Ida Chow | 15-112 Term Project | “Language Journal”

**Competitive Analysis**

DUOLINGO

Duolingo strengths lie in how engaging, social, and innovative the entirety of the app is. In terms of actual language it has a *set curriculum* essentially built by those who have proficiency in said language. It starts with basics, such as nouns and more “essential” subjects like family and conversational phrase. One part of the success of Duolingo as a language teaching app is its integrated *audio abilities*. Being able to hear words and repeat them out loud helps learners adjust to saying words the proper way. Because of a set curriculum, Duolingo also offers the option to skip ahead to certain checkpoints by showing proficiency. The social aspect includes being able to compare earned points with friends who are also utilizing the app. The innovation of the app lies in the reCAPTCHA system, but that lies more outside of the app’s ability to teach a language. Some shortcomings of Duolingo – that are really not at the fault of Duolingo itself – is the inability for people to really customize the curriculum. This may not be necessary when just learning a language in one’s own free time – as Duolingo intended – but in the more impromptu-style of learning focused on in this term project, this is more of a con.

ROSETTA STONE

Rosetta Stone is one well-known language learning digital services that has been around for quite a while. It’s known for its extremely faceted software which has all sorts of various features from mini-games to very detailed graphics. Another useful part of this system, which also uses *set curricula* for its languages, is again the *audio feature*. It uses voice recognition as a decent part of how the curriculum is laid out. Hearing words and having the feature to repeat them back is again a crucial part of language development that many other digital language learning apps lack. Rosetta Stone’s vast number of languages offered, including those that are character based, is one advantage it has over other competitive apps like Duolingo. One drawback to Rosetta Stone is the pricetag, and also how complex it is, as some people prefer to either learn a language in a classroom, or do it leisurely at their own pace on an app more geared towards that lifestyle like Duolingo.

GOOGLE TRANSLATE

While Google Translate is not necessarily a language learning application, it is a great aid when actually going through the process of learning a language. It’s ability to quickly *translate* from near all somewhat commonly used languages to one another is very helpful. It also incorporates some (somewhat finicky but decently utilizable) *voice-to-text pronunciation*. It serves better for the use of impromptu learning, but has limited capabilities when it comes to storing learned words and allowing revisitation.

SPEECH JOURNAL

A small and seemingly unknown way of learning languages that is most similar to this term project. It builds on the idea of having a customizable “language journal” that follows along with the progress of the user, building a archive-dictionary that grows with the vocabulary of the user. It implements audio recording and visual images – that are all custom from the user – that allow the vocabulary to have a unique and custom visual, audio, and linguistic frame of reference. From what is available online, the app doesn’t have clear organization which could be an issue in keeping track of progress and revisiting words.

QUIZLET

The customizability of Quizlet has allowed it to be used for everything from science to the humanities to language. Recent additions to the basic Quizlet flashcard app is the addition of mini-games targeted to help ground ideas and terms into the user’s mind. The *ability to search and store* personalized terms and definitions is extremely beneficial to the usability of the app as a learning tool. In terms of the cross-cultural workability of this term project, the ability to customize may be the most helpful to fit each learner’s optimal way of learning. *The ability to attach different languages via your own audio* to vocabulary is especially nice. Quizlet is, however, not language specific, so it may lack the full functionalities that language learning apps like Duolingo or Rosetta Stone have, such lack of set curriculum or inability to check the pronunciation of words.