

Teaching apps for the learning of languages through sports: Technology and sports in the English and Spanish as a L2/FL classroom

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a selection of teaching apps for the teaching and learning of both English and Spanish through sports. In the frame of a funded research project on Applied Linguistics to the teaching of modern languages through sports (Galindo Merino, 2016a), one of our aims is to apply ICT to this teaching approach (Botella Tejera et al., 2016; Sellés et al., 2016). Thus, 17 apps related to the teaching of languages through sports are explored. Specifically, we have selected different kinds of apps: language-based apps, language learning apps, three specific English through sports apps, and sport journals and TV channels apps. After presenting and analyzing them, we provide a wide range of activities to include them in the language classroom, in line with recent developments in task-based language teaching with technology.

Keywords: *English, Spanish, sports, technology, apps, ICT*

I. INTRODUCTION. TECHNOLOGY IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Language teaching is, at present, inextricably linked to technology

ⁱ. According to the Instituto Cervantes (2012), among the eight key competences of second and foreign language teachers, there is the *digital competence*, which includes skills such as information processing, content creation, communication, problem solving, and safety, as described by the European Commissionⁱⁱ. Language education, therefore, cannot be conceived without the help of technology anymore.

This means that instructors must develop the ability to use digital resources effectively if they want to follow the strategic lines established by their institutions (e.g. to promote students' learning, and for their own professional development). Thus, they need to reflect about the different technological resources at their disposal and how to get the most out of them by doing an appropriate use. Moreover, they need to integrate them in their teaching methods in order to promote language use, and to encourage cooperative

learning. They also need to guide students to use these tools independently (Instituto Cervantes, 2012: 27).

For the last fifty years, technology has somehow been present in language teaching pedagogy, with the use of recordings, labs, listenings... However, the last decade has turned into a *tech revolution* in the language classroom. The huge current amount of publications on education, language teaching and technology proves the existence of this trend in the language teaching field (Akbar, 2015; Carrió Pastor, 2016; Chun, 2008; Gargiulo et al., 2016; González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014; Hampel & Stickler, 2015; Herrera, 2015; Martín-Monje et al., 2016; Sánchez Quero & Botella Tejera, 2010; Sánchez Quero et al., 2012). Social media applied to the teaching of Spanish as a second language deserve a special mention, since this field has experienced a boom in recent years (Arellano, 2013; Cuadros & Villatoro, 2014; Erdocia, 2012; Fernández Ulloa, 2012; Galindo Merino, 2015, 2016b, 2016c; Herrera & Castrillejo, 2013; Varo & Cuadros, 2013).

Today, no one can question the usefulness of technologies in the classroom. There are many resources available for foreign language teachers, as those compiled by María Méndez Santos in her excellent guide for language teachers (2016: 51 and ss.): videos, MOOCs, gaming tools, different uses of the mobile phone, blogs, podcasts, Pinterest boards, word clouds, mind maps, webquests, wikis, prezis, timelines, flashcards, digital books, subtitling editors, video generators and animations, comics, online games, and, obviously, social media and apps.

The advantages of their use for educational purposes are well-known. Among them, we can highlight: "...adaptability to personal profiles, use of multiple input modes to reach levels of concentration, and self-paced tutoring (...). The Internet is not just a medium for transmission of materials, but also for interaction with teachers and fellow students" (Smedt et al., 1999: 54-55). And, as F. Herrera (2015: 139) points out, the presence of the mobile phone in the language classroom has meant a total revolution.

Therefore, our research project on teaching foreign languages through sports was clear about the inclusion of technology as part of the learning methodology. In this article, we explore the potential of different apps for our teaching approach. In the same way native speakers are informed about sports through their mobile phones, language learners can

take advantage of these resources to increase their language exposure. Smartphones and portable devices become, thus, an essential learning tool for languages through sports, as we will see in the next pages.

II. TEACHING ENGLISH AND SPANISH THROUGH SPORTS

Sport is an integral part of our society, an important force in our lives and a serious piece of our culture, as Spickard Prettyman & Lampman (2006) state. Its bond to the representation of foreign cultures is evident in the case of both Spanish (tennis, basketball, and especially, soccer) and British culture (cricket, rugby, soccer, horse racing). In fact, many students choose to learn Spanish specifically because they truly admire a certain team or player. *The Telegraph* recently talked about the “Messi effect”ⁱⁱⁱ to account for the increase in the number of students of Spanish in England, to the detriment of French, which had historically dominated the teaching of foreign languages in the UK. As we explained in Galindo (2016a), sports are one of the economic engines of modern societies in terms of companies connected to sports, national and international tourism and mass media.

Based on our own experience in the teaching of both English and Spanish as a foreign language, connecting sports with languages generates a very useful approach between two industries that walk together nowadays. At the same time, sport is a sort of universal language which can promote several values such as peace, equality, tolerance and education. All of them can obviously help create closer ties within our students, and to overcome cultural differences inside the classroom.

General studies about language have shown a recent interest in sports and their influence in language. Institutions such as *Fundéu*, that seek to preserve the good use of the language in the media, dedicate a noteworthy amount of resources to the language of sport, offering many special issues on sport events and a weekly section called “Liga del español urgente”^{iv}. Likewise, the University of Salamanca has its own place on the Spanish League (“la Liga USAL”^v), under the agreement “Fútbol en español” signed by this institution and the Spanish League^{vi}. Furthermore, the European Commission recently

devoted their bulletin *Punto y coma*, specialized in Spanish translation within the European institutions, to the topic of Sport, Language and Translation (2016).

In English, there are many studies on language and soccer, such as the one by Adrian Beard (*The language of sport*, 1998) or the one by Lavric *et al.* (*The Linguistics of football*, 2008). Even some specific research groups, such as the one from the University of Innsbruck, have compiled an online linguistic bibliography on football^{vii}. In Spanish, there are many experts such as Jesús Castañón, who has written several articles and launched the web *idiomaydeporte.com*; Antonio Teruel Sáez and his work on the vocabulary of soccer (2007) or Professor J. L. Rojas Torrijos, from the University of Seville, with his award-winning blog^{viii} and his contributions to the study of language, sports and journalism (2011). Together with them, there are other initiatives such as the Athletic Club de Bilbao's^{ix} “Encuentros de literatura y fútbol”.

Nevertheless, in the Spanish as a foreign language field there are not many materials connecting the teaching of Spanish with sports. This discipline does not even appear in the language for specific purposes literature (Romero Gualda, 1987; Carabela, 1998; Gómez de Enterría, 2001; Hernández & Sierra, 2002; Aguirre Beltrán, 2012; Robles Ávila & Sánchez Lobato, 2012). There are, however, some leveled readings such as *Messi. La grandeza de un pequeño* (Rodríguez, 2011) and *Rafael Nadal dentro y fuera de la pista* (Monge, 2012) both for A2 levels and published by Difusión in the frame of their *Colección perfiles pop*, as well as *El FC Barcelona* (Pujol Vila, 2010), B1 levels and *El Real Madrid CF* (Segovia Yuste, 2013), A2+ levels, in the SGEL *Colección saber.es*.

