Product Teardown: Notifications
Learn In Public Challenge 6
By Amaan Kamil

duolingo

Overview

Duolingo is the worlds #1 way to learn a language, with more than 300 million learners world-wide. Dedicated to make language learning free and accessible to all, Duolingo uses scientifically proven, bite-sized lessons to provide instructions in 35+ languages.
In addition to its core platform, the company developed the Duolingo English Test (DET), an affordable and convenient language certification option that is accepted by over 500 universities.
The company raised over $138 million in venture capital. Duolingo is based in Pittsburgh, USA.

Business Model Canvas

Key partners	Key activities	Channels
Investors	Managing partners	Mobile apps
Engineers	Managing learning community	Online platform
	Translating through crowdsourcing	
Key resources	**Value proposition**	**Revenue streams**
Online platform	Free language learning	Premium access
Mobile apps	Ability to learn anywhere with the Internet connection	Translation services
Engineers	Gamified apps	
	Translation	

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User Persona

John

Meet John, a 22-year old university student with a passion for learning new languages. He loves using the internet to learn new languages and also interacts with a lot of people.

Bio

John is a 22-year old university student with a passion for learning new languages. He spends his free time immersing himself in different cultures and expanding his linguistic abilities. He uses internet and mobile applications to learn new languages and practice them.

Demographics

Age: 22
Status: Single
Family: None
Archetype: University Student
Location: Brooklyn

Tech

Internet	●●●●●●●●
Social Networks	●●●●○○○○
Messaging	●●●●●○○○
Games	●●●●●○○○
Online Learning	●●●●●●●○

Characters

#Passionate #Practical #Multi-Lingual #Organized #Hardworking

Core Needs

- Accessibility
- Availability of multiple languages
- Gamified learning

Frustrations

- Less speaking practice
- Repetitive content
- Lack of cultural context
- Limited vocabulary

Favourite Apps

Motivations

Effectiveness
User-friendliness
Convenience
Engagement

Personality

Introvert	Extrovert
Analytical	Creative
Loyal	Flickle
Passive	Active

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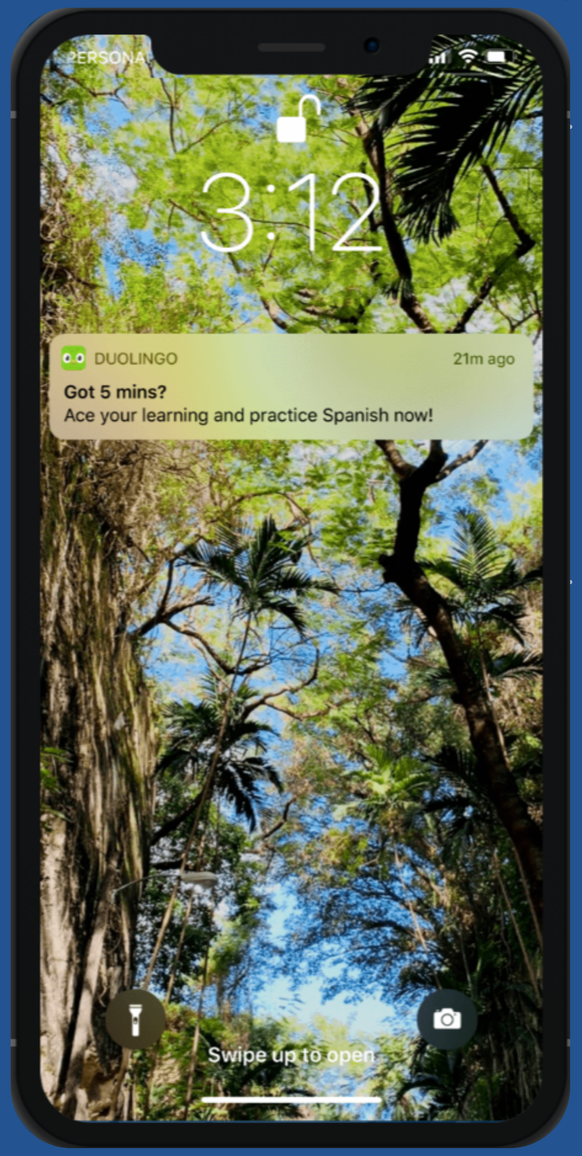
1.



