**Student Name:** Jess Lee Shi Ying

**Matric Number:** A0190083J

**Tutorial:** TW*5*

**NM3243, AY2022/23, Semester 01**

**Assignment Focus:** Emotional Interaction

**Assignment 2 – Emotional Connection**

**Duolingo – Emotionally Connective**

Duolingo is a language learning platform consisting of multiple interactive features that emotionally connect with users.

The use of cute icons and pastel-colored design makes it light-hearted (Helen Sharp, 2019) and motivates users to learn the language. Each language category is represented by a cute icon. For instance, the family category is denoted by an adorable baby icon. These icons are also pastel-colored, making them stand out amidst the dark background. The icons and light color palette used make the interface aesthetically pleasing and calm the stresses (Design Wizard, 2020) of learning a new language by making the interface seem light-hearted and fun. This motivates the users to keep learning.

Moreover, Duolingo gamifies its app by encouraging learners to maintain their learning streaks and earn rewards while they complete daily quests. By strategically gamifying and framing the learning modules as “quests”, it keeps users thrilled to continue learning as they see them as fun challenges to conquer. Learners can also purchase “heart refills” to eliminate their frustrations of being prevented to take lessons if they exhaust all existing hearts through repeated mistakes. Furthermore, seeing the green progress bars filled gives users a sense of accomplishment and motivates them to unlock the subsequent categories through more learning. By eliminating potential user frustrations and creating avenues to emotionally uplift users, users then form an emotional connection with Duolingo.

The use of Duolingo stories also connects with learners emotionally. Hearing the characters speak gives them personality (Helen Sharp, 2019), bringing life to them and the process of learning a new language. It sets the learners on a rollercoaster journey of emotions as they are immersed in an actual lively conversation with the tone, rhythm and accent being expressed by the characters. By making the interface expressive, this creates an emotional impact on the users (Helen Sharp, 2019). Moreover, when learners hear the iconic high pitched “Ding” signaling the right choice being selected, it makes them happy and feel accomplished. Such sonification (Helen Sharp, 2019)is used to encourage and motivate the learners.

Duolingo also uses written verbal language to emotionally connect with learners. For instance, Duolingo regularly sends out notification to users of the application, saying “we missed you!” when the user stops using Duolingo for some time. It tugs on the user’s heartstrings by making them feel wanted, in hopes they will get back on Duolingo. Also, when users select the right option, there would be words of praise like “Excellent!” in green, making learners feel encouraged in their learning.

According to Norman’s model of emotions and behavior, Duolingo demonstrated high emotional impact. It stimulates the users viscerally with its appealing visuals, expressive characters and constant praise. Behaviorally, learners find Duolingo as a useful and easy-to-use language learning platform. Reflectively, learners are able to form socio-emotional connection with others around the world with the new language skills.

**Interactive Voice Response System – Annoying Example**

One drawback of IVR systems is that they often have long automated menus (Milsoft Utility Solutions, 2022). Oftentimes, they would relay a series of instructions before users can select the appropriate option. While the instructions are comprehensive to enable callers to select the right response and be directed to the right resources for their queries, it also poses a series of issues. The lengthiness of the instructions can be frustrating to callers who find the pace of automated speech slow yet are compelled to sit through the entire message to know what to select. If one misses a small portion of the message due to external noise disruption, the entire message will be repeated (Helen Sharp, 2019) because it lacks a rewind function that allows callers to skip to the missed part. This can be very annoying for callers given that it is very time consuming. This contrasts with speaking to a person where doubts can be clarified immediately and even expanded on.

Another drawback would be the system ambiguity arising from the lack of feedback and visual representation. When callers are prompted to select a key and they select a key that was unmentioned, the system remains silent and the call does not progress. This can leave the callers confused since there is no feedback to them that they have pressed on an invalid key nor show them what keys are valid to press for the call to proceed upon clicking the incorrect key. Furthermore, callers are often required to key in a number followed by a hex key. However, some people might not know what a hex key is. Only the hex symbol is displayed on the keypad, with no written text on the keypad nor visual representation over the call that indicates the symbol to be a hex key. This can result in annoyance for the callers.

Furthermore, IVRS are automated. It does not engage in a two-way conversation with the caller. Rather, it gives one-way instructions mechanically. Thus, it makes the call feel emotionally stale since there is no actual human presence and engagement. There is also a general perception that IVRS can only assist with frequently asked questions rather than complex ones. Hence, some people would perceive IVRS as annoying and inflexible given its inability to empathize with and address one’s complex issues effectively.

For some, the music played while putting the caller on hold can be annoying when the same song is repeated or sound scratchy (Milsoft Utility Solutions, 2022). The music, while well-intentioned to put callers at ease while waiting to speak to a live agent, can backfire and seem annoying to some.

While the IVR system is generally useful and easy to use, it could pose some usability issues to those who are technologically unsavvy. It could also get annoying with its repeated songs, lengthy voice notes and message rewinding limitations. Overall, there is a lack of emotional connection with users viscerally. Users generally do not hold the IVR system close to their hearts but rather see it as a means to be directed to the right resources. Thus, one can see how it lacks emotional appeal to users with Norman’s model of emotions and behavior.

# Bibliography

Helen Sharp, J. P. (2019). *Interaction Design : Beyond Human-Computer Interaction.*

Design Wizard. (2020, May 15). *How to Use Pastel Colors in Graphic Design*. Retrieved from https://designwizard.com/blog/design-tips/pastel-colors/#:~:text=Pastel%20colors%20are%20typically%20described,lasting%20popularity%20in%20graphic%20design.

Milsoft Utility Solutions. (2022). *IVR Systems: 6 Mistakes you Want to Avoid*. Retrieved from https://www.milsoft.com/newsroom/common-ivr-systems-mistakes-to-avoid/