Apart from Spanish publishing houses, we can find the book by Kristina Pilmark and Lene Håkansson *El deporte* (2011), published in the “Tema” collection by the Danish publishing house Gyldendal. This book contains texts about sports and exercises to present the Hispanic culture and its connection to sport for students of Spanish as a foreign language. Teachers such as Blanco López (2014) highlight the need to train Spanish language teachers to teach Spanish for sport purposes.

In contrast, the area of ELT (English language teaching) has started to explore this possibility, as in the textbook *Career Paths: Sports* (Evans, Dooley, & Graham, 2013),

and its twins *Career Paths: World Cup* (Evans, Dooley, & Wheeler, 2014) and *Career Paths: Olympics* (Evans, Dooley, & Wheeler, 2016), all of them for A1, A2 and B1 levels. There are also two books specifically about soccer: *English for football* (Redmond & Warren, 2012) and *Football English: Soccer Vocabulary for Learners of English* (Challenger, 2012). Finally, there is also the study by Ji-Eun and Ho (2014) on Sports English Education as English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

Indeed, sport has a significant presence in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR; Council of Europe, 2001). Actually, the fourth chapter of the CEFR, devoted to “Language use and the language user/learner”, contains the following subsections including sports:

- 4.2. *Communication themes: “Free time and entertainment”*, includes sports as follows (CEFR, p. 52):

In each of these thematic areas, subcategories are established. For example, area 4, ‘free time and entertainment’, is subcategorised in the following way:

- 4.1 leisure
- 4.2 hobbies and interests
- 4.3 radio and TV
- 4.4 cinema, theatre, concert, etc.
- 4.5 exhibitions, museums, etc.
- 4.6 intellectual and artistic pursuits
- 4.7 sports
- 4.8 press

For each sub-theme, ‘specific notions’ are identified. In this respect, the categories represented in Table 5, covering the locations, institutions etc. to be treated, are particularly relevant. For instance, under 4.7. ‘sports’, *Threshold Level 1990* specifies:

- 1. locations: field, ground, stadium
- 2. institutions and organisations: sport, team, club
- 3. persons: player
- 4. objects: cards, ball
- 5. events: race, game
- 6. actions: to watch, to play (+name of sport), to race, to win, to lose, to draw

Figure 1. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR; Council of Europe, 2001)

- 4.4. *Communicative language activities and strategies*: includes sport commentaries as oral production (speaking) activities (p. 58).
- 4.6. *Texts*: sports commentaries (football, cricket, boxing, horse-racing, etc.) as spoken texts (p. 95).

In the same way, the *Plan Curricular del Instituto Cervantes* (the PCIC, 2006) includes sports in many sections. Precisely, the *inventario de referentes culturales* talks about sports in the media (*prensa escrita deportiva*, section 1.8.) and sport events throughout history (personalities from the culture, science, and sports with an international projection; *acontecimientos deportivos en la historia*, section 2.2). Also, among the *saberes y comportamientos socioculturales*, sport is mentioned within the leisure activities, habits and hobbies, and the whole section 1.7.4. is devoted to this topic. It contains information about the sports most frequently practiced by Spaniards, terms for all the places to practice sports, main shows and sport events, stereotypes, extreme sports, traditional sports, public institutions and values associated to sports in our society, etc. Then, section 1.8., about the media, stresses the importance of sports-related publications in Spain. On 1.10., services and sport facilities are mentioned; on 1.12., about *Salud e higiene*, there is a reference to the practice of sports, and on 3.2., about *Tradición y cambio social*, new ways to enjoy your free time (sport) are described.

Finally, among the *Géneros discursivos y productos textuales*, in B1 and B2 levels, sport broadcasting and commentary of sports are mentioned in the oral and written genres.

In the case of the *British Council*, sport plays an important role among its resources. There are materials to learn English through sports, such as the web “Premier Skills English”^x, focused on soccer.



Image 1. Premier Skills English webpage

An interesting case involving both English and Spanish is the program *Arsenal Double Club*^{xi}, developed by the soccer team Arsenal F.C., which offers a combination of English and soccer for kids. This Londoner institution offers the same program in Spanish, in cooperation with the Spanish Embassy in London.

In Poland, there is a similar program for kids who want to learn English while playing soccer: *Kick in English*^{xii}.

Finally, the University of Salamanca is now working on a project to launch Spanish and soccer schools in China, so that students can learn both at the same time^{xiii}.

We should clarify that teaching languages through sport does not imply that the learning process should be based on physical activities, in the line of *Happy Sport*^{xiv}, a company specialized in the teaching of English for kids through physical and sport routines, or like the Prague Cervantes Institute *Club de corredores*^{xv}. Rather, the integration of sport in the foreign language classroom can happen as in the case of any other topic, through a specific lesson plan on sports as the content of the classroom. This is the approach we took in our research project on languages and sports and we consider that it would be very successful with the help of new technologies.

III. METHODOLOGY

III. 1. Research questions and objectives

As we said before, in the frame of a funded research project on Applied Linguistics to the teaching of modern languages through sports (Galindo Merino, 2016a), this paper explores the possibility to include technology into a language through sport course (Botella Tejera et al., 2016; Sellés et al., 2016). After exploring the use of social media to the teaching of languages through sports (Galindo Merino, 2016b, 2016c), this article focuses on a selection of teaching apps for the teaching and learning of both English and Spanish through sports. The rationale of the project is the potential motivation of sports for the learning of foreign languages, still scarce in the literature of this subfield of Applied Linguistics (Blanco López, 2014; Challenger, 2012; Galindo Merino, 2016a; Redmond & Warren, 2012). Therefore, our research questions are:

1. Are there specific apps to learn foreign languages through sports?
2. What kind of general apps can be selected to work with them in such a language class?
3. What sort of activities can be done with the help of apps in the language classroom?

III. 2. Instruments

In order to answer these questions, 17 apps are explored in this article.

During the process of selecting the most pertinent tools to teach languages through sport, we considered that it was necessary to select those resources used by native speakers to be informed about sport, so that they reflected a natural way of using them. However, we realized that in the teaching of languages through sport we do not have at our disposal neither the tools nor some previous research materials about the use of technology in this matter (except those arising from our own research project: Sellés, Manchado & Cejuela, 2016, and Botella et al., 2016), what turns this into a very new and interesting topic.

Specifically, we select different kinds of apps in both English and Spanish:

1. Language-based apps, to deal mainly with grammar and vocabulary. We selected *Fundéu* (Spanish) and *Oxford Dictionary* (English).
2. Language learning apps designed for non-native speakers. Here we have *Spanish Challenge* and *Gramática Española* for Spanish and *British Council* for English.
3. English through Sports apps: *Cambridge English F. C.*, *Worldwide Sports Events* and *Career Paths: Sports*, the last two by Express Publishing. We do not have any equivalent in Spanish.
4. General sport journals apps, which are realia for the language classroom: *Marca* and *Mundo deportivo*, from Spain; *Olé*, from Argentina; and *SUN Sport* and *Mirror Sport* from the UK,
5. and TV channels (*Eurosport*, in different languages, *CBS Sports* and *BBC Sport* in English and *RTVE deporte* for Spanish).

