

TASK 1.2 | USER RESEARCH

# UX FUNDAMENTALS

# INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

\* These are base questions that were prepared for this interview. Some of them have been modified/replaced throughout the interview process.

Q 1

What do you think about learning foreign languages? What do you like most about it and what are the biggest pain points?

Q 2

How much time per week / month do you usually spend on learning foreign languages? Are you happy with your progress?

Q 3

When was the last time you had to learn a good deal of new vocabulary? And what learning methods did you use to make your learning process more efficient?

Q 4

Do you think learning new vocabulary is difficult? If yes, what makes it most difficult to you? If not, how do you manage to make it easy?

Q 5

Have you ever used a vocabulary learning app? If yes - how did you (or didn't) find it helpful, if not, what do you think such application should be capable of?

# MY INTERVIEWEES



**# 1** CHRISTINA R.

- 29 years old
- Digital Marketing Consultant
- Based in Luzerne, Switzerland
- Languages: Swiss German (native), English (second) & Italian (third), French (fourth)
- Frequent user of language apps



**# 2** MARIA N.

- 23 years old
- Student at the University of Zurich, Chinese Studies
- Based in Zürich, Switzerland
- Languages: Swiss German (native), English (second) & Chinese (third)
- Big fan of translating apps, but she's not convinced about the language learning apps in general



**# 3** KAROL R.

- 16 years old
- High school student
- Based in Warsaw, Poland
- Languages: Polish (native), English (second) & German (third)
- Very tech-savvy, studies languages online - whenever it's possible.



# 1

**CHRISTINA R.**

*Q 1 What do you think about learning foreign languages? What do you like most about it and what are the biggest pain points?*

I love languages since I was a kid. To me, learning foreign languages means embracing new cultures – and I guess that’s what I like the most about it. Getting to know people from different countries can be very eye opening and fun, learning languages becomes then easier and more natural. I started traveling at the very young age with my parents, then it became my habit when I grew up. It always gives me great motivation to review my language skills before and during my holidays. I usually do it through reading books or articles. I also like playing around with the language apps like Duolingo or TripLingo. Pronunciation is the biggest pain point to me, as it’s really hard to get rid of my German accent.

*Q 2 How much time per week / month do you usually spend on learning foreign languages? Are you happy with your progress?*

I haven’t attended to any language course since a while now, so I don’t have a study routine to be honest. However, I do spend a couple of hours per week on listening and reading the news in Italian or French. Sometimes I also use the language apps when I’m on the train. So I would say in total it’s probably around 4h per week on average. I’m quite happy with the progress if considering the small amount of time invested in the learning. But I wish I pushed myself harder and tried to practice my skills through speaking more frequently.

*Q 3 When was the last time you had to learn a good deal of new vocabulary? And what learning methods did you use to make your learning process more efficient?*

The last time I studied vocabulary very heavily was when I moved to Italy for work in 2017. I stayed there for 8 months and during this period of time I had a very strong motivation to learn new Italian words every day. I remember I learned a lot with Duolingo – it helped me to catch many practical sentences. As I was in Italy, I could leverage this knowledge right away so I was learning very smoothly. In general, flashcards are quite a good method to me as well, but I need some context in order to remember the meaning for real, like for example the situation picture or the sample sentence.

*Q 4 Do you think learning new vocabulary is difficult? If yes, what makes it most difficult to you? If not, how do you manage to make it easy?*

I think learning new vocabulary requires a lot of commitment because it’s a very repetitive process. Therefore you need to keep yourself motivated in order to succeed in the long term perspective. As for me, It’s really hard to keep me engaged if the exercise is only repetitive, not interactive, because then I lose my focus after 15 min. That’s why the flashcards are never my first method of choice. I rather prefer to read or translate some articles or dialogs, because then I can see the story behind and it’s just easier to remember.

*Q 5 How would you describe the perfect vocabulary learning app?*

I believe vocabulary learning app should be just effortless to use. Normally I use my apps on-the-go, when I travel or commute, and then I have this moment to relax and refresh my memory in a short amount of time. I would love it to have the pronunciation correction function. Also, it should be more in the form of an educational game, when you need to connect the meanings or pictures, quiz is fun too.





#1

CHRISTINA R.

