



# Keystroke and Pointing Time Estimation for Touchscreen-Based Mobile Devices: Case Study Children with ASD

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**Abstract.** Nowadays, children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) show great interest and ease in the use of technology such as tablets and smartphones. There is much research that has been done and is focused on helping users with this type of disorder. However, the challenge is the creation of applications that adapt to their physical, cognitive and motor skills of this type of users. This article focuses on identifying the distance of drag that users with ASD can perform with less complexity, as well as identifying the time that the user with ASD needs to complete the task. The results show that the higher the drag distance, the more complicated this type of user will be. With this result, we can conclude that when to develop mobile applications to support the teaching of this type of users should be considered a smaller drag size and an image size greater than 63 pixels.

**Keywords:** Usability · Keystroke · Pointing · ASD spectrum disorders

## 1 Introduction

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a pervasive neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by impairments in social communication and restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests or activities. On the other hand, recent studies indicate that people with ASD may present deficiencies in motor skills and cognitive limitations [1].

The rapid increase of mobile games in the market is being driven by a powerful operation of mobile phones and tablets, which are accelerating the rapid growth and use of mobile devices. Although the number of developments aimed at people with ASD has increased in recent years, this has not occurred with studies that seek to generate knowledge on how to make solutions for possible motor difficulties that people with ASD may have.

For this reason, it is essential to develop technology that adapts to the motor and cognitive abilities of users with ASD.

Many improvements have been proposed to the Keystroke-Level Model ((KLM-GOMS [2] and FLM [3]).) in order to evaluate different techniques. However, there exists little research on improving techniques of user behavior in users with ASD; in particular, those that seek to estimate the time used to achieve common interactions when using touchscreen devices. The objective of the current study is to identify the time in which users with ASD can execute the operator Keystroke (K) and Pointing (P) using mobile applications.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. In Sect. 2, we analyze related work. Section 3 describes the experimental design. In Sect. 4, we present the obtained results, then Sect. 5 presents the discussion, and finally, Sect. 6 presents conclusions and future work.

## 2 Related Work

With the rising popularity of mobile devices, the KLM-GOMS model has recently been revised to evaluate interactions based on touch-screen devices [4, 5]. The model KLM-GOMS determined 5 operators: Drawing (D), Keystroke (K), Mental Act (M), Pointing (P) and Homing (H).

Similarly, in [3] he proposed a modified version of the KLM-GOMS model called FLM (fingerstroke level model). The purpose of this study was to define the time it takes to perform the operators of mobile devices with direct movements of the fingers (Drag (D), Point (P), Move (F) and (Touch (T)), it was only applied to typical adults.

Also in [3], the Fingerstroke Level Model (FLM) was proposed, and a game was analyzed using the FLM operators. The empirical study confirmed the effectiveness and efficiency of FLM, and suggested how HCI methods can improve the design of the user interface of mobile games, but the experiment was only applied to adults with experience in video games.

In [7] a study is shown that evaluated the operators of drag, zoom, and movement for mobile devices. The research consisted of comparing efficiency and user satisfaction during navigation with 2D documents on mobile screens. Although the results obtained were positive, the experiment was only applied to users with a typical psychological development.

In the other hand [8] examines the size of the objective and the distance between each one with smartphones. The results of this study show that the larger the size of the lens (image), the easier it will be to use touch technology for this type of user.

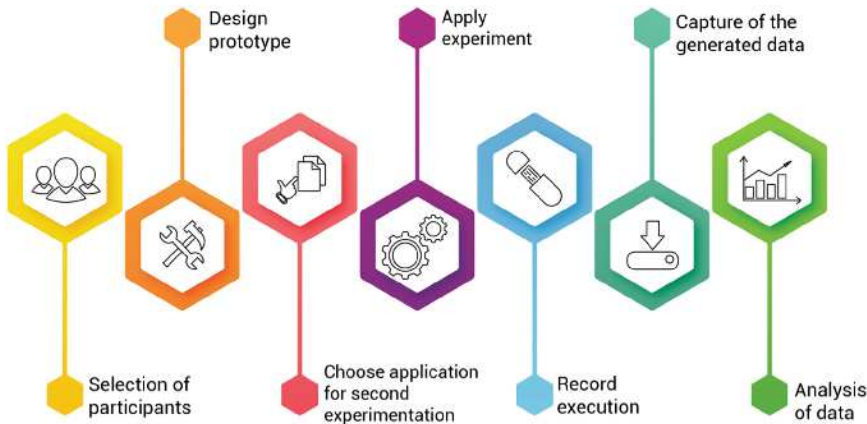
In the same way, in [9] analyzed the interaction of autistic users with mobile devices. This study took into account 6 operators: M, K, G, I (Initial Act), T (Tapping), and S (Swipe). The results suggested that users with level 1 ASD are more likely to perform operations such as K, G, I, and T than users with level 2 ASD.

