

Lesson 1.1: Introduction to UX and Design Thinking

Goals achieved:

UX Design and the design thinking process

Applying the design thinking process to learning vocabulary apps problem

Task:

Explore vocabulary learning mobile applications through practicing the “Understand” stage of the design thinking process by doing an informal competitive analysis of a few existing mobile applications for learning vocabulary.

Bigger picture of the project:

As mentioned in the course project, vocabulary learning ranges from learning words for new language to saving new terms from a business or UX design course.

In this project, I’ve chosen learning a new language as the objective of the mobile application to be built.

- The mobile application can be used by wide range of users i.e. students, professionals, travelers, and middle-aged people to learn new language that could potentially improve communication, build academic vocabulary, and motivate to learn more.
- The mobile application can be used while shopping, travelling, waiting to meet someone etc.

Approach towards the task:

To redesign the experience of memorizing and understanding new concepts, techniques, and terms by exploring how people learn vocabulary and design a mobile app addressing their goals and problems, I did a brief study on vocabulary apps “Study Blue” and “Quizlet” to gain basic knowledge on how vocabulary apps work and understand users’ pain points in general.

- The apps in general have features like account information, languages, notifications, latest activity, classes, settings etc.

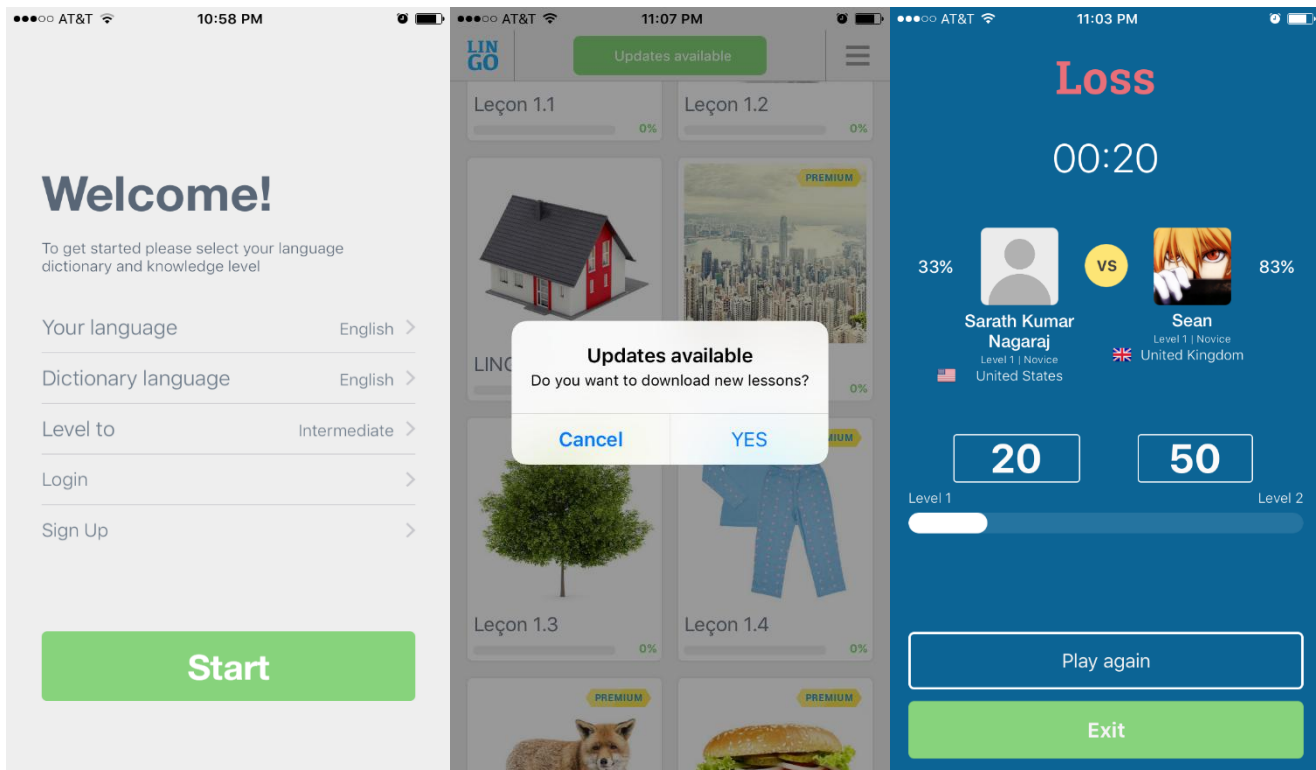
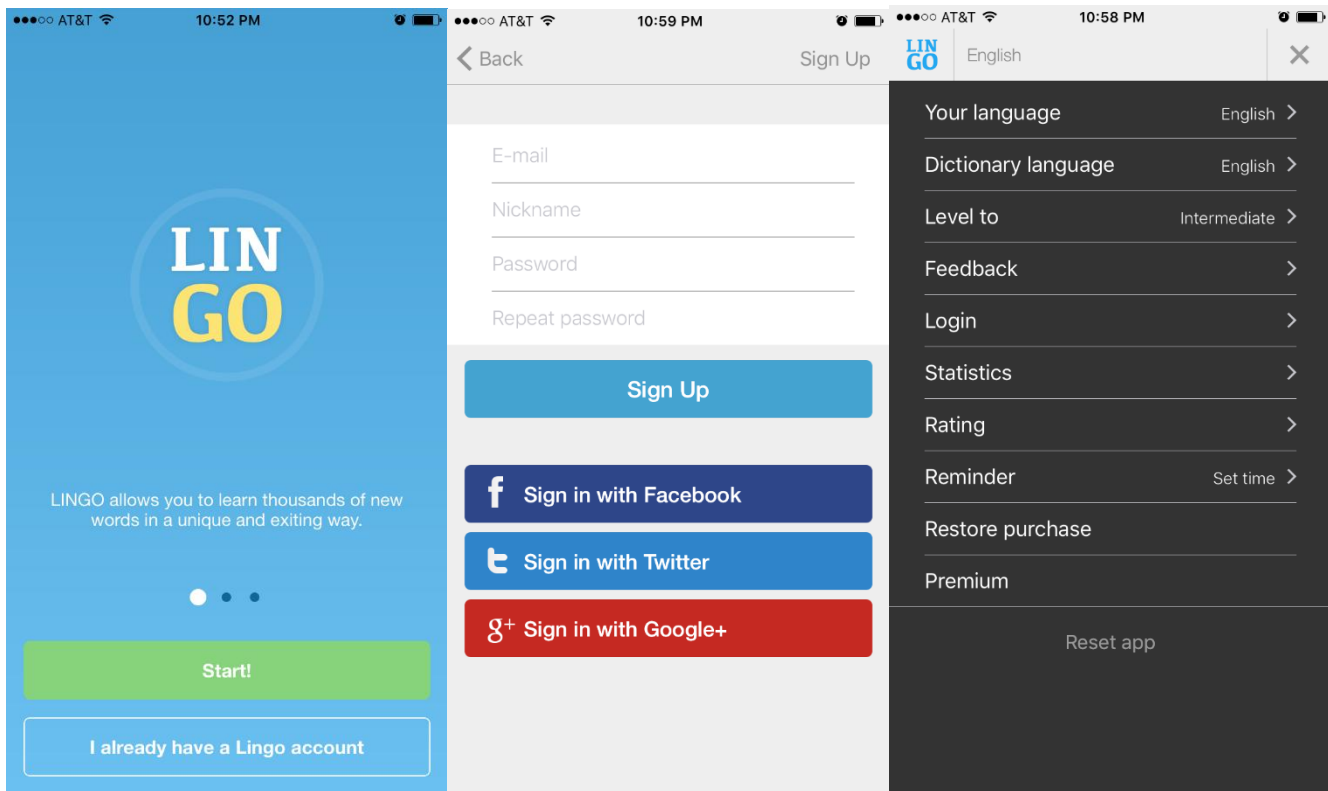
Applying Design Thinking Process:

I’ve chosen 3 mobile applications focus on vocabulary learning

- Lingo Vocabulary Trainer
- Drops
- Busuu

App 1: Lingo Vocabulary Trainer – Learn Foreign Languages

Screenshots of the app are below.



