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Informative Abstract

With cross-cultural inhabitation on the rise and international travel reawakening after the COVID-19 pandemic, people are hungry to practice speaking and responding to questions in another language. However, not everyone can interact face-to-face or even video conference with a person who speaks a foreign language. Many studies have emerged over the last decade supporting how learning a foreign language strengthens cognitive abilities, prevents dementia, and promotes cross-cultural awareness (Fox, Corretjer, Webb). In addition, learning a language is just plain fun. These factors are why language learning applications for mobile and tablets are in such high demand. Mobile applications such as Duolingo, Babbel, and Memrise have created opportunities for individuals to learn and practice a foreign language in the privacy of their own home, while commuting, or relaxing on vacation. Unfortunately, these apps fall short in listening comprehension and speaking practice. They especially underperform in providing users (people who use the application) exercises that improve the understanding of questions asked in a foreign language. This is where a new mobile-based, software application called ListenEar comes in. People who download and use ListenEar will develop their listening comprehension skills in whichever language they want to learn because this is the streamlined focus of ListenEar. Overtime, users will be able to understand the spoken content of a foreign language and speak more easily with others when traveling to the country in which that language is spoken. This increase in aural understanding will decrease the user’s fear of saying the wrong thing and lower the probability of miscommunications. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) are continuing to advance in linguistic arenas as exemplified by technology such as Apple’s Siri and Amazon’s Alexa. ListenEar will use AI functions to determine what spoken items to deliver to the user based on their language level and to assess the accuracy of the user’s responses.

Works Cited

Fox, Rebecca, et al. “Benefits of Foreign Language Learning and Bilingualism: An Analysis of Published Empirical Research 2012–2019.” *Foreign Language Annals*, vol. 52, no. 4, Dec. 2019, pp. 699–726. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1111/flan.12424.