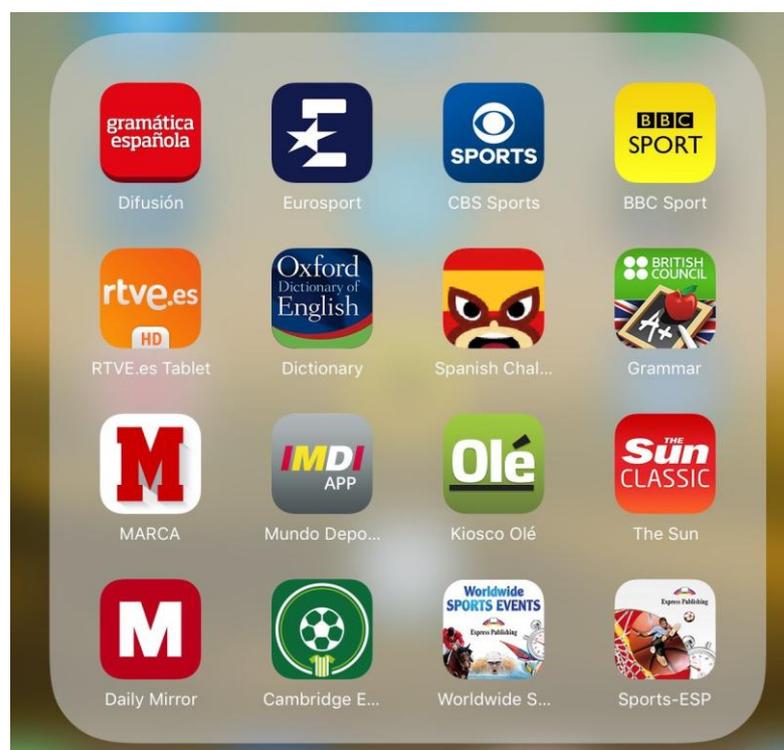


Image 2. Overview of the selected apps for the project

Following this classification, we first analyze all the apps and then, in section V, we provide a wide range of activities to include them in the language classroom considering the use of language skills, focus on content vs form, audiovisual vs written prompts, etc., in line with recent developments in task-based language teaching with technology (Akbar, 2015; Carrió, 2016; Gargiulo et al., 2016; González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014; Hampel & Stickler, 2015; Herrera, 2015; Martín-Monje et al., 2016). This teaching proposal, including the list of suggested app for the language classroom, is a previous step to implement a language and sport course to learn English or Spanish, ultimate objective of our research project.

IV. TEACHING APPS FOR THE LEARNING OF MODERN LANGUAGES.

IV. 1. Language-based apps

- Fundéu

As explained in Botella Tejera et al. (2016: 1850), there is a strong relationship between *Fundación del Español Urgente* (Fundéu) and sport. In fact, BBVA has also sponsored the Spanish Football League's first division. This web, that is very popular amongst linguists and language lovers, created the *Libro de la Liga BBVA del Español Urgente*^{xvi}. Its weekly content incorporates reports, “pills” or suggestions, and blackboards with linguistic plays. According to its authors, this book aims to “aunar las pasiones que generan el fútbol y el idioma, dos patrimonios culturales de gran proyección internacional”. Its format allows users to download it in mobile devices.

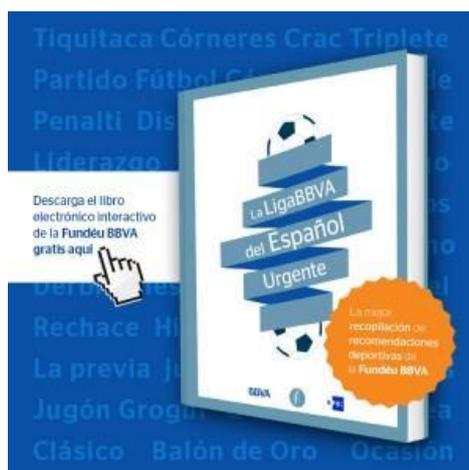


Image 3. BBVA Español Urgente's Book

Both the web and the app are assisted by the Real Academia Española, and users can use the search engine or the Twitter account to share their questions and doubts. They can also look at the different themed articles or subscribe to the app alerts so that they can receive all the relevant information.

This way, the Fundéu app and its strong presence in social media makes it a very interesting query tool for our classes.

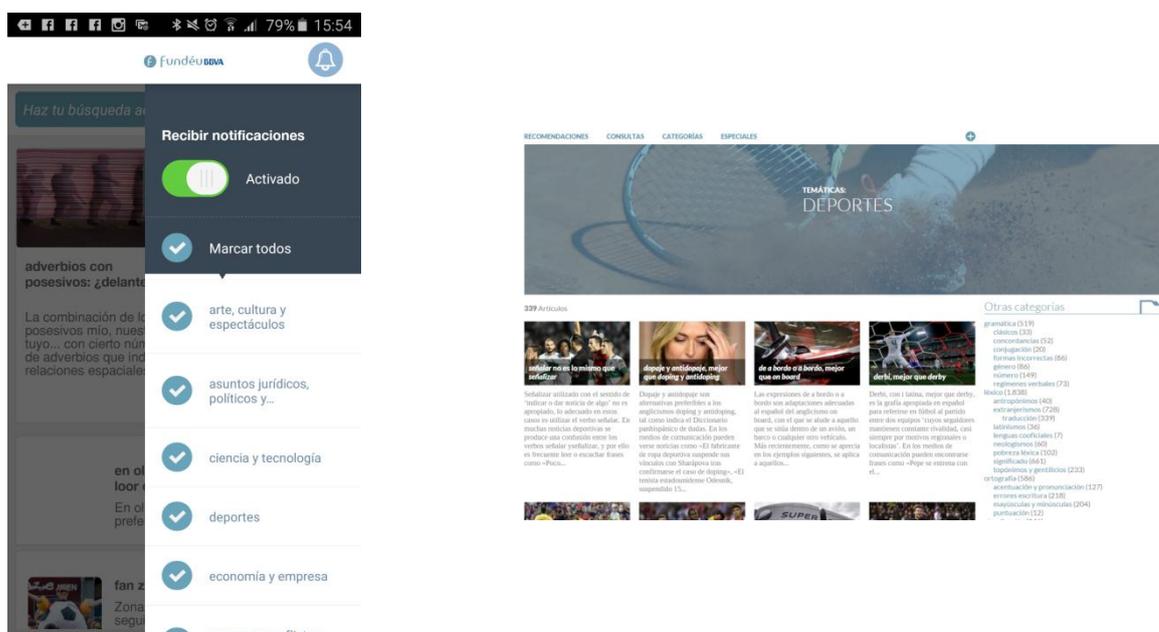


Image 4. Fundeu app

- Oxford Dictionary

Available in I-Tunes and Google Play, this app contains a mobile dictionary with content from Oxford University Press and advanced search and language tools for free. These are some of the possibilities of this app as described by the web:



Image 5. Oxford Dictionary of English app

Search tools –effortlessly find words using a clear, functional, and easy-to-use interface. The integrated search tools activate automatically when starting typing:

1. Search autocomplete helps find words quickly by displaying predictions.
2. Keyword lookup allows to search within compound words and phrases.
3. An automatic ‘Fuzzy filter’ to correct word spelling, as well as ‘Wild card’ (* or ?) to replace a letter or entire parts of a word.
4. Camera search looks up words in the camera viewfinder and displays results.

