

Title: How Duolingo's Visual Design Encourages Second Language Acquisition
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In a more globalized 21st century, language learning is something people participate in every day through mobile application use. Duolingo is a mobile application that allows users to learn languages or perform Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Through informational research and an interview with RMIT's Stephen Banham, professor of Typography, Duolingo's visual design system proves its ability to encourage the acquisition and retention of another language. This research analyzes Duolingo's approach to SLA as to how it addresses issues of traditional learning materials and environments. The application addresses multi-sensory learning experiences through visual and auditory exercises (Rusman, Terrier, Specht, 2018); furthermore, it encourages engagement through motivating design (Yazdanmehr, Shoghi, 2014). Although aesthetic choices are made to motivate users, Professor Banham points out that typefaces have specific jobs and cultural associations, and Duolingo is no different. The application itself promotes "gamification" – applying game-playing elements – with inviting incentives and features. Instances include its immersive leaderboards and lingot currency, users are able to compete in a gamified language learning community (Huynh, Zuo, Iida, 2016). This research was able to examine Duolingo's design and strategic decisions and as to how it improves user learning retention, engagement, and motivation. Language learning design has progressed with technology with the use of virtual and augmented reality to aid those with anxiety or attention deficiencies (Craddock, 2018). As a result, this research found that language learning applications are capable of improving SLA experiences, particularly Duolingo.

References

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