

# TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES IN MOBILE LEARNING FOR THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF SMEs

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Multilingualism at work and language skills required for international trade are some of the main topics of recent European directives leading to important research by the European Commission (Cilt, 2006, Grin et al., 2009, PIMLICO, 2011), which focuses on the impact of foreign languages on job opportunities and international business relationships in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In promoting the application of ICT to language learning and training, they outline some good practices to support internationalization. Our proposal aims at describing the results of the research project “LSECON: foreign languages as tools to support the productive and economic system of Tuscany Region”, through which the research team implemented language courses for specific purposes on mobile devices, for Tuscan SMEs, based on the different needs of the local economy, to promote their internationalization. The potential users of our courses are entrepreneurs, with little time to dedicate to language learning; therefore we chose a mobile learning tool in order to allow for a learning process anywhere at any time (Mehdipour Zerehkafi, 2003, Crescente and Lee, 2011) and focused on a ludolinguistic approach, through which language skills for specific purposes were developed in a lighter and flexible way by using fun activities such as crosswords, crucipuzzles, dot-to-dot, mesostics, etc. Prototypes of teaching paths and learning materials were also developed which could be used to build future language and culture courses tailored to the users’ specific needs, retrieving authentic texts from a Textual Database that is organized by languages and fields and constantly updated. In particular, seven courses have been created for different CEFR levels and productive sectors of economy. Each prototype contributes to the development of language and cultural knowledge in order to provide a real support to businesspeople interested in expanding their business activities.

**Keywords:** Foreign Languages, Mobile Learning, Internationalization

### **Biographical Notes**

**Luisa Salvati** has a PhD in Linguistics – Theory of Languages and Speech (2012) and an MA in Intercultural Studies (2004). Since 2013 she has been the operative coordinator of scientific and teaching activities for the project FEI (European Funds for the Integration of third Countries citizens) “Rete e Cittadinanza 2013-2014” at the University for Foreigners of Siena; she is a member of the research group of Siena Italteltech – Tecnologie per lo sviluppo linguistico s.r.l. for the project “Framework of Italian language competence as an L1” (for Pearson Italia), designing a descriptive model of Italian language competence in order to develop a language test for native speakers. From 2012-2013 she was a research fellow at the University for Foreigners of Siena in the research project “LSECON – Foreign languages as tools to support the economic and productive system of Tuscany Region”.

**Chiara Buchetti** holds an MA in Chinese Language for Intercultural Communication. She works as professional translator and language and cultural mediator in companies, in schools and in the sanitary field. She is currently teaches Italian at the University for Foreigners of Siena.

**Luana Cosenza** is a PhD student in Linguistics and Teaching Italian as a Second Language at the University for Foreigners of Siena, where she graduated in Linguistics and Intercultural Communication, with a specialization in Arabic language and culture. Her research interests include Islamic civilization, Islamic history and historiography, Islamic law, Islamic theology, and teaching Arabic. From 2012-2013 she was a research fellow in the project “Foreign languages as a tool to support the economic and productive system of the Tuscany Region: LSECON”. She has worked as translator, linguistic and cultural mediator and taught Italian to foreigners, both in Italy and abroad.