Learning tools –engaging features that help further enhance the vocabulary:

1. ‘Favorites’ feature to create custom folders with lists of words from the extensive library.
2. ‘Recent’ list to easily review looked-up words.
3. ‘Word of the day’ section to expand vocabulary every day.

Premium features include offline mode (to look up words without internet connection), audio pronunciation, priority support and no ads.

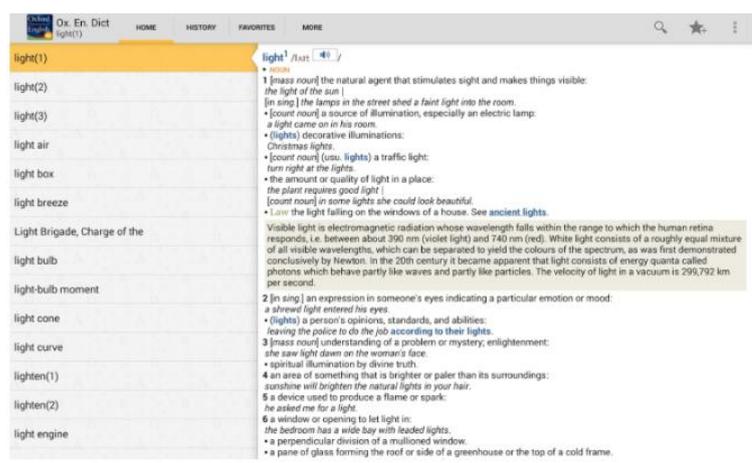


Image 6. Oxford Dictionary of English app – an example

IV. 2. Language learning apps

- Spanish Challenge

Also in Botella Tejera et al. (2016: 1852) we talked about *Spanish Challenge*, a free app for iOS and Android mobile phones and tablets, created by Big Bang Box S.L. for Edinumen publishing house. This app basically recreates a game for the practice of Spanish as a foreign language. Its design and content adaptation for mobile devices turn *Spanish Challenge* into a very fun and dynamic way of learning Spanish.

The different levels in the game are divided according to those established by the CEFR, in correspondence with different *leagues*:

Liga iniciación: A1 Levels.

Liga principiante: A2/B1 Levels.

Liga intermedia: B1/B2 Levels.

Liga avanzada: C1/C2 Levels.

Users can also practice different skills (reading and listening comprehension, written expression) and develop their visual memory, learn synonyms, select terms, learn definitions...

At the very end, when players have answered all the questions, they will be able to see their feedback and find out who the winner of the challenge is.

Teachers can create challenges for the group; they can access data and statistics, etc. Students will also be able to create their own individual challenges independently.



Image 7. Spanish Challenge app, by Edinumen

Gramática Española (Difusión)



Image 8. Gramática española app, by Difusión

This app contains 342 exercises classified into levels (107 exercises for A1 students, 114 for A2 and 121 for B1) to practice Spanish grammar.



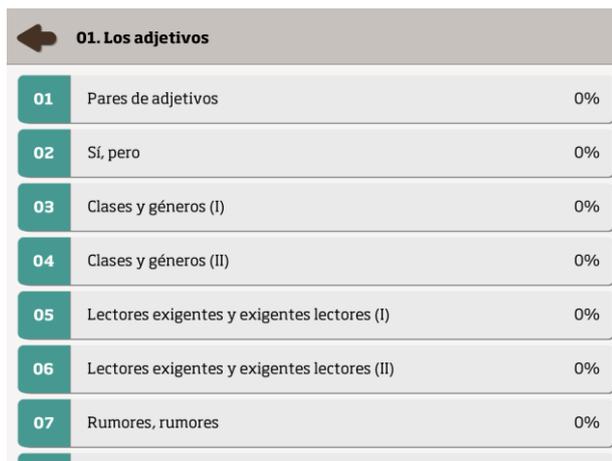
Image 9. Gramática Española app: exercises by levels

Students can choose the area they want to work in (articles, pronouns, tenses, certain structures, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, commands...), as in the example:



Image 10. Gramática española app: A1 section

They can check their progress and access the theory of every of the grammar aspects covered in the app.



01. Los adjetivos		
01	Pares de adjetivos	0%
02	Sí, pero	0%
03	Clases y géneros (I)	0%
04	Clases y géneros (II)	0%
05	Lectores exigentes y exigentes lectores (I)	0%
06	Lectores exigentes y exigentes lectores (II)	0%
07	Rumores, rumores	0%

Image 11. Gramática Española app: the adjectives

It is a very good resource for students working on their own, autonomously. It is focused on grammar, not on vocabulary or any other skill.



Valor general de los adjetivos

Los adjetivos complementan a los sustantivos y concuerdan con estos en género (femenino o masculino) y número (singular o plural). Pueden estar relacionados con los sustantivos mediante verbos como **ser**, **estar** o **parecer**, o estar directamente junto a ellos. Además de otras funciones, se usan para precisar el significado de los sustantivos, destacar sus características o valorarlos.

- ¿Y bien? Dígame, ¿se trata de un **problema personal** o **profesional**?
○ **Personal**. Mejor hablamos en privado. (precisamos)
- ¿Qué te vas a poner hoy?
○ ¿Esta noche? La **camisa blanca**. (destacamos una característica)
- Mario, es un genio de la cocina. Sus **platos** son **deliciosos**. (valoramos)

¿Me pongo la azul o la amarilla?

Image 12. Gramática española app: text on adjectives

- British Council

This app is designed to practice sample questions at beginner, elementary, intermediate and advanced levels. Each set of sample questions covers 12 grammar topics, with over 20 activities per topic. Then, users can purchase and download more questions as their grammar accuracy improves.



Image 13. British Council app

Very relevant to our project is their specific section for sports: *Learn English Sport Words*. Users can find objects related to the events, players and the technical sports moves and techniques. The definitions include translations and can be grouped together by sport, so they can review the words easily. This is based on a hidden object and word game and it seems fun and easy to play.

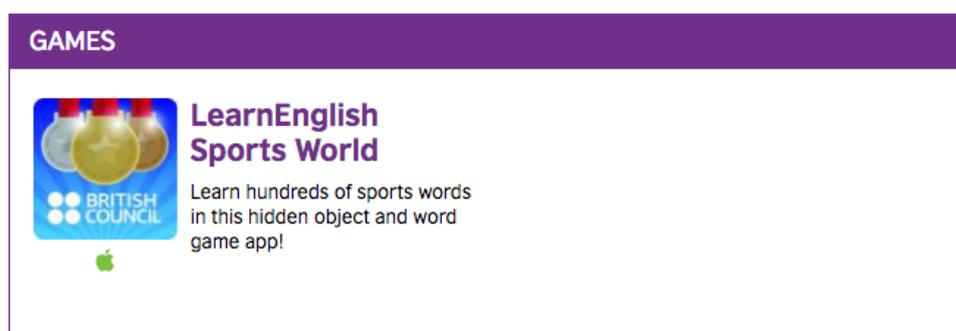


Image 14. Learn English Sport Words, by British Council

Some examples include expressions such as *en garde* in fencing, what a receiver is in hockey, or how to play Boccia.