## DOING

- *I usually learn languages through reading articles or books.*
- *I also like playing around with the language apps like Duolingo, Babbel or Memrise.*
- *I don't have a study routine*
- *I spend a couple of hours per week on listening and reading the news in Italian or French.*
- *I also use the language apps when I'm on the train.*
- *I stayed in Italy for 8 months and during this period of time I had a very strong motivation to learn new Italian words every day.*
- *I learned a lot with Duolingo – it helped me to catch many practical sentences.*
- *Normally I use my apps on-the-go, when I travel or commute, and then I have this moment to relax and refresh my memory in a short amount of time.*

## THINKING

- *To me, learning foreign languages means embracing new cultures.*
- *Getting to know people from different countries can be very eye opening and fun, learning languages becomes then easier and more natural.*
- *Flashcards are quite a good method to me as well, but I need some context in order to remember the meaning for real, like for example the situation picture or the sample sentence.*
- *I think learning new vocabulary requires a lot of commitment because it's a very repetitive process. You need to keep yourself motivated in order to succeed in the long term perspective.*
- *I believe vocabulary learning app should be just effortless to use.*
- *Quiz is always fun!*

## FEELING

- *I love languages since I was a kid.*
- *Pronunciation is the biggest pain point to me, as it's really hard to get rid of my German accent.*
- *I'm quite happy with the progress if considering the small amount of time invested in the learning.*
- *I wish I pushed myself harder and tried to practice my skills through speaking more frequently.*
- *It's really hard to keep me engaged if the exercise is only repetitive, not interactive, because then I lose my focus after 15 min. That's why the flashcards are never my first method of choice.*
- *I prefer to read or translate some articles or dialogs, because then I can see the story behind and it's just easier to remember.*
- *I would love the vocabulary learning app to be more in the form of an educational game, when you need to connect the meanings or pictures.*



## #2 MARIA N.

*Q1 What do you think about learning foreign languages? What do you like most about it and what are the biggest pain points?*

To me language learning has been the first priority since I chose Chinese Studies as my specialization (at the university). I think in general it's a great challenge to obtain fluency in a foreign language if you're a grown up person, it's different for kids of course. I believe the most important thing about the language learning is the consistency: regular repetition and practice. But in case of Mandarin there's an extra difficulty – tones and characters. In order to learn how to pronounce words and write characters properly you need to practice it thousand times – that's so frustrating and time-consuming. But I love learning Chinese overall, especially the calligraphy part – it can be very relaxing.

*Q2 How much time per week / month do you usually spend on learning foreign languages? Are you happy with your progress?*

I can say without the hesitation it's between 30 and 40 hours per week, including my time in Mandarin class and studying on my own. After 2 years of learning Chinese I still feel like I barely scratched the surface of this language, it's just so different to anything else I know.

*Q3 When was the last time you had to learn a good deal of new vocabulary? And what learning methods did you use to make your learning process more efficient?*

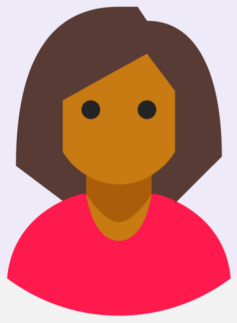
Today! (laughing). So usually I practice my vocabulary by writing the characters down many times on the piece of paper and reading them at the same time. It's a very old and proven method to learn Chinese. I don't really need any digital tools except for the dictionary on my phone, but I don't have anything against the Google Translate either.

*Q4 Do you think learning new vocabulary is difficult? If yes, what makes it most difficult to you? If not, how do you manage to make it easy?*

It's very difficult, the more I learn the more I see how much I still don't know. With Mandarin it's like a never ending story, there are 5,000 characters that can be single words, many of them have more than 1 way to pronounce them. Every new word that you want to learn means 3 things to remember about: the meaning, the character and the pronunciation, that's the biggest challenge as for the Chinese vocabulary. I think it can only be done with the repetition – at least in my case.

*Q5 How would you describe the perfect vocabulary learning app?*

I'm not sure. Some of my classmates are using apps heavily cause they say it makes studying less boring. As for me, I'm not convinced about it. I rather prefer to feel the pen or brush when I learn calligraphy. But if there's an app that provides more sophisticated calligraphy hints and lets you practice both writing and pronunciation – with the correction function of course – that would be really great. And I would love if there were some calligraphy videos!



#2

MARIA N.