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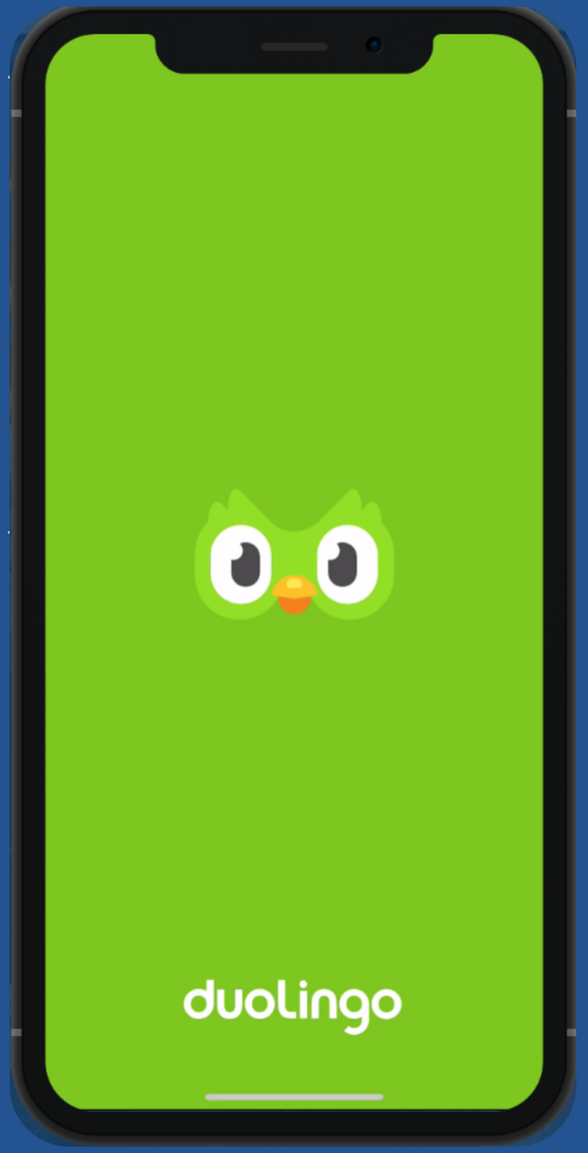

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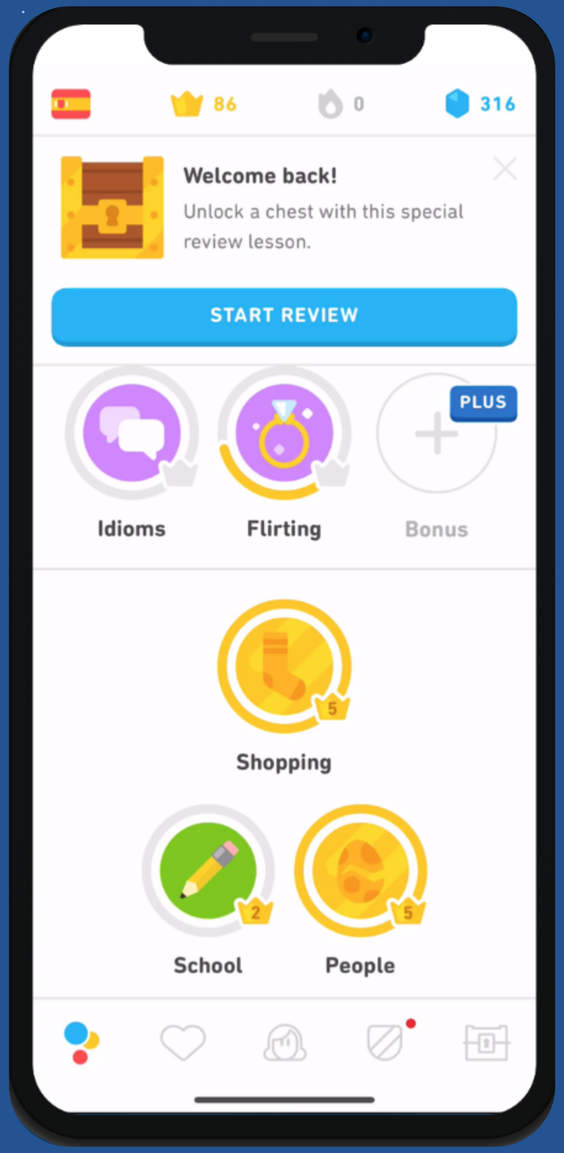