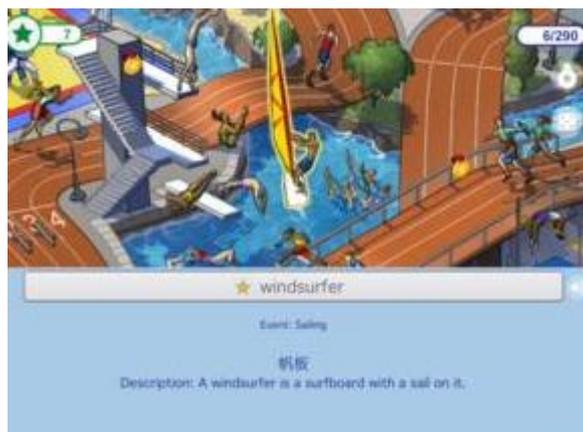


Image 15. Example from the British Council app

IV. 3. Specific English through Sports apps

- *Cambridge English F. C.*

Cambridge English F.C. is a free learning app from Cambridge English that makes learning English fun through football. It is available for I-Phone and Android.

The web tells us that the user becomes the star player and captain of Cambridge F.C. and has to answer quiz questions to help the team pass the ball, get to the goal, shoot and score.

There are multiple choice questions to test English skills in a range of categories. If the user gives two wrong answers in a match he/she will be substituted and the game will be over. If questions are right, the user takes the cup home! Questions in this game are mapped to levels B1, B2 and C1 on the CEFR. Both vocabulary and grammar are practiced.



Image 16. Cambridge English F. C. app

- *Worldwide Sports Events*

According to the official information^{xvii}, this app is an educational resource for sport-event support staff who want to improve their English communication in a work environment. Incorporating career-specific vocabulary and contexts, each unit offers step-by-step instruction that immerses students in the four key language components: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Besides, it addresses topics including sports events, security, first aid, concessions, and communications. However, it seems that a code is needed to access. It is included in the book *Career Paths* to access the content.



Image 17. Worldwide Sports Events app

- Career Paths: Sports

Again, according to the official information^{xviii}, this is an educational resource for sport professionals and enthusiasts who want to improve their English communication in a work environment. Incorporating career-specific vocabulary and contexts, each unit offers step-by-step instruction that immerses students in the four key language components: reading, listening, speaking and writing. It addresses topics including the field of play, rules of play, equipment, players and leagues for the world's most popular sports.



Image 19. Career Paths Sports app

The series is organized into three levels of difficulty and offers a minimum of 400 vocabulary terms and phrases. Every unit includes a test of reading comprehension, vocabulary and listening skills and leads students through written and oral production.

IV. 4. General Sport journals apps

- *Mundo Deportivo*

Mundo Deportivo is a sports app by the journal *El Mundo Deportivo*, S.A. It provides ongoing information about different sports, with a remarkable presence of F. C. Barcelona. It allows the user to customize the menu with their favorite sections, to access quickly breaking news, live transmissions, results of the main leagues and to set an alert system of specific teams (scores, results). Moreover, it includes specific information about all the teams competing at the Liga BBVA, articles by different journalists, radio connections and social media. It is really complete.

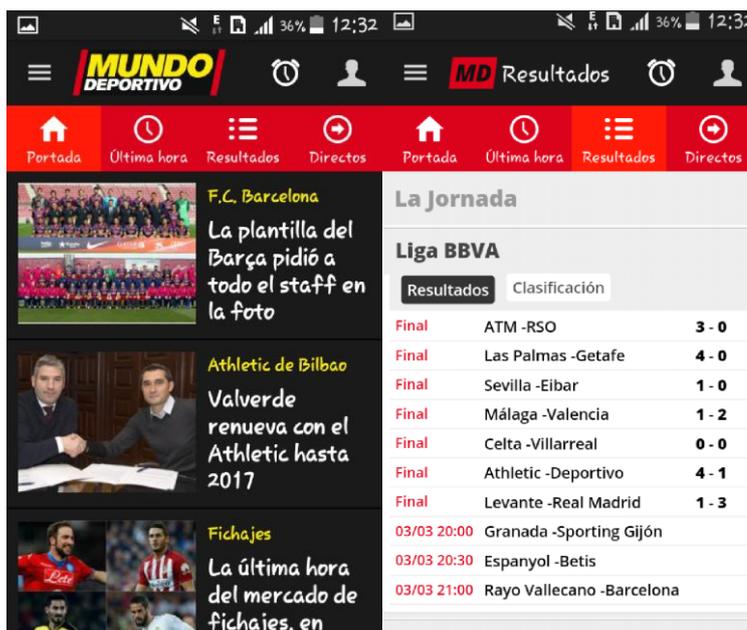


Image 20. Mundo Deportivo app

- Olé

Olé is an app by goal.com for the Argentinian sport journal *Olé*, which also offers live results, personalized alerts and notifications on more than 750 leagues across the world. According to its developers, it is the fastest app of its kind. It keeps information about scores, shoots, penalties, faults, corners, saves, changes... in real time. Therefore, it is a valuable way to be informed about sports.

Moreover, it offers live scoreboards, audiovisuals, classifications, teams, scores and results, with the possibility of saving your favorite information.

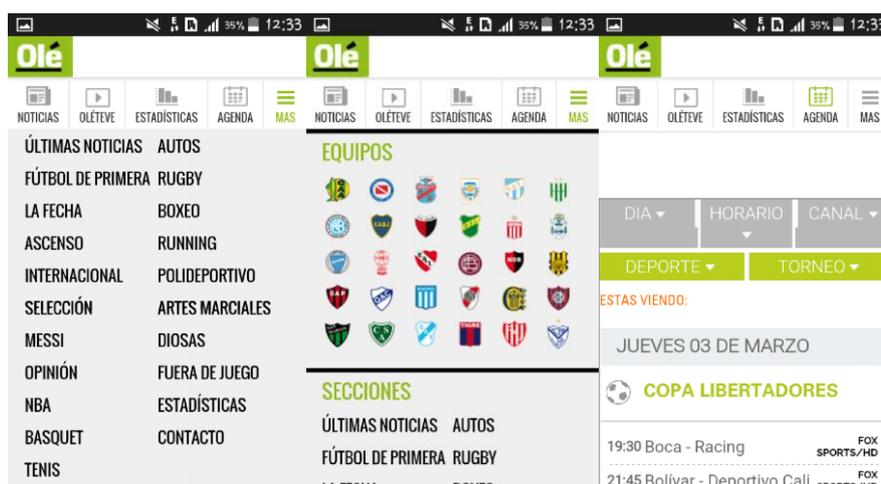


Image 21. Olé app

- *Diario Marca*

Most sport journals offer their own apps, but Marca is the most read newspaper in Spain and out of Spain. Its new app is the typical tool sport-lovers use to be updated. With a friendly design, it allows the user to follow live sports, with complete information about competitions and a wide range of audiovisual resources.

