NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

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GramBeast

https://github.com/louiemontes/CS386_GramBeast

D1.2 - Interviews

CS386

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Professor Marco Gerosa

Interviews:

Julian-

I interviewed two people at the same time. Their names are Jeffery Somers and Ben Thompson. Jeffery is a junior at Northern Arizona University and he is majoring in Exercise Science with a minor in a Spanish. Jeffery is an honor student but admittedly in the interview, Jeffery says that sometimes he has a rough time staying motivated to study. Once I told him about our software that we will be developing, he thought it was a great idea and says that it would definitely keep students motivated to want to actually study. This kind of approach gives students incentive and no one wants to let their pet starve due to the lack of studying. He also says that it can also feed into the competitive instinct that most students possess, but are unable to demonstrate in a normal classroom environment. Ben is also majoring in exercise science with a minor in a foreign language, but he has a different approach when it comes to schoolwork than Jeffery. Ben is a lot more persistent in his studying, he describes himself as very eager to learn, and it doesn't take much to motivate him to study. But after introducing him to the idea of the software that we are planning on developing, he says that it would be a great relief from all of the constant textbook studying and it would be a great way to get students more excited about sitting down and having to study and learn new things.

Jacob-
1. Christopher Young-Spears is an HRM major at NAU and is starting his spanish minor. FIrst language was English and Spanish is completely new to him. His response to how difficult it is to learn was an 8 out of 10. Use of spanish outside of class is minimal, but agrees that study apps are a useful tool for beginners. He admits to using his phone habitually every day but rarely to study. The hardest part of learning the new language is to actually use it in a conversation, but the easiest part being learning the actual alphabet. On a scale of 1-10 he answered an 8 when describing how well he is doing in the class. When asked more about a potential study app, he proposed features such as flashcards to help learn vocabulary and practice tests to help review his material.
2. Gerardo Pinales Jr. is a BioMed major at NAU and is currently in his second year of French. His first language was Spanish, and finds this class to be of 6 difficulty on a 1-10 scale. He takes the class every day but finds the spoken word to be of little time in his practice. He finds studying on his phone on an ap to be of 8 on a 1-10 scale. Phone usage he agrees to take up at least half of his day, but not any much related to studying but potential reader and interested in participating in an app with his present knowledge. He believes the hardest part of the new language is speaking and hearing on a consistent basis, specifically notes to remember is his weakness. The easiest part he thinks is to relate structure to speaking spanish. He currently thinks he has a B in the class. He agrees that that studying every day would increase his long term memory in learning the material, and would like to see complexity within the study material, specifically noting a feature of natural language comprehension.

Luis-
1. Katie Schwartz is a Spanish professor here at NAU. As someone who is not a native speaker of what she teaches, she was an excellent person to interview for opinions on the product. She mentioned daily study habits has never troubled her, but she would be interested in a virtual pet fed by correct answers to a studied language every couple of days… if only just for extra practice. She would give students extra credit for keeping their pets alive come the end of the semester. However, she was unsure how she felt about a scoreboard to keep students in the know on where they stand in terms of pet health amongst each other. She prefers we use an animal skin instead of a plant skin for what an end-user would want to feed. She does suggest a way to "pack lunches" for pets so that the site does not need to be checked in on everyday as she thinks it to be unfair how a student may not have internet access for a day or two and consequently lose a chance at extra credit.
2. Blanca Acosta is another Spanish teacher here at NAU. She is a native speaker of Spanish but did have to learn English and like Professor Schwartz was self disciplined enough to study on her own daily. She believes most people in her class (currently she teaches SPA102) would find our product helpful and she would offer extra credit to her class for pet maintaining until the end of the semester provided the questions were not too hard or too easy for her class' overall proficiency level in Spanish. She likes the idea of a scoreboard for her students but only viewable to her.
3. Mounia Mnouer is Luis' Arabic teacher and head of the Arabic Language Department of NAU. She knows four languages and had to learn in a school setting two of them, them being French and English. She did not have self-discipline struggles in learning any of her languages but does think students may benefit from the product nonetheless. The effect of the product on self discipline she thinks is hard to say because while she would offer extra credit for keeping a pet alive by the end of her class, she also thinks that extra credit alone may be the sole reason to increase someone's self discipline and not so much the product because of a student's intentions to earn extra credit. She was adamantly against the idea of public scoreboard of students' pets' healths and would prefer an animal skin as opposed to a plant skin. She would not consider using the product herself but does think other people with poorer study habits would benefit.
4. Erica Hess is an associate professor of French at NAU who is not a native French speaker, but had no study habit problems when learning French. She is very much for offering extra credit to keep a pet alive by the end of a semester, and thinks a scoreboard is a great idea with conditions: the scoreboard must be anonymous with some sort of user ID only a single student knows of so that he or she can compare his or her pet's health to anonymous people only known to be part of his or hers class. As in, someone can see how him or she stacks against the rest of their peers but not know who in particular is feeding or neglecting their pets. Competition in learning she believes to be an effective driver of better studying.   She thinks an anonymous scoreboard would help students be competitive in the harder French classes but that the lower French classes would only care about the extra credit.
5. Ben Cogdall is a Spanish teacher at NAU who learned Spanish at a prestigious level however admitted to the occasional slacking when learning Spanish back in his highschool days. He thinks offering extra credit for keeping a pet alive by the end of the semester is something he