In this article, we evaluate the K (Keystroke) and P (Pointing) operators using one prototype and one different application. In subsequent works other operators were evaluated, in this article our objective is to evaluate P and K to generate reference values and to be able to propose a KLM model for users with autism.

### 3 Experimental Design

#### 3.1 Method

The purpose of this experiment is to determine the time of keypress that user with ASD can perform with the least amount of effort. It is for this reason that two different image sizes were evaluated to define the appropriate size for this type of users, as shown in Fig. 1.



**Fig. 1.** Methodology of experimentation

##### 3.1.1 Participants

The experiment was carried out with 14 users diagnosed with ASD in a special education school. A group of ASD psychologists assessed and approved the methodology used in this experiment. The users were diagnosed by specialist psychologists and each user was associated with a level of ASD according to the DSM-5 [11]. Users with ASD are between 5 and 11 years old.

##### 3.1.2 Apparatus

For this study, a prototype of an application for mobile devices was designed for the Android platform. This prototype reflects a common interaction widely used in tablets and mobile devices: press and point a screen element.

The objective of the prototype is to present to the users different scenarios of KeyPress, Pointing and automatically collect the time necessary to carry out these interactions. The scenarios presented by the application vary the size of the item that users must press as shown in the Fig. 2.

The developed prototype consisted of pressing the objective that is the image of an orange star in size of 21, 63 and 86 pixels, the task of the user was to press the star, the task was completed when the user pressed the 5 images. This task was repeated once for each image size.

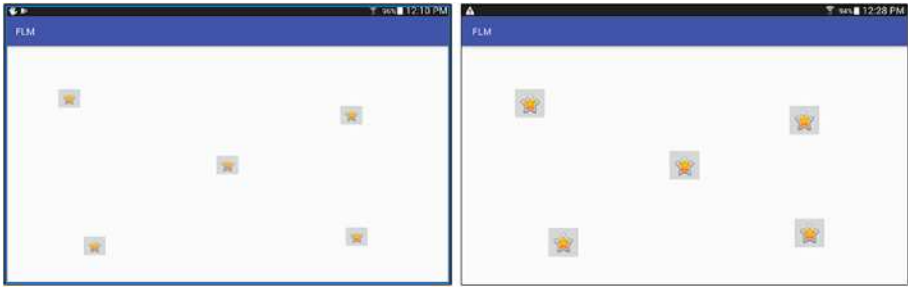


Fig. 2. Characteristics of prototype for Keypress.

The next task was to point to three different image sizes 21, 63 and 86 pixels and with a distance of 95, 324 and 553 pixels as shown in the Fig. 3.



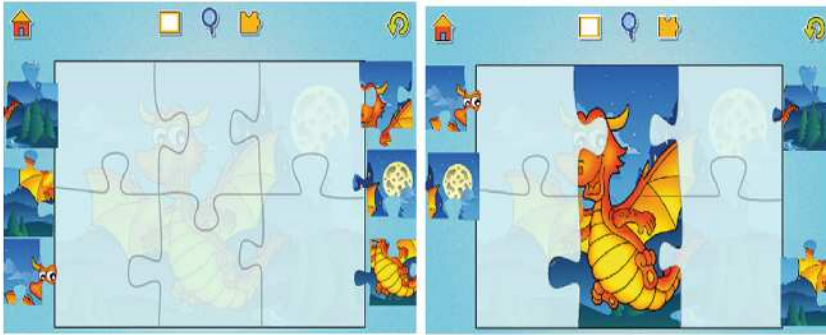
Fig. 3. Characteristics of prototype for Pointing

**Kids Animals Jigsaw Puzzles**

It is an application to assemble puzzles developed for children offered by App Family Kids - Games for boys and girls. Each relaxing puzzle presents a beautiful different scene drawn by a professional cartoon artist, and a unique reward when the puzzle is completed. The scenes include things like cute animals, dragons or dinosaurs, and the rewards can be balloons, fruits, snowflakes or many more.