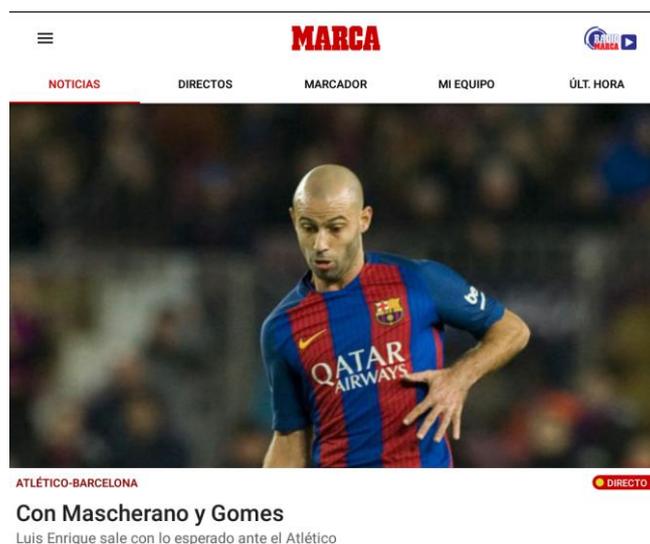


Image 22. Diario Marca app

Navigation is really easy. The front page includes the most important news, but users can also access live transmissions and stats, and are allowed to add their own comments. Furthermore, users can customize the app with the colors of their team and get selected information about it (clips, calendars, info about games...).



Image 23. Diario Marca app – sections

Marca covers both national (Spanish) and international competitions and results. Users can access blogs and articles from the newspaper and ask questions in digital encounters with sportmen and women, and journalists. Interaction is definitely a very useful feature when thinking about its potential for language learning.

- The Sun Mobile: The Sun Sport

According to their own description^{xix}, The Sun Mobile app brings breaking news, sports, show business and celebrity gossip from around the world to the user fingertips and it is available for download on both I-Phone and Android. Although this is a general newspaper, it contains a sport section that can be very useful for us.



Image 24. The Sun Mobile app

As its key features, The Sun Mobile web page^{xx} tells us that this app has popular journalists to answer different questions, write reviews, and share stories behind the showbiz scenes. Then, users can watch great videos, read take on the breaking headlines of the day, take the daily quiz, browse top telly pictures, get the insiders look at soaps, be the first to hear all the showbiz celeb rumors and gossip and enjoy a round-up of the best pictures of the day.



Image 25. The Sun Mobile app

Only the news and services related to sports would be of interest for our research.

- Mirror Football: Mirror Sport

Football news, opinion and live action both for I-Phone and Android with an army of journalists and bloggers covering every league and cup competition. The app comes packed with breaking news and transfers, videos, galleries and in-depth analysis.



Image 26. Mirror Football app

Features according to the web page^{xxi}:

1. FREE to download.
2. 24/7 breaking news.
3. Users can personalise their homepage.
4. Insights from their award-winning columnists.
5. Image galleries within articles.
6. More football videos in articles showcasing players, goals and skills.

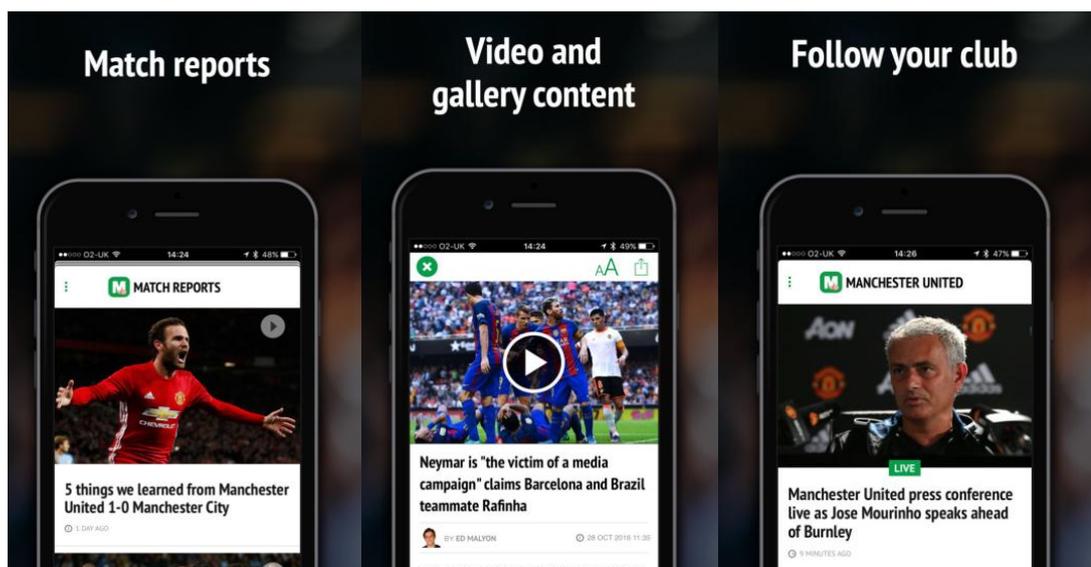


Image 27. Mirror football app: some examples

IV. 5. TV channels

- Eurosport

This is a very visual app, available in French, English, Spanish, Russian, German, Italian, Turkish, Polish and Chinese. Depending on the country, the app selects different information. Users can see live scoreboards covering a wide range of sports.

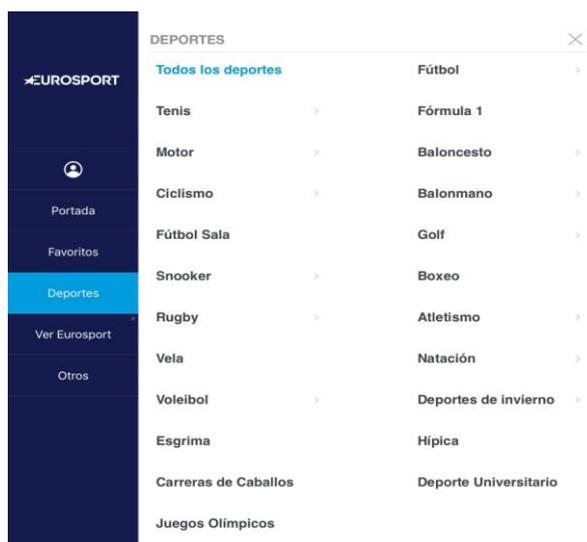


Image 28. Eurosport app

Obviously, the video coverage is really good and complete, perfect to offer audiovisual resources to users. It also offers a pay-per-view option to see live games and matches.

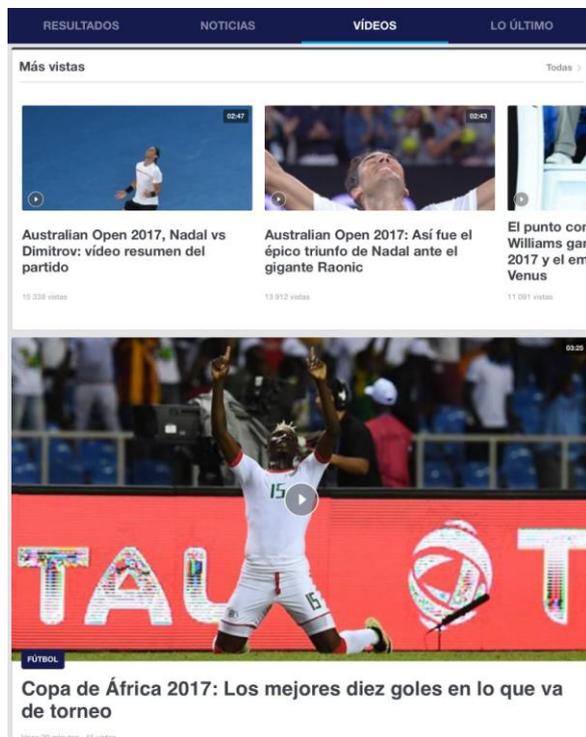


Image 29. Eurosport app

Users can access sports and competitions, including university tournaments and winter and summer olympics. It is an excellent international resource.

