-based</li> <li>• Direct contact with native speakers</li> </ul>	A1-B2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Game combined with social networking</li> <li>• Language garden,</li> <li>• Busuu berries</li> <li>• Study reminders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correct/incorrect</li> <li>• Feedback from community for written exercises</li> </ul>
Curso Completo Inglés Wlingua	Wlingua		Combines various methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gradual exposure to the language</li> <li>• Spaced repetition</li> <li>• Listening assimilation</li> </ul>	A1-B2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect stars for free extra hours to the Premium account</li> <li>• Visually follow the progress</li> <li>• Grades for lessons</li> <li>• Diplomas</li> <li>• Study reminders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correct/incorrect</li> </ul>
English Hello-Hello (Phone)	Hello-Hello	Notional-Functional Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language immersion,</li> <li>• Incremental</li> <li>• Learner-centred</li> </ul>	A1/A2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social networking (only on website)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correct/incorrect</li> <li>• Feedback from community for written and spoken exercises (only on website)</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Information in tables is an overview of the information given in the essay except for the app size which is taken from the apps respective profile pages on *Google Play*.

	Developer	Theory	Methodology	Level	Motivation	Feedback
<b>Learn English</b>	Anspear		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Largely informed by the UK's <i>Adult Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Core Curriculum</i></li> </ul>	A1/A2 Originally designed for immigrants in the UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nothing particular</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correct/incorrect</li> </ul>
<b>eTeacher – Learn English</b>	Nahlik Soft		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only exercises</li> </ul>	Beginner, intermediate, advanced and proficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cheers, boos and comments after answering each question</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correct/incorrect</li> </ul>
Learn English - <b>Voxy</b>	Voxy	Contextual Language Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use technology to give learner personalized access to material, immediate feedback, and personal progress.</li> <li>Use real life material to create relevant exercises</li> <li>Distributed practice</li> </ul>	Suitable for all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study reminders</li> <li>Personal advices</li> <li>Personal progress report</li> <li>Reading material that interests the users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correct/incorrect</li> </ul>
English Lessons - <b>GymGlish</b>	GymGlish		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use technology to give learner personalized access to material, immediate feedback, and personal progress</li> <li>Study material with a storyline</li> <li>Distribute practice</li> </ul>	A2 (at least) – C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study reminders</li> <li>Personal advices</li> <li>Personal progress report</li> <li>Follow a story with humour and jokes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback with explanations both for correct and incorrect answers</li> <li>Additional reading material/explanations related to the errors</li> </ul>

Table 2:

	Vocabulary/ Phrases	Listening Comprehension	Reading Comprehension	Writing	Speaking	Grammar rules explained	Grammar exercises	Types of exercises
Learn English with <b>Busuu!</b>	Yes, flashcards with audiovisual support	Yes, short and with text	Yes, short and with audio	Yes, short sentences, sent to the community for feedback	Not within the app	No	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flashcards</li> <li>Multiple-choice questions</li> <li>Build a sentence from a word scramble</li> <li>Pairing</li> <li>Free writing</li> </ul>
Curso Completo Inglés <b>Wlingua</b>	Yes, flashcards with audio support and some with images	Yes, short/medium long with text	Yes, short/medium long with audio	Only the spelling of words and sentences	Yes, record pronunciation of a word and compare to a native pronunciation	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gap filling</li> <li>True or false</li> <li>Multiple-choice questions</li> <li>Pairing</li> <li>Build a sentence from a word scramble</li> </ul>
English <b>Hello-Hello</b> (Phone)	Yes, within text and in flashcards	Yes, day-to-day life dialogues	Yes, the same as the dialogue	Yes, write sentences from the dialogue	Yes, repeat sentences from the dialogue (no recording)	No	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flashcards</li> <li>Multiple-choice questions</li> <li>Write a particular sentence (gap filling)</li> </ul>



