

Mobile phone app “7ling”: Learning languages without lessons or teachers

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The free mobile phone app for learning languages without lessons or teachers is aimed particularly at migrants and refugees. The app arose out of XCELING, a joint project on foreign language teaching supported by an international network of European and Egyptian universities.

The mobile [phone app “7ling”](#) offers the possibility to learn the basics of a foreign language in a new environment without lessons or a teacher. Researchers at the Institute of German as a Foreign Language Philology and the Institute for Translation and Interpreting of Heidelberg University were substantially involved in its development. The free app for mobile devices is especially aimed at migrants and refugees, and offers users the opportunity to teach themselves the basics of six European languages. The method is based on practical exercises and units focusing on everyday situations. The app arose out of XCELING, a joint project on foreign language teaching supported by an international network of European and Egyptian universities.

The app comprises lessons for learning English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. The units with listening exercises and dialogues simulate situations from daily life, like an appointment with the doctor, going shopping or looking for accommodation. *“We deliberately designed the app so that users can find orientation independently and intuitively in the new foreign language environment,”* explains Prof. Dr. Christiane von Stutterheim, who is responsible for the project at Heidelberg University. The practical exercises are complemented by tables of numbers and letters, which can also be played as audio files, an alphabetic glossary, plus information on the social and cultural conventions of the respective host countries. *“Detailed translations of the useful phrases, the glossary and above all the information about the host countries, provided by our Egyptian project partners, make the app particularly suitable for Arabic-speaking users,”* Prof. von Stutterheim underlines.

The 7ling app originated as part of the [XCELING project](#), in which researchers work on methods to modernise foreign language teaching in Egypt. Besides Heidelberg University, the universities of Bologna (Italy), Coimbra (Portugal), Poitiers (France) and Trinity College in Dublin (Ireland) are involved. Participants on the Egyptian side are the universities of Alexandria, Helwan, Cairo, Luxor, Minia and Pharos. The University of Salamanca (Spain) is responsible for the overall coordination. The joint project is funded by Erasmus+ and runs until September 2021.

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