Abstract

Business, products and/or services presentations in English are increasingly common in the globalization era. However, precisely those who are in dire need to learn how to perform them (executives and professionals in the business world, in general), are the group who lack sufficient time for the learning of this competency, especially in classroom-based teaching environments. Considering a possible solution for this problem, the authors of this work formulated the following hypothesis: would it be possible to build some computer system that can allow this group to learn autonomously and ubiquitously the knowledge needed to make effective presentations in English? To confirm or refute this hypothesis, the authors of this paper have built BusinessApp. BusinessApp is a mobile application (1) designed to help users create and perform effective professional and/or business presentations, and (2) developed on a solid pedagogical and linguistic basis. Its development has pursued a natural and interactive use, as well as including self-assessment activities which can be automatically corrected. All this, a priori, should enable not only distance, blended and ubiquitous learning, but also autonomous learning of its contents. This article presents some important details of construction of BusinessApp, such as the methodology applied in its development, and describes the methodology followed and the results obtained in a first assessment of this mobile app. This first assessment aimed at finding out its actual power to autonomously learn the theoretical contents associated to the creation and implementation of effective professional and/or business oral presentations in English. It also shows that the results obtained in this assessment confirm the research hypothesis stated, i.e., that learning autonomously the contents mentioned using a mobile app is possible.

Keywords

Lifelong learning, language teaching, oral expression, educational software, language for special purposes, autonomous learning (self-instruction).