	Vocabulary/ Phrases	Listening Comprehension	Reading Comprehension	Writing	Speaking	Grammar rules explained	Grammar exercises	Types of exercises
<b>Learn English</b>	Yes, with image and sound support	Yes, short texts without script support	Yes, short texts	Only a little spelling	Little pronunciation with the possibility to record own voice and compare	No	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple-choice questions</li> <li>• Gap filling</li> <li>• Sentence building from word scramble</li> <li>• Word ordering</li> </ul>
<b>eTeacher – Learn English</b>	Yes, with image and sound support	Yes, short texts without script support	Only short sentences	Only a little spelling	No	No	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple-choice questions</li> <li>• Gap filling</li> <li>• Drag and drop</li> <li>• Pairing</li> </ul>
<b>Learn English -Voxy</b>	Yes, multiple-choice questions about meaning of a word from a text and flashcards	Yes, listen to songs with script	Yes, short news texts and lyrics	Only a little spelling (write a word or fill in letters)	Yes, record a word/phrase and compare and get feedback on what it sounded like	No	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple-choice questions</li> <li>• Gap filling</li> </ul>
<b>English Lessons - GymGlish</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple-choice question about meaning</li> <li>• Pair the words with synonyms and definitions</li> <li>• Word/phrase explanations</li> </ul>	Yes, with and without script	Yes short parts of the story	No	No	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple-choice questions</li> <li>• Gap filling</li> </ul>

Table 3:

	Price	Downloads the last 30 days between	Average Rating	Comments	App's size	Translation languages	Part of a website
Learn English with <b>Busuu!</b>	20 Free lessons Month €15.99 Year €69.99	1.000.000 - 5.000.000 (7 Feb. 2013)	4.5	Most positive Complaints: English-English Interface language problems App not free	16M	English, Spanish, French, Italian, German, Portuguese, Russian, Polish, Turkish, Arabic, Japanese, Chinese	Yes, synchronizes with a website but can stand alone No internet connection needed
Curso Completo Inglés <b>Wlingua</b>	One month free with Premium account, then changes to a Basic account with limited access to the material Mont € 9.97 Year €59.97	500.000 - 1.000.000 (11 Feb. 2013)	4.7	Most positive Complaints: Requires Internet connection	607K	Spanish	Yes, multiplatform Internet connection needed
English <b>Hello- Hello</b> (Phone)	1 lesson free. Each lesson \$1.99 All lessons \$14.99	10.000 - 50.000 (17 Feb. 2013)	3.1	Are few but most are negative. Complaints: App not free, does not work on the device, is too slow. Positive: helps improve accent	16M	English, Spanish, French, German, Italian, Chinese, Portuguese, Dutch	Yes, but can stand alone and does not sync with the website
<b>Learn English</b>	First 3 lessons free. £ 0.69 for the whole app (11 lessons)	10.000 - 50.000 (29 Mar. 2013)	4.4	All positive except for one comment about the app not being free.	45M	English, Greek, Hindi, Spanish, French, Korean, Tai, Polish, Russian, Portuguese, Italian, Chinese (2 dialects), Indonesian, Vietnamese, German, Danish, Japanese	No

	Price	Downloads the last 30 days between	Average Rating	Comments	App's size	Translation languages	Part of a website
<b>eTeacher</b> – Learn English	44 free exercises. Each level or topic costs £1.50 The whole app costs £16.39	10.000 – 50.000 (19 Feb. 2013)	4.3	Mostly positive	17M	English, Polish, French, German, Spanish, Arabic, Japanese, Hindi, Korean, Portuguese, Russian and Chinese.	No
Learn English <b>-Voxy</b>	5 lessons a week free + limited access to other resources Month \$9.99 Year \$80.04	100.000 – 500.000 (20 Feb. 2013)	4.7	Mostly positive Complaints: Not free, too many permissions, only for Spanish speakers, easy to accidentally pay for the app	4.2M	Spanish	Yes, multiplatform
English Lessons - <b>GymGlish</b>	10 free lessons Month €29 Year €180	5000 – 10.000 (27 Feb. 2013)	4.7	Only positive comments	Varies with devices On Samsung Galaxy SIII 1M	Only in English	Yes/No, All material is kept online but the user cannot sign into a specific website but accesses the material through an e-mail or the app