User Experience:A Holistic View

Initially, sign up with many options is a positive impression on the app but navigating through different options in the menu exposed inconsistency in the app in terms of colors, lack of help and contact information is a big letdown. The app might possibly cause frustrations at many points during the user journey on learning vocabulary

I feel the vocabulary game playing with opponents online and the searching for opponent screens are engaging. The dictionary language and statistics option is a nice add-on but notification feature is missing and the pricing seems high.

Although the app designers created strategy like games to improve language vocabulary it fails to impress users to go for premium with information and visual consistency and additional features i.e. adding own vocabulary, categorize learning throughout the application

Pros

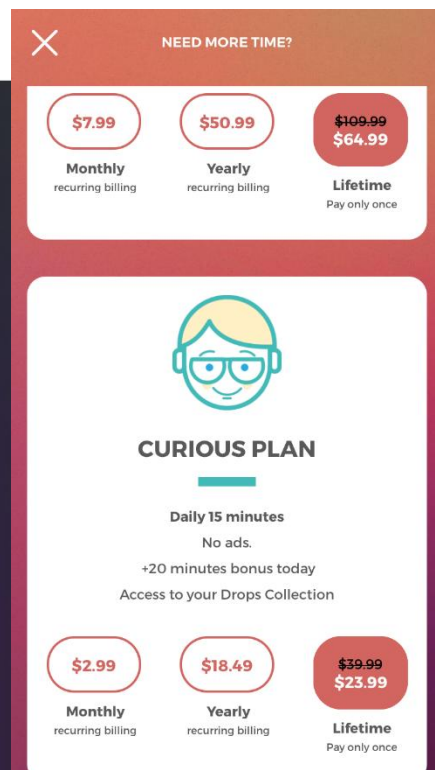
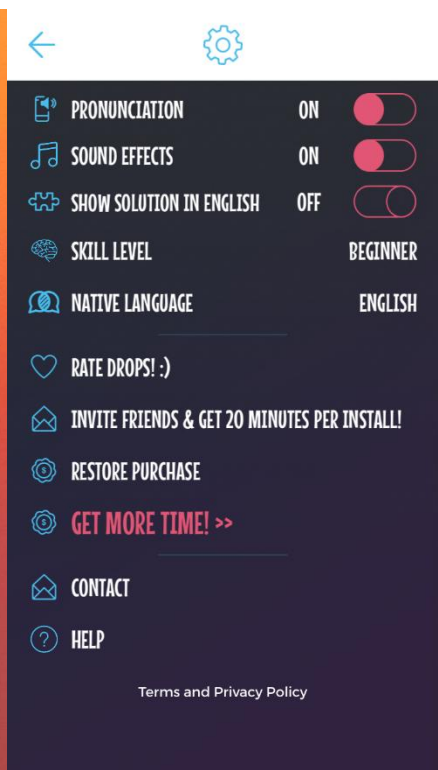
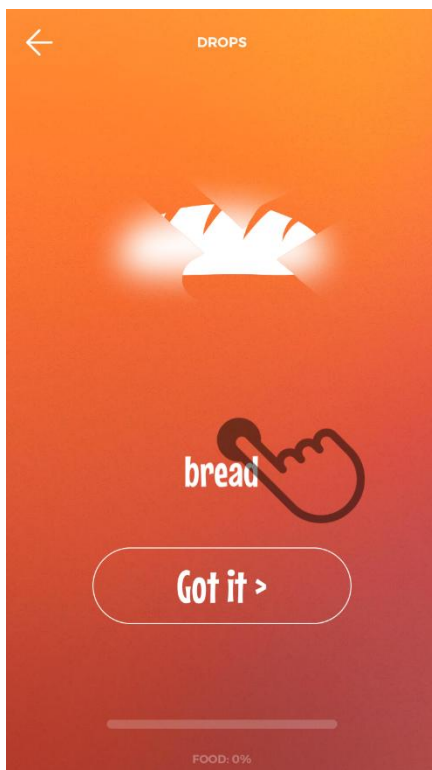
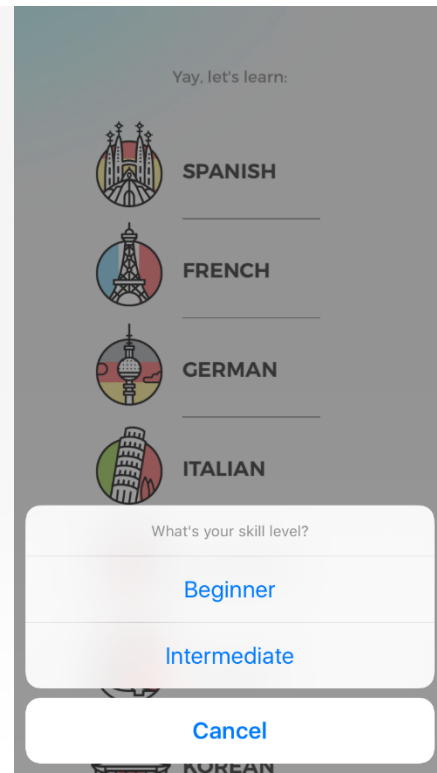
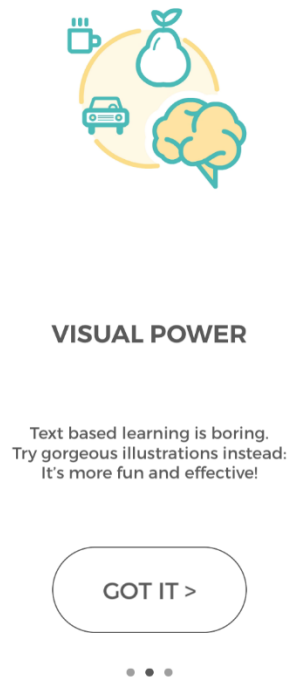
- Sign up can be done using Facebook, twitter, google, and email or you can be a guest
- Language selection and choosing levels of difficulty navigation is intuitive
- Active games and searching for opponents to play language vocab game is really attractive
- Rating board shows user ranking and can share that in social networking apps