would do and is an exciting idea to motivate students.   His exact answer on a scoreboard was semi-forgotten by Luis but he leaned towards caution and skepticism in that being an effective motivator for students. He has tried other language learning software like Duolingo and mentioned he would personally give GramBeast a try for his own amusement. He preferred an animal skin over a plant one for the entity students would maintain.   He did make it a point to mention that questions should not be too hard.

6. Dr. Luke Maring is a Philosophy professor and he was interviewed as a potential user. He mentions that external pressures to learn anything are not effective on him and that most of his learning has been through intrinsic reasoning and basically brute will power alone. That said, he mentioned he would consider using the product even if he does not care about how he compares to others by means of scoreboard and does not care about keeping a virtual pet alive… he just likes the opportunity for more practice. He lastly noted that animal skins over plant skins is better, and that the animals have to be real cute.

7. Roberto Serpas is a senior lecturer of Spanish at NAU and he was the most enthusiastic about this product ...so much so he gave Luis a business card to be kept in the know as soon as this product can be used in his scholastic plans by the Fall of 2017 semester. He mentions self discipline to be something he and pretty much everyone else struggles with in learning a new language and occasional laziness comes from us all. He thinks keeping a pet alive by the end of the semester is a great idea provided that the questions to feed the pet do not take too long out of a student's day to solve because he does not want this side extra credit project of the students to get in the way of their regular homework. Mr. Serpas wanting to give extra credit for this is a big deal because he said early in the interview he is mostly against making extra credit assignments as in his words he believes: "If you needed more to do, I would give you more work". He wants a way for teachers to customize what kind of questions that would feed the pets for particular weeks in a semester so the questions are relevant to coursework at a given a time in a semester. For his class, he wants to give us questions and answers to put in GramBeast. On the scoreboard concept he is only in favor of the scoreboard if it strictly shows what percent of a class has pets alive at a given time in the semester available. He also wants a choice for students to choose between plant skins, animal skins, or both. He does not think the product is for him but that his students would certainly benefit from near-daily light practice.

Kalen-

Jeffrey Hunter is a junior Communications major, who also minors in spanish. For Jeff one of the harder parts he found in learning spanish was the grammar along with imperfect subjunctives. He believes that using the software would be a great idea, especially if there is an incentive for extra credit by keeping the pet alive by the end of the semester, as any extra practice can really make a difference in learning a new language. One issue he finds though is keeping the pet alive by taking care of it daily, as some people do not have the time to login every day, do to time constraints or other unforeseen issues. Although he does believe it would be a great study tool, even if the student does not keep the pet alive throughout the whole semester. A suggestion he gives is a feedback to the user on what they missed and the answer being explained to the user in a clear concise way.

Along with using achievements to track the user's milestones which will provide the user with more incentive to use the application more often.

Conclusion:

After 12 different one on one interviews, with different interviewee's that in our case identify as end-users; They include professors, lecturers, and associates all within different language fields such as Spanish, Arabic, and French. We also included current students of language courses both within the major/minor field and just using it for their cultural understanding requirements at NAU. In each of the interviews it seemed worthy to note that these core values for our system stuck out; The ability to retain long term memory within the languages consists of studying and speaking the words out loud. Professors seemed eager to have a system where they could be included to see the given work of students' habits, furthering their range to be able to teach accordingly, and provide extra credit incentives. We pondered together and concluded that with these results we should continue our system included with pet customization and complexity such as natural language processing within games to help with both the needs of our found users.

Group Participation:

Julian- Conclusion, two interviews
Jacob- Conclusion, two interviews
Luis- Project repository, seven interviews, front page
Kalen- Conclusion, Interview