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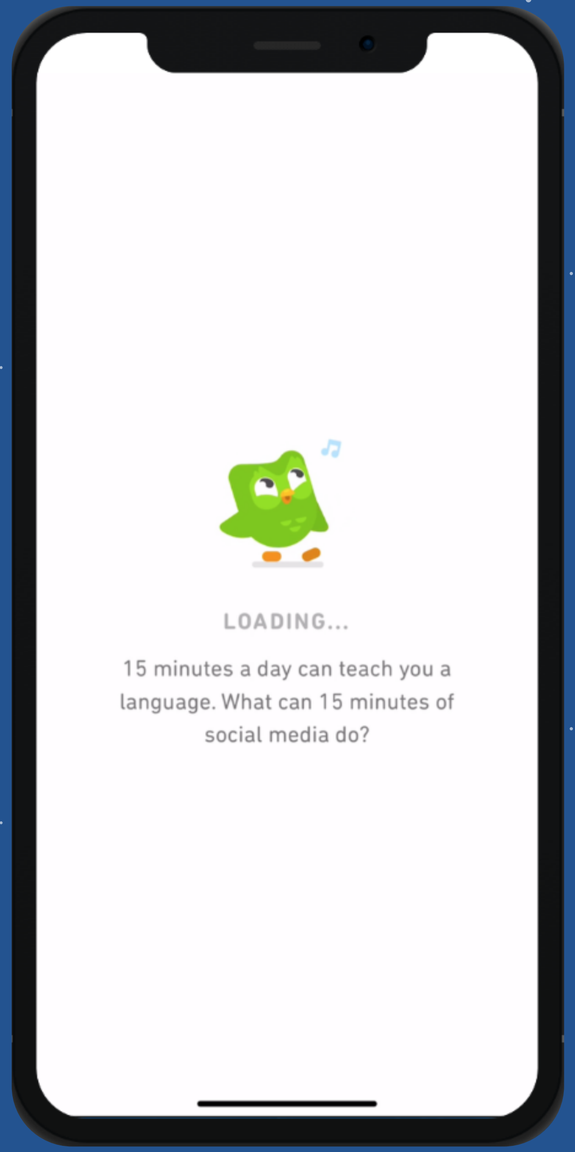

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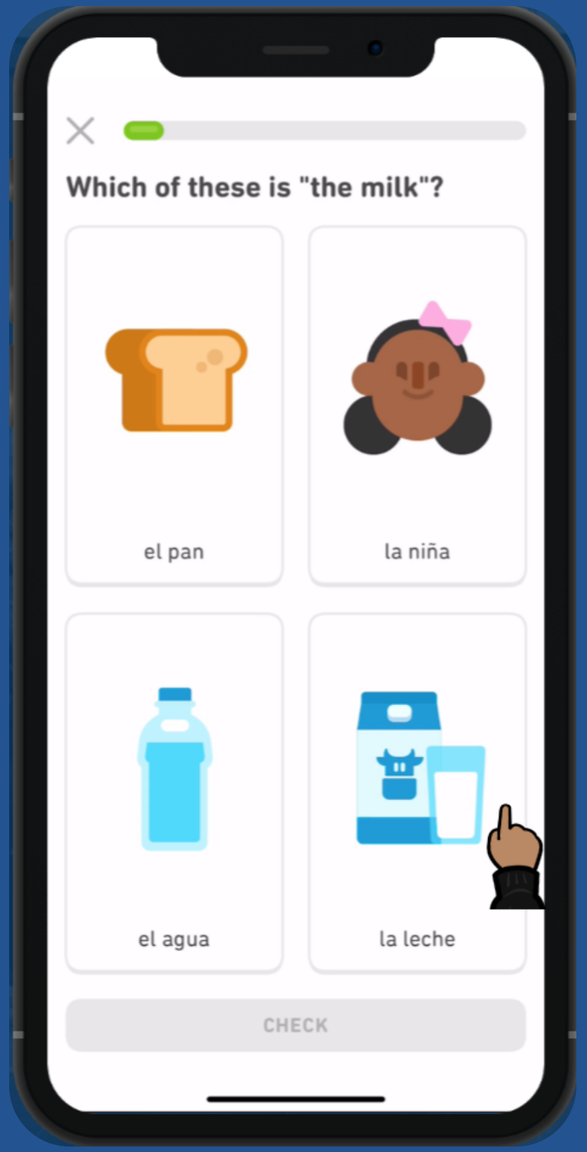