## DOING

- *Usually I practice my vocabulary by writing the characters down many times on the piece of paper and reading them at the same time.*
- *I don't really need any digital tools except for the dictionary on my phone, but I don't have anything against the Google Translate either.*
- *Some of my classmates are using apps heavily cause they say it makes studying less boring.*

## THINKING

- *To me language learning has been the first priority since I chose Chinese Studies as my specialization.*
- *I think in general it's a great challenge to obtain fluency in a foreign language if you're a grown up person.*
- *I believe the most important thing about the language learning is the consistency: regular repetition and practice.*
- *Every new word that you want to learn means 3 things to remember about: the meaning, the character and the pronunciation, that's the biggest challenge as for the Chinese vocabulary. I think it can only be done with the repetition – at least in my case.*
- *But if there's an app that provides more sophisticated calligraphy hints and lets you practice both writing and pronunciation – with the correction function of course – that would be really great.*

## FEELING

- *In order to learn how to pronounce words and write characters properly you need to practice it thousand times – that's so frustrating and time-consuming.*
- *I love learning Chinese overall, especially the calligraphy part – it can be very relaxing.*
- *After 2 years of learning Chinese I still feel like I barely scratched the surface of this language, it's just so different to anything else I know.*
- *Learning new vocabulary is very difficult, the more I learn the more I see how much I still don't know.*
- *As for me, I'm not convinced about the language learning apps. I rather prefer to feel the pen or brush when I learn calligraphy.*
- *I would love if there were some calligraphy videos!*





#3

**KAROL R.**

*Q 1 What do you think about learning foreign languages? What do you like most about it and what are the biggest pain points?*

Learning languages comes in handy when I'm traveling or watching foreign movies. In my school passing language certifications makes you qualified for student exchange program, which I'm applying for this year. It takes a lot of time and effort to study for the exams, but I think staying abroad for longer is the best way to really become comfortable with the language. I like the idea of knowing many languages and I definitely want to speak more than 3, it will help me to get a great job in future, I'm sure. Studying language at school is the biggest pain point to me, I'm so fed up with the amount of homework and all the book exercises that make me sleepy. I prefer more interactive ways of learning.

*Q 2 How much time per week / month do you usually spend on learning foreign languages? Are you happy with your progress?*

It's 6 hours of English and 2 hours of German per week, plus around 3 hours of studying at home. It makes a total of 11 h per week. I usually get good grades in all language subjects and I'm happy with my progress in general. My school program is also very language-oriented, so I think the level is quite advanced if compared to other high schools.

*Q 3 When was the last time you had to learn a good deal of new vocabulary? And what learning methods did you use to make your learning process more efficient?*

Next week I'll have a big test that will cover 3 chapters from my German textbook, so I've been studying for that. Obviously there's a plenty of new vocabulary to study, so I've been using the flashcard app called Memrise, it's quite fun actually and my textbook is listed there. On top of that I frequently listen to dialogs, it helps me to remember how and when to use new words.

*Q 4 Do you think learning new vocabulary is difficult? If yes, what makes it most difficult to you? If not, how do you manage to make it easy?*

Yes it is difficult, especially in German the forms and conjugations are the worst. But it's not that bad if you have a smart approach to it. Sometimes I pick up a lot of new vocabulary by watching German youtubers – but it must be with with subtitles. I like playing games as well. Recently I discovered this app called Mindsnacks – it's all about learning languages by playing games. I'd surely recommend it to my friends.

*Q 5 How would you describe the perfect vocabulary learning app?*

As I have mentioned already, I like game apps. But I wish someone could bring it to the very next level, for example if the app was compatible with my VR set. Mix of the shooting game and vocabulary learning app in virtual reality would be something.





#3

KAROL R.

## DOING

- *Learning languages comes in handy when I'm traveling or watching foreign movies.*
- *In my school passing language certifications makes you qualified for student exchange program, which I'm applying for this year.*
- *I usually get good grades in all language subjects.*
- *Obviously there's a plenty of new vocabulary to study, so I've been using the flashcard app called Memrise.*
- *I frequently listen to dialogs, it helps me to remember how and when to use new words.*
- *Sometimes I pick up a lot of new vocabulary by watching German youtubers – but it must be with subtitles.*
- *Recently I discovered this app called Mindsnacks – it's all about learning languages by playing games.*

## THINKING

- *I think staying abroad for longer is the best way to really become comfortable with the language.*
- *My school program is also very language-oriented, so I think the level is quite advanced if compared to other high schools.*
- *Memrise is quite fun actually.*
- *Learning new vocabulary is not that bad if you have a smart approach to it.*
- *I'd surely recommend Mindsnacks to my friends.*
- *Mix of the shooting game and vocabulary learning app in virtual reality would be something.*

## FEELING

- *I like the idea of knowing many languages and I definitely want to speak more than 3, it will help me to get a great job in future, I'm sure.*
- *Studying language at school is the biggest pain point to me, I'm so fed up with the amount of homework and all the book exercises that make me sleepy.*
- *I prefer more interactive ways of learning.*
- *I'm happy with my progress in general.*
- *Yes learning new vocabulary is difficult, especially in German the forms and conjugations are the worst.*
- *I like playing games as well.*
- *I like game apps. But I wish someone could bring it to the very next level, for example if the app was compatible with my VR set.*