Cons

- No walkthrough/onboarding feature
- App feedback takes to play store or app store and no mail option provided
- No search bar/icon found throughout different screens of the app
- Poor functionality and inconsistency in colors usage and layout

App 2: Drops: Learn Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Portugal

Screenshots of the app are below.



User Experience:A Holistic View

On a whole, Drops will satisfy users with few pain points through the journey of learning vocabulary. The app designers created screens consistent visual aesthetics. The swipe and touch features on words definitely make the app stand out from other vocabulary learning apps.

The app owners should work on the rewards issue and the pricing because the new users normally like to use the free trial and reward usage and decide to go premium. Failing to address this could lose potential paid users.

Pros

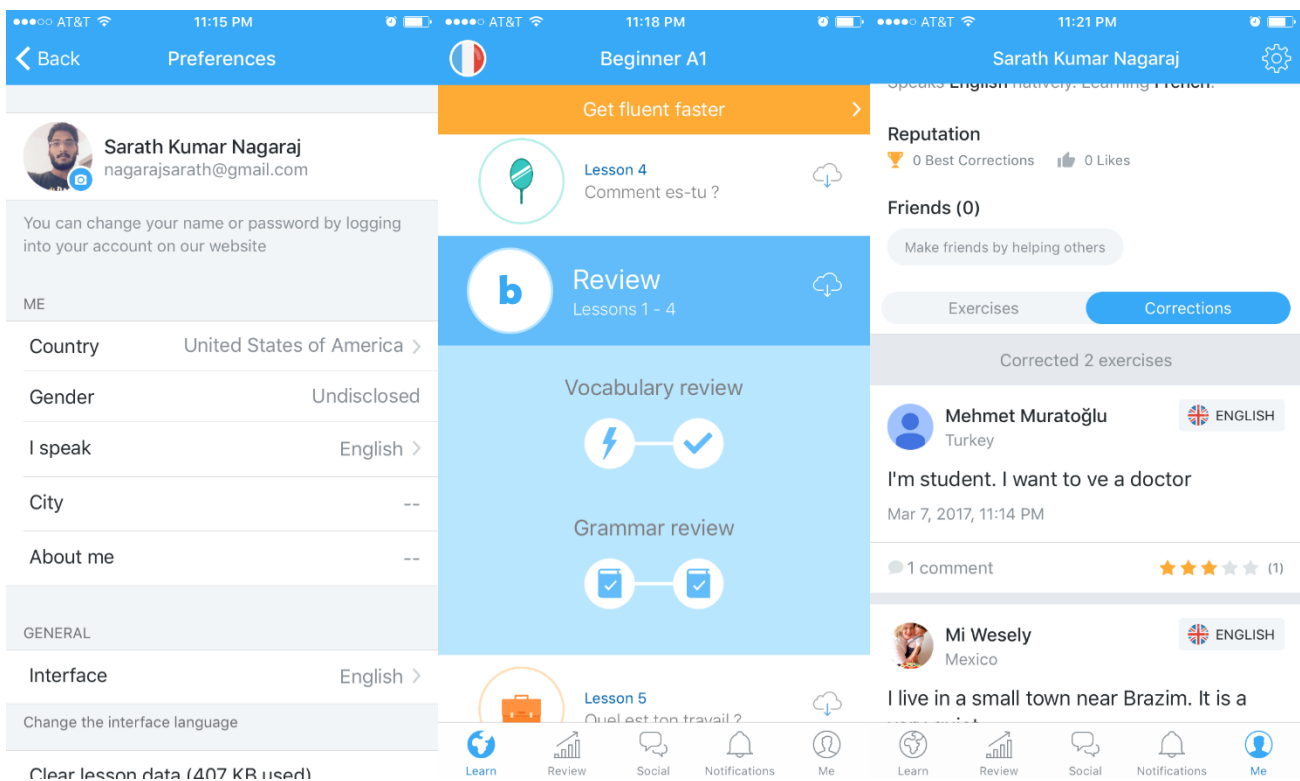
- The onboarding process and the features display with auto slide is eye catching
- The screens have consistent colors and layout throughout the app though they have two different visual themes
- Language, levels, pronunciation, sounds effects are organized and intuitive in the menu
- Swipe and touch on the word pronounces words and display meaning simulates to learn more
- Contact has email option to write feedback which is any easy mode of communication between the app and the user

Cons

- The app offers premium plans that are too high (costs over \$60)
- No search bar/icon found throughout different screens of the app
- As a user, initially I want to use app for a few days like a trial but to have free usage of 5 minutes the user need to wait 10 hours
- The rewards to use app for freely with invite friends option never credit to the account

App 3: Busuu – Learn languages: English, Spanish & French

Screenshots of the app are below.



User Experience:A Holistic View

Busuu seems to have a clear vision to be comprehensive vocabulary learning app that accomplish the users' objective of learning and improving vocabulary effectively by incorporating new strategies i.e. socialize, offline access, co-user reviews.

The new strategies by the designers and team make Busuu a successful vocab app in the market. The users will get the worked reviewed by co-users and that will improve "Learning & Sharing".

With all the sophisticated features, as a user I would expect a better attractive visual design scheme that could convert the basic plan users to go premium plan.

Pros

- Sign up can be done using Facebook, twitter, google, and email or you can be a guest
- The vocabulary lessons can be downloaded and accessed offline but for premium users
- The features of the paid usage is clearly explained before displaying the pricing which as a user I feel is a must because disclosing the features it offers followed by pricing is convincing to buy
- The socialize feature of the app is really awesome it has help others option to have co-users' sentences corrected by others and provide feedback that way user learn and improve their vocabulary

Cons

- No walkthrough/onboarding feature
- No search bar/icon found throughout different screens of the app
- Visual themes chosen for the app is very basic, with so many awesome features an attractive layout and color scheme could push users to go premium