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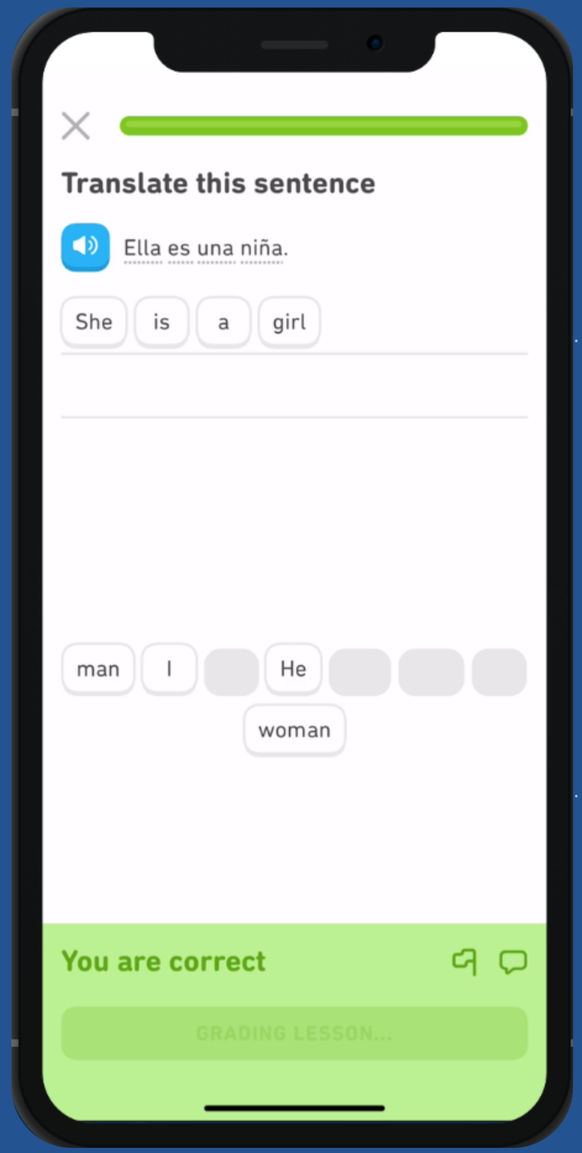
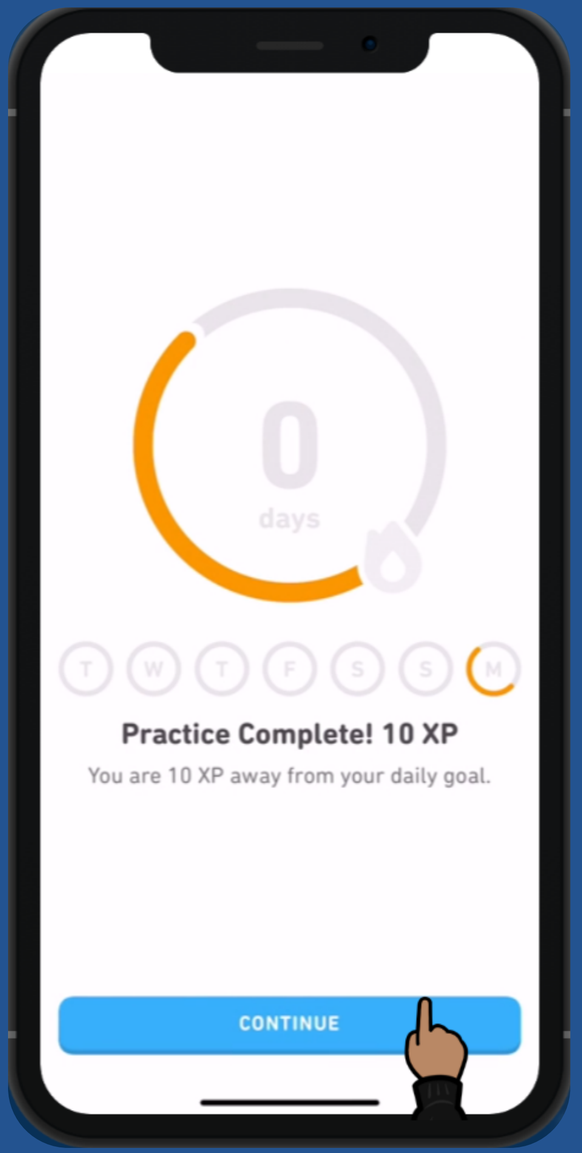


7. duolingo



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What Duolingo got right

#PSYCHOLOGY INSIGHT

Internal & External Triggers

A "trigger" is a prompt of a user to take action. There are two types of triggers:

- ***Internal Triggers*** (e.g. places, situations, emotions, people).
- ***External Triggers*** (e.g. emails, mobile notification, billboards, ad)

People are more susceptible to take action if the **external trigger is aligned with an internal trigger**.[1]

#PSYCHOLOGY INSIGHT

Zeigarnik Effect

People remember uncompleted tasks better than completed tasks.

A famous UX design example of this effect is the use of progress bars to guide a user's behavior.

#UX PRO TIP

Happy Path

Try to offer a "simplified" experience with reduced difficulty, even if you have to cheat your user flows a bit.