For this experiment, a Samsung Galaxy Tab 4 tablet was used with specifications that included a 7-inch resolution screen and 1280 × 800 pixels in the Android operating system. Figure 4 shows the characteristics of this application Kids Animals Jigsaw Puzzles, such as image size and drag size.

To measure the interaction time of the users, a video camera was used to record the interaction in the video, and then we used the ELAN is a professional tool for the creation of complex annotations on video and audio resources to measure the time of the video.



**Fig. 4.** Interface of app Kids Animals Jigsaw Puzzles

### 3.1.3 Procedure

The experiment took place in the place where users attend classes, a quiet room was chosen without distractors in which users could interact with the tablet. During the experiment the support staff (psychologists) were explained what the procedure consisted of and the use of the application. The support staff was responsible for carrying out the experiment, which consisted of helping the subjects to do each use case explained in previous sections. Before conducting the experiment, the parents of the subjects signed a letter of consent for the video recording of the subjects, only their hands were recorded, and only while the tablet was being used.

Participants used the index finger of their dominant hand to perform each of the tasks set. While the experiment was running, the participants were asked to execute the task of the first drag as quickly and accurately as possible. When the users started to interact with the applications, these interactions were recorded to measure the time later. All the tasks were repeated at least 3 times, and for the measurement they were only used from the second interaction, since the first one was considered as training.

## 4 Results

In this section we present the times that users need to perform each task for each size of the image and the different distances.

### 4.1 Pointing Task

**Group of ASD Level 1.** For the pointing (P) task with an image size of 31 pixels and a distance of 95 pixels, the results show that the maximum time of use of a user of level 1 was 1.30 s and the minimum of 1.10 s and a median of 1.20. In the case of the image size of 63 pixels with the same distance the results show that the maximum time was 1.63 s and the minimum of 1.37 s and a median of 1.51. For the image size of 86 pixels distance the results show that the maximum time was 0.78 s and the minimum of .45 s and a median of 0.61 as shown in Fig. 5.

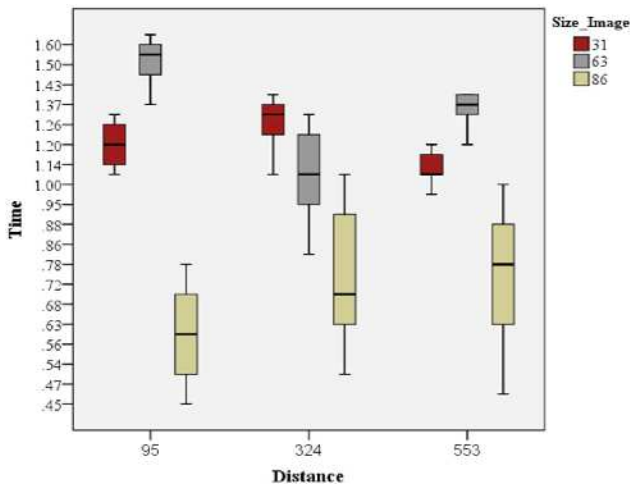


Fig. 5. Task pointing ASD level 1.

In the same task with an image size of 31 pixels and a distance of 324 pixels, the results show that the maximum time of use of a user of level 1 was 1.40 s and the minimum of 1.10 s and a median of 1.28. In the case of the image size of 63 pixels with the same distance the results show that the maximum time was 1.30 s and the minimum of 0.79 s and a median of 1.08. For the image size of 86 pixels distance the results show that the maximum time was 1.10 s and the minimum of 0.49 s and a median of 0.75 as shown in Fig. 5.

Finally the task P with an image size of 31 pixels and a distance of 553 pixels, the results show that the maximum time of use of a user of level 1 was 1.20 s and the minimum of 0.99 s and a median of 1.10. In the case of the image size of 63 pixels with the same distance the results show that the maximum time was 1.40 s and the minimum of 1.20 s and a median of 1.34. For the image size of 86 pixels distance the results show that the maximum time was 1.0 s and the minimum of 0.46 s and a median of 0.75 as shown in Fig. 5.

**Group of ASD Level 2.** In the case of users with level 2 ASD For the pointing (P) task with an image size of 31 pixels and a distance of 95 pixels, the results show that the maximum time of use of a user of level 1 was 1.49 s and the minimum of 1.11 s and a median of 1.35. In the case of the image size of 63 pixels with the same distance the results show that the maximum time was 1.74 s and the minimum of 1.42 s and a median of 1.61. For the image size of 86 pixels distance the results show that the maximum time was 1.40 s and the minimum of 1.20 s and a median of 1.28 as shown in Fig. 6.