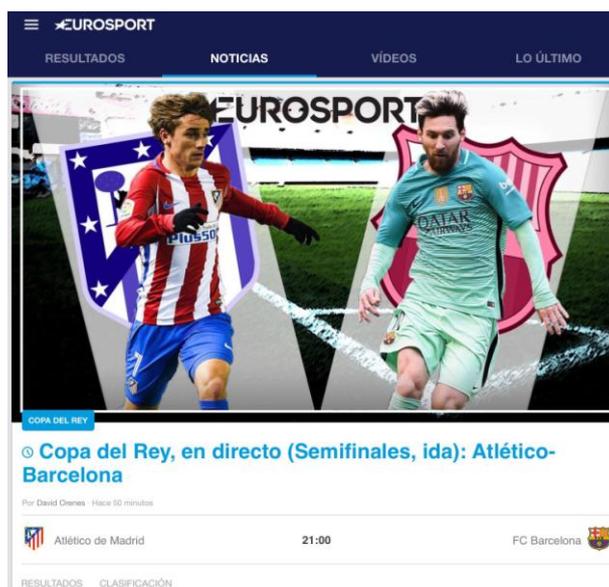


Image 30. Eurosport app

- CBS Sports

This is an American-based sports app (baseball, football, golf, basketball...). It offers live results and calendars for competitions such as the NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL, MLS, Nascar and high school football. It is, mainly, a scoreboard.

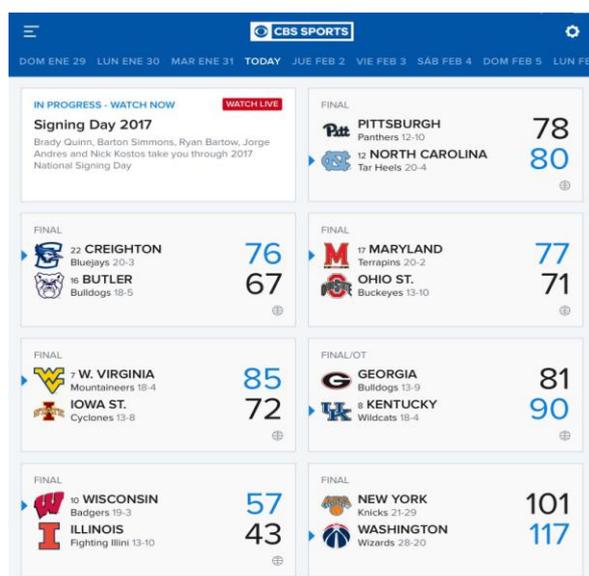


Image 31. CBS Sports app

It also includes European soccer competitions such as the Premier League, la Liga, Bundesliga, Champions League. In contrast to Eurosport, this is not really multimedia.



Image 32. CBS Sports app

- BBC Sport

This British app, only available in English, allows you to customize the info according to your teams and preferences to get alerts and information.

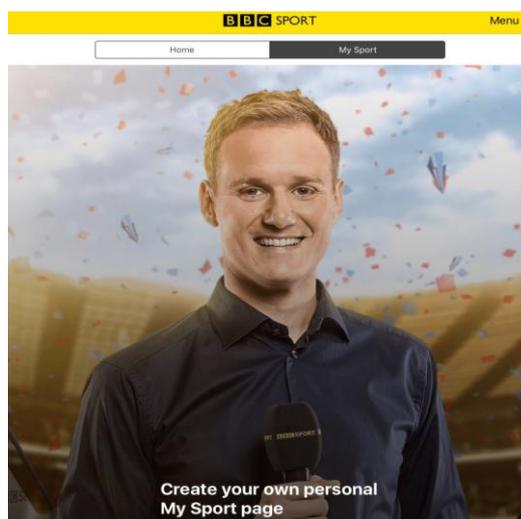


Image 33. BBC Sports app

As the others, it contains live scoreboards, news and videos, in a very visual format.

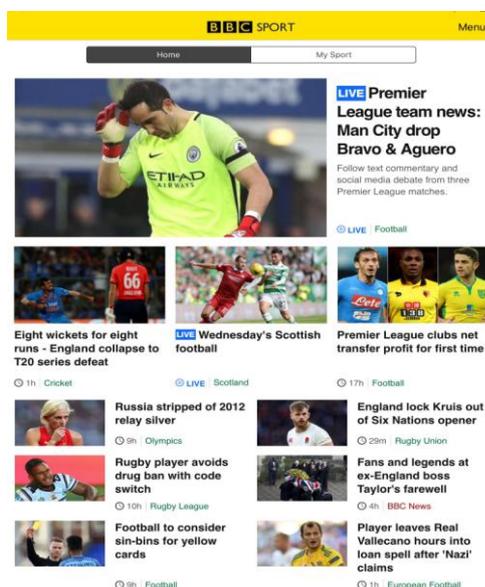


Image 34. BBC Sports app

It has a large news section, with live scoreboards and results, comprising a huge amount of sports -even disability sports-.

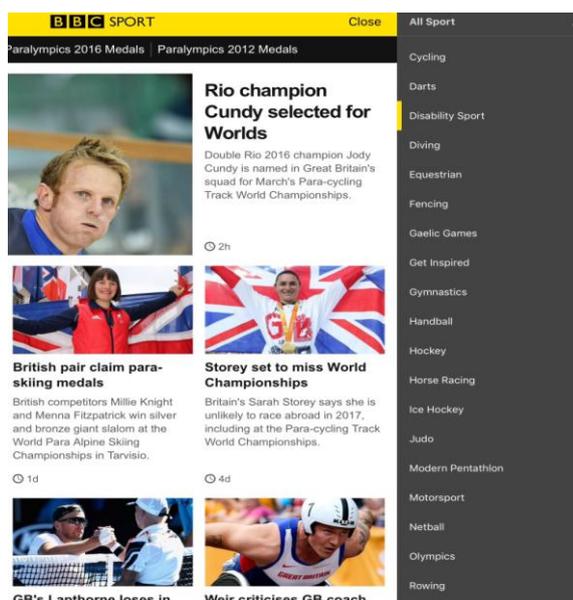


Image 35. BBC Sports app

- RTVE Deporte

The sport section of the national broadcasting media in Spain is very simple. There is a series of news and videos without different categories. Users can access different clips but they are not organized by sports.



Image 36. RTVE app

The sport area is one section of the general RTVE app, but it is not as developed as the other apps presented here.