It's a great way to:

- **boost activation rate** & engagement when onboarding new users and
- **increase user retention** when resurrected users come back after a long pause.

#PSYCHOLOGY INSIGHT

Investment & Sunk Cost Effect

Right after a reward is the best moment to ask your user to invest a bit of their resources in anticipation of future benefits.

It makes users more likely to stick around for two reasons:

- 1) The investment **loads the next trigger** (e.g. notification to remind users of their recent commitment)
- 2) People **value things more** when they invest work/resources in them (a.k.a. the "*Sunk Cost Effect*"). [1]

Duolingo confirmed that this specific "Investment Wager" step **increased Day-7 retention by +14%**. [2]

What could have been better

#PSYCHOLOGY INSIGHT

Hick's Law

The time it takes to make a decision increases with the number and **complexity of choices**.

If you highlight one option, make sure that the **other options don't compete** for the user's attention.

#ETHICAL INSIGHT

User Shaming

Making users **feel bad about themselves** in order to convince them to adopt a behavior is rarely a good idea.

Specific kinds of user shaming are even worst—such as ***manipulinks*** and ***confirmshaming***[1].

But overall, it's often better to **avoid** this kind of micro-copy altogether to avoid sliding into *the Dark Side of the Force*—hem, I mean ***Dark UX Patterns***.

#UX PRO TIP

Providing Exit Points

Allow users to disengage from your product with a sense of **completion**.

If not, people will associate your product to a **never-ending list of tasks**—which may hurt your long-term user retention.

There are several ways to achieve this, here's one of them:

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS FOR DUOLINGO

Rosetta Stone

Strengths

- Offers a wide variety of languages (24).
- Allows pricing options for enterprises, schools, and students.
- Users can choose their own learning goals (travel, basics, work, family).
- Lessons are available for users.

Weaknesses

- Although users have some free access to the courses, they still have to subscribe for either 3 months, 12 months, or for a lifetime.
- Doesn't offer quick tips.
- Linguistics context is understood as you're going through each lesson.
- Users can't test their skill level
- Can't connect with friends or a larger community.

MEMRISE

Strengths

- Beginner or intermediate levels to choose from.
- Customizable reminder schedule.
- More focused on vocabulary and scenario-based learning.
- User can bookmark lessons for later.
- Had video aids to enhance the learning experience.

Weaknesses

- Subscription-based (monthly yearly, or lifetime).
- Can't connect with friends or a larger community.
- Doesn't offer quick tips.
- Linguistics context is understood as you're going through each lesson.

+Babbel

Strengths

- Users can choose their goals (school, travel, family, personal, skill, work).
- Users can choose their comfort level to start with.
- Allows for customization of reminders, lesson time, etc.
- Vocabulary and grammar notes throughout lessons.
- Scenarios/conversations to help users familiarize themselves with a language.
- Offers a lesson plan.
- Offers multiple learning settings.

Weaknesses

- Limited amount of languages (14).
- Subscription-based (1, 3, 6, or 12 months).
- Can't connect with friends or a larger community.
- Doesn't offer quick tips.
- Linguistics context is understood as you're going through each lesson.

mondly languages

Strengths

- Offers a wide variety of languages (41).
- Can pick lessons based on desired topics.
- Quick tips on how the app works.
- Users can view verb conjugations during the lesson.
- Offers recap of vocabulary/expressions learned.

Weaknesses

- Offers a free 7-day trial.
- Can't access previous words learned (only the number of words is available).
- Linguistics context is understood as you're going through each lesson.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- There isn't any introduction to a language, whether it's new or already known, so users are expected to use context clues to understand their tasks, and certain grammatical details. Most apps do not have this feature, and Duolingo could benefit from offering they're users with a more comprehensive understanding of the languages.
- Because of how intimating learning a language might seem, all apps interactions have some sort of feedback to make the experience more engaging. Duolingo also disguinguishes itsel in that the interface is create to look more like a game than a lesson.
- Overall, very few apps offer completely free content to users. Generally speaking, most apps allow some sort of trial, with the option of having more exclusive and comprehensive content for a fee. Duolingo is one of he few apps that offers completely free content, with the option to have a subcription, which disguinguishes them from other competitors.
- Along with the price point, the large selection of languages makes Duoligno a leader among language learning apps. Their accessibility and gamification could be elevated by offering its users more context on the languages learned.

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Competition

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Metrics

North Star Metric

Weekly Active Users(WAU)

Net promoter score(NPS)

L1-Metrics

Weekly lessons completed per user

Average session length

L2-Metrics

Crash rate

Retention rate

Thank You :)