In the same task with an image size of 31 pixels and a distance of 324 pixels, the results show that the maximum time of use of a user of level 1 was 1.77 s and the minimum of 1.35 s and a median of 1.56. In the case of the image size of 63 pixels with

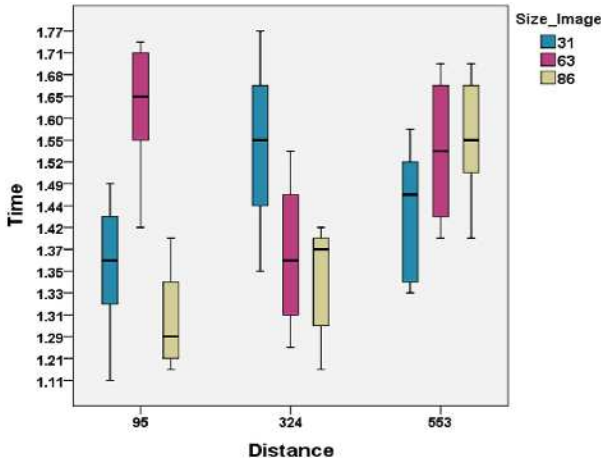


Fig. 6. Task pointing ASD level 2.

the same distance the results show that the maximum time was 1.53 s and the minimum of 1.22 s and a median of 1.38. For the image size of 86 pixels distance the results show that the maximum time was 1.42 s and the minimum of 1.20 s and a median of 1.34 as shown in Fig. 6.

Finally the task P with an image size of 31 pixels and a distance of 553 pixels, the results show that the maximum time of use of a user of level 1 was 1.56 s and the minimum of 1.33 s and a median of 1.45. In the case of the image size of 63 pixels with the same distance the results show that the maximum time was 1.70 s and the minimum of 1.40 s and a median of 1.55. For the image size of 86 pixels distance the results show that the maximum time was 1.70 s and the minimum of 1.40 s and a median of 1.56 as shown in Fig. 6.

## 4.2 Keystroke Task

For the Keystroke (K) task, users with ASD level 1 completed the task in a shorter time than those of level 2. For the task K with the image size of 31 pixels the Maximum time was 0.83 s and the minimum 0.33. In the case of the same task but with an image size of 63 pixels the time maximum was 0.70 and the minimum as 0.40. And for the same task but with an image size of 86 pixels the maximum time was 0.40 and the minimum time was 0.60, as shown in the Fig. 7.

In the execution of the same task Keystroke the users with ASD of level 2 for this task with an image size of 31 pixels the maximum time was 0.90 and the minimum of 0.40. In the case of the execution of the same task but with an image size of 63 pixels, the maximum time was 0.80 and the minimum time was 0.50. Similarly in the execution of the task but with the image size of 86 pixels the maximum time was 0.74 and the minimum was 0.60, as shown in the Fig. 8.

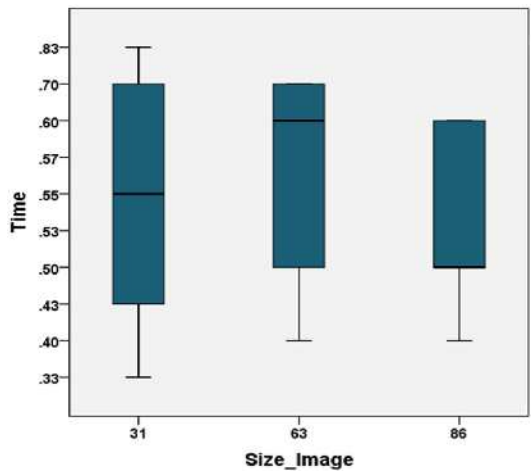


Fig. 7. Task Keystroke ASD level 1.

