

Name: Adityabaan Tripathy
Registered email: at9715@srmist.edu.in

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Product Teardown: Current Duolingo Features

Duolingo's core features include:

- **Language courses** across 43 languages including Spanish, French, and less common options like Navajo.
- **Gamification elements:** Streaks, XP points, hearts, and leaderboards to boost engagement.
- **AI-powered features:** Roleplay conversations, "Explain My Answer" feedback, and Video Call practice (Duolingo Max tier).
- **Specialized modules:** Duolingo Music (piano/sheet music), Duolingo Math, and Chess lessons.
- **Assessment tools:** Duolingo English Test (DET) with interactive speaking/listening tasks.
- **Accessibility features:** Offline mode, speech recognition, and mobile compatibility.

Feature Prioritization for MVP

RICE Framework Analysis:

Feature	Reach(Users/ Quarter)	Impact (1- 3)	Confidence (%)	Effort (Person- months)	RICE Score
Core language lessons	500,000	3	90	10	135
Gamification (streaks)	450,000	3	80	5	216
Mobile app (iOS/Android)	600,000	3	95	15	114
Speech recognition	300,000	2	70	8	52.5
AI conversation tools	200,000	2.5	60	20	15

Scoring rationale:

Highest priority: Gamification and core lessons (high reach/impact, low effort)

Lower priority: AI features (high development cost)

KANO Model Classification

Feature	Classification	Reasoning
Core language lessons	Must-be	Essential for basic functionality
Mobile app access	Must-be	Expected by modern users
Gamification	Performance	Increases satisfaction when robust
Speech recognition	Performance	Enhances learning but not critical
AI features	Attractive	Delights users but not required

MVP Feature Set Selection

Given bootstrap budget constraints, the MVP will include:

Included features:

- Core language lessons (5 starter languages)
- Mobile app (iOS/Android) with basic UI
- Gamification: Streaks and XP rewards
- Progress tracking dashboard

Excluded from MVP:

- AI conversation features (high server costs)
- Duolingo English Test (complex infrastructure)
- Music/Math modules (non-core to language learning)

Rationale: Focuses on 80/20 rule—core functionality with minimal development cost while retaining engagement drivers.

GTM Strategy: Viral Growth & Community Building

Phase 1: Pre-launch (0-1 month)

- **Referral program:** Users unlock premium features by inviting 3 friends
- **Influencer seeding:** Partner with language-learning creators on TikTok/Instagram for authentic UGC
- **Waitlist gamification:** Early sign-ups earn "founder badges" visible post-launch

Phase 2: Launch (Month 2)

- **Viral loops:** Shareable streak milestones on social media (e.g., "I've practiced Spanish for 10 days straight!")
- **Community hubs:** Reddit AMAs with polyglots and Duolingo's mascot Duo
- **Partnerships:** Free access for university language clubs (e.g., Spanish departments)

Phase 3: Retention (Months 3-6)

- **Localized challenges:** City-based leaderboards (e.g., "Tokyo Japanese Learners")
- **User-generated content:** Feature top learners in-app with "polyglot stories" ^[12]

Success Metrics

Metric Type	Specific KPIs	Target (First 6 Months)
User Acquisition	Downloads	500,000
	Viral coefficient (invites/user)	≥ 1.2
Engagement	DAU/MAU ratio	> 30%
	Avg. session duration	> 5 minutes
	Streak retention (7-day)	45%
Learning Impact		
	Lesson completion rate	60%
	Skill mastery (Level 1 proficiency)	50,000 users
Business		
	Free-to-paid conversion	5%

Validation approach:

- A/B test gamification variants to optimize streaks ^[10]
- Track NPS scores via in-app surveys ^{[13][14]}

This approach balances feasibility (bootstrapped budget), market needs (core language learning), and viral growth mechanics while providing clear measurement frameworks.