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1MDM1 Digital Media

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Assignment 1: Application comparison

For the first assignment of comparing applications, I wanted to compare 2 language apps I use. Both apps are made for the user to learn one or more languages by giving different assignments.

Shape

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Duolingo

What kind of information can the user control and change?

In the Duolingo app and website, the user can change whether they want to link contacts, change the language course, change whether they want speaking assignments or not and change the notifications.

It makes it so that the user has the best experience in learning a new language. It makes it so that the notifications and assignments can be adjusted to the daily or weekly routine of the user.

A screenshot of a video game

Description automatically generated with medium confidence Graphical user interface, application

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How does the application lead the user activity?

The interface of Duolingo is very clear. The only time I have had to search something for help was to remove a language course I accidentally added.

This apparently could not be found in the app, but on the website. This was not very convenient as I don’t always have my laptop with me.

However, even if I did not look up the steps, I could have still found it by myself using the web version as the steps to take to get to the “my courses” page was clear.

The help center however, for Duolingo is within the app, which is much more convenient, Busuu links to a web page.

Text

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Can the user make changes in the interface?

The only option to change the interface is to turn on/off dark mode. The courses are the same for everybody that does the same level of the language.

Is the interface "inductive" or "deductive"?

The app asks very clear questions on what steps to take next. Such as: What language would you like to learn? Then it shows the flags of each country and the name of the language. It also asks: Do you already know a bit of the chosen language? The app then shows a few buttons with texts like “No” or “A little bit” on which you can click. In the app it is very clear what steps to take to partake in a course. When on the main page there are not many different options, but only to click on which level you want to partake in next, as well as icons that have a clear meaning. Buttons are clear and so is the text. During the learning process when you click on the level you want to learn in on the app, there are very clear instructions on how to do the exercises, such as: “Touch to speak” for speaking assignments or “Put the buttons in the right order” or “Touch the buttons with the words that are being said in the right order”.

A screenshot of a cell phone

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Does the application offer a "progressive disclosure" in relation to its workflow?

In the app, your progress is shown by either having more chapters available to you or by a yellow line around the chapter. Each chapter must be done 5 times (though more is possible to practice or earn prizes) for you to open the next chapter and make progress. You also get weekly email with “Weekly Progress” that show you the number of words or sentences you have learned and how much XP.

Does the application involve an Authorization process? What are the steps involved in the Login/Logout?

The flow of both apps is great, it’s mad extremely clear what option the user has and what steps to take in the process of creating the account and learning within the app or website. You need to sign up using your mail and choose if you want the premium paid version or not. I remember having to confirm my email. To log out of the Duolingo app you must click on the profile icon which is located at the bottom in the middle of the bar. Then you will have to click on the settings icon and scroll down a little bit and press the “Log out” button.

Logo

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Busuu

What kind of information can the user control and change?

In the app and website, the user can change whether they want to link or share their profile on social media or share with friends through whatsapp. They can also change the language course and change the notifications. The same is for the webpage. Many options are the same.

How does the application lead the user activity? (Tip: Look out for the "Help" / "Learn More" sections and notifications about how to use the application)

The Busuu help page links to a webpage instead of being in the app, which is less convenient. The page also has buttons that show up, of which the first ones are about the premium description and billing and business, which are usually not the first things I look for when I have just downloaded an app.

In the chapter of the Web Application Design Book called “The browser framework” It says: “In desktop applications, GUI standards require that nearly all actions be restricted to the dropdown menus at the top of the window. This rule is helpful since everyone knows from experience where to find options; in fact, people even know where to find individual options like “Print” and “Cut” on the dropdown menus.” I feel like this is the same in many applications as well, games or default apps. Because many apps have similar layouts and icon it is much easier for people to find “Settings” because they all have a similar icon. As well as the general dropdown menu which is usually made from 3 lines. In the Busuu app you have download icons next to the chapters. Though they don’t say the actual word “download” it is clear that you need to press it to download the chapter you want to do next, though this is only available for people who have the premium subscription and want to learn offline.

Graphical user interface, text, application

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* + Customization Options
    - Can the user make changes in the interface?

The only option to change the interface is to turn on/off dark mode. The courses are the same for everybody that does the same level of the language. However, compared to Duolingo the interface is not as satisfying to look at or nearly as attractive.

A screenshot of a cell phone

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

* + - Is the interface "inductive" or "deductive"?

The interface of Busuu is a bit more distracting because of the ads for the premium version being at the top of the screen.

There are a lot of different looking buttons to click compared to the Duolingo app. The icon to learn your language is the earth / globe icon, which also confused me. The term “Learn” remind me more of books or glasses. However, because it was the icon on the lower left, I knew that was the one to click to continue learning. I would not say it is deductive. Some things are not as logical as in the Duolingo app. The webpage for Busuu I would say is deductive. There is simply too much information and too many buttons to click for the interface of the app.

* + Does the application offer a "progressive disclosure" in relation to its workflow?

Like Duolingo, the app shows you statistics when you’ve made progress and how fluent you are in the language within the app. It is clear when it comes to showing the rates / tables. It also allows you to look at specific words that are either difficult for you, medium difficulty or strong / easy words. However, I do think there are way too many buttons to click on and unnecessary ads.

Graphical user interface, application

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* + Does the application involve an Authorization process? What are the steps involved in the Login/Logout?

You need to sign up using your mail and choose if you want the premium paid version or not. I also had received an email, but not one to confirm my identity. To log out there are only a few buttons to push, however it is not an app where you’d easily want to log out as it has your personalized profile and course(s). To log out, like with many apps, you simply must click on your profile picture which in the Busuu app is on the lower right, then go to the settings button, scroll down and click “log out”. For both apps, to log in only your password is required.