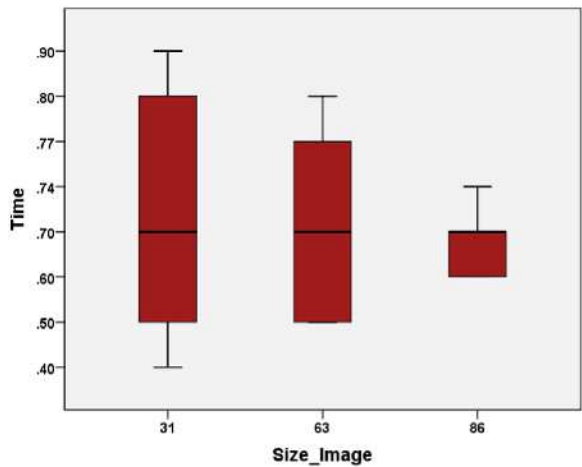
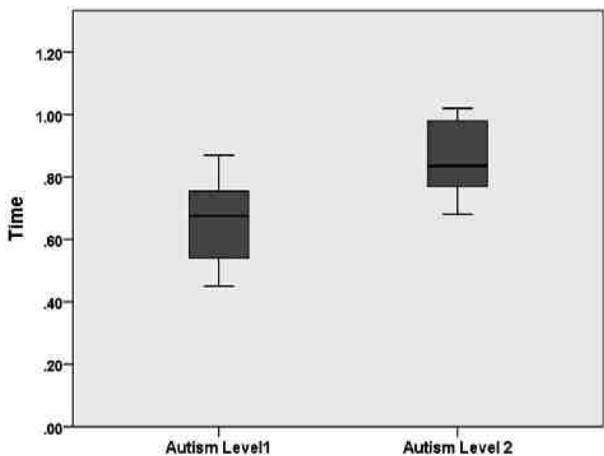


Fig. 8. Task Keystroke ASD level 2.

In the case of the interaction with the application Kids Animals Jigsaw Puzzles, users with ASD level 1 executed the task K in a maximum of 0.87 s and in a minimum time of 0.45 s. For users with level 2 ASD the maximum time to execute the same task was 1.02 s and a minimum of 0.68 s, as can be seen there is a slight variation between both groups, as shows in that Fig. 9.





**Fig. 9.** Task Keystroke for Kids Animals Jigsaw Puzzles ASD level 1 and 2.

## 5 Discussion

The results show that there is a variation in the execution of the task Pointing (P) users with ASD level 1 executed the task 32% slower with the size of the image of 31 pixels and with a distance of 95 pixels, the same is presented with the image of 86 pixels needed 59% more time to execute it. For the distance of 324 pixels users needed 21% more time with the image of 31 pixels and the image of 63 pixels, for the case of the image of 86 pixels needed 32% more time. It can also be observed that for the distance of 553 pixels with an image size of 31 pixels the time required was 24% more than with the image of 63 pixels, it can also be seen that for the image size of 86 pixels it was necessary 32% more time.

In the case of users with level 2 ASD in the execution of the same task P, with the image size of 31 pixels and a distance of 95 pixels they made the task 26% slower than with the image of 63 pixels with the same distance. In the case of the distance of 324 pixels with an image size of 31 pixels, they executed the task 18% slower than with the image of 63 pixels and 86 pixels.

For task K, users with level 1 ASD were 20% faster with the image size of 63 pixels compared to the image of 31 pixels, the same happens with the image size 86 pixels, the task was performed 17% quicker. In the case of users with level 2 ASD they executed the task 47% faster with the image size of 63 pixels with respect to 31 pixels, in the case of the 86 pixels image the percentage was 14% difference.

We can see that the bigger the image, the better the user interacts with the interface. It was also observed that the applications should be as simple as possible to achieve the child's attention. This indicates that developers should take into account the motor skills of users as are users with ASD.

## 6 Conclusions

In this article an experimental design was presented to evaluate the time required for the execution of two tasks Pointing (P) and Keystroke (K), in this experiment a prototype with different image sizes was used to determine which is the size with the that users with ASD can perform the task more easily. In the first task P the results show that the bigger the image and the smaller the distance the execution, I need less time for both groups of users

In this experiment, the time required for each group to perform the operations proposed by KLM and FLM, which are variants of the original model proposed by GOMS, was evaluated.

The results obtained in this study allow us to establish that users with level 1 ASD performed tasks in less time compared to users with level ASD 2, due to the cognitive and motor deficits that each user level has, despite the fact that have the same task, the difference is identified for each of the trawls with the distances used in each of the applications.

As future work, experiments will be carried out with typical users and with users who have some motor disability, this is to be able to counteract the results obtained with this experimentation and be able to compare the results between each group of users, this is with the purpose of being able to develop applications that they adapt to the different motor and cognitive abilities of each user.

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