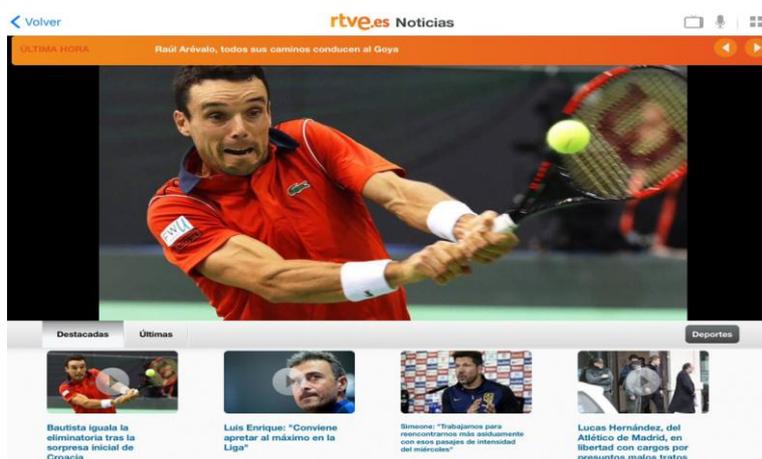


Image 37. Sports section on RTVE app

V. TEACHING APPS IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM THROUGH SPORTS

All of the apps presented in the previous sections allow different activities to be carried out inside or outside the language through sports classroom. Obviously, *Career Paths: Sports* and *Worldwide Sports events*, conceived as a support material for the corresponding textbooks, are perfectly valid for this kind of teaching approach. Similarly, *Cambridge English F.C.* allows the learner to improve his/her English by engaging with sports. However, the rest of the apps, not specifically about language learning through sports, can be used in several ways in the language classroom.

Fundéu and *Oxford Dictionary* are essentially useful to clarify questions about spelling, meaning and vocabulary. They can be categorized as *consultative apps*. Teachers can ask students to check different meanings and suggestions and to improve their writing skills. Together with them, *Spanish Challenge*, *Gramática Española* and *British Council* will help students to focus on form while learning English or Spanish. The three of them include, somehow, some features resembling sports, such as gamification in leagues, competition, or sport content. But their use is mainly *metalinguistic*. Since some of these apps are designed to be played, they seem to be more appealing for students, and teachers can benefit tremendously from this. However, we believe that the most useful apps for this kind of language program are those based on authentic sports: journals and multimedia platforms. There, learners can access real materials with audiovisual content, suitable to practice the language while they are engaged with the content. The possibility to customize the information, to follow a wide array of sports and to watch videos, read the news and interact with other users can stimulate the learners to improve their language skills. This can be especially interesting in immersion contexts, since students can better get immersed in the target culture.

In the language classroom, teachers can propose the reading of a certain piece of news, follow a given competition or team, comment the most striking information about certain players, etc. Since these sport-related apps require receptive skills, language teachers should encourage productive tasks in class: having a debate, writing a summary, expressing an opinion, comparing two sources of information or presenting a

popular athlete. Students could even participate in some sort of competition or contest to better relate to the world of sports.

In addition, the multimedia content allows for the exposure to different language varieties and registers, contexts and, even, different topics around sports: economy, climate, fashion, health, geography, communication, politics, childhood, equality, technology, human body, medicine, justice, among others.

Finally, the fact that the learners can access a huge amount of input in the target language from their mobile phone is a definitive argument in favor of the use of apps for language learning. Thus, teachers have to include their use as part of the program and requirements, not only as supplementary material, but as a fundamental part to understand the relevance of sports in the target society and as a rich source of real language for the students. This way, students will act in the same way as native speakers, by using sports and incorporating technologies into their daily lives.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Year 2004 was declared the European year for education through sports by the European Union. This article has pointed out that there is still plenty of work to do in terms of research and studies in the field. However, we have also discovered that, according to different documents on language learning, sport is a great asset that can allow teachers to articulate a Spanish or an English language course. This means that it is necessary to study students' needs, as well as the importance of individual and affective factors; also, we need to know which are the most effective didactic approaches for realia according to learners' age, and whether teachers need any kind of special training or not.

Concerning our three research questions, number one was "Are there specific apps to learn foreign languages through Sports?". The answer is YES, but only to teach English. We have *Cambridge English F. C.*, *Worldwide Sports Events* and *Career Paths: Sports*. Some other apps include sport content, but they are not specifically designed for this teaching approach. Therefore, our article shows a gap in the teaching of Spanish, since

there is not a single app related to our new language teaching methodology, combining languages and sports.

The second research question was about what kind of general apps can be selected to work with them in such a language class. Looking for some answers, this article has analyzed 17 apps connected to sports that can be very useful and appealing in the learning of a language. We have divided these apps into 5 different groups:

1. Language-based apps, to deal with grammar and vocabulary, mainly. We selected *Fundéu* and *Oxford Dictionary*. We have defined them as *consultative apps*.
2. Language learning apps, specifically designed for non-native speakers. Here we have *Spanish Challenge* and *Gramática Española* for Spanish and *British Council* for English, that have been categorized as *metalinguistic*.
3. English through Sports apps: *Cambridge English F. C.*, *Worldwide Sports Events* and *Career Paths: Sports*, the last two by Express Publishing, to serve as a complement the corresponding textbooks. We have discovered that there are no equivalents in Spanish, although their potential is clear.
4. General Sport journals apps, which are realia for the language classroom: *Marca* and *Mundo deportivo*, from Spain; *Olé*, from Argentina; and *SUN Sport* and *Mirror Sport* from the UK,
5. TV channels (*Eurosport*, *CBS Sports* and *BBC Sport* in English and *RTVE deporte* for Spanish), providing audiovisual materials which also allow some sort of interaction with the user and a high degree of customization.

Number 4 and number 5 have been proven to be the most useful apps in order to learn and practice languages through sports. The fact that they contain real materials that students can relate to the culture, make them especially relevant in the learning of a certain language, even by being exposed to different registers, varieties, contexts and accents.

Finally, our last research question inquired about the kind of activities to be performed with the help of apps in the language classroom. We have seen that with every app, but especially with the ones in these last groups, there is a wide range of activities that can

be done; most importantly, this work can continue outside of the classroom, becoming a very valuable part of students' daily lives.

Therefore, we claim that the use of apps for language learning is in line with the recommendations of the Instituto Cervantes for language teachers, highlighting the importance of the digital competence (Instituto Cervantes, 2012: 27). Social media and apps find their place in the language through sports lessons: they are perfect examples of the implementation of technology in the classroom and enhance autonomous learning. The use of realia allows students to access relevant updated information about sports of their choice, which can promote motivation and engagement in the target language. Moreover, their knowledge of local or national sports can facilitate their integration while in immersion. Being this is still a young field, there are plenty of possibilities yet to explore, both in English and Spanish through sports. Although this has been a rather theoretical approach to the subject, we would definitely want to implement this useful information to the language classroom. Articulating a language through sport course which incorporates these apps would certainly be one of our main aims. We hope this article contributes to the promotion of this approach among language educators by opening new avenues for language learning and teaching.

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ⁱⁱ <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/resources/digital-competences>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/11048295/GCSE-results-Lionel-Messi-effect-drives-rise-in-Spanish.html>

^{iv} <http://www.fundeu.es/liga-del-espanol-urgente/>

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