

Usability Testing



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Usability Test Plan

Scope: A vocabulary learning mobile application.

Schedule: In-person usability testing with 3 participants.

Sessions: 10-15 minutes

Equipment: Participants will be asked to use their phones, laptops, or computers. Otter.ai will be used for recording after participant consent.

Metrics: Jakob Nielsen's Error Severity Rating Scale

Usability Test Script

Hi, _____. My name is Christie, and I'm going to be walking you through this session today. We are conducting usability tests to better evaluate how well our prototype empowers people to learn new vocabulary. The session should take about 10 - 15 minutes.

The first thing I want to make clear right away is that this is not a test. You can't do or say anything wrong here. You will be testing an incomplete prototype that has errors and mistakes - that's why we're testing it out! If you have any questions or frustrations as we go along, just think out loud, describe what you are thinking and any suggestions you may have.

Before we begin, I would like to ask a few questions about yourself. Do I have your consent for voice recording?

Let's get started! Can you tell me a little about yourself - how old are you, where do you live, what do you do? How comfortable are you using mobile apps for educational purposes? What methods have you used before to learn new vocabulary?

Usability Test Tasks

Direct Tasks:

1. Complete onboarding and create an account.
2. Begin learning with AI messaging function.
3. Add new vocabulary to flashcard deck.
4. Subscribe to app through in-app purchasing.

Scenario Tasks:

1. You are planning on retiring in Italy and you want to learn more about the language and the culture. You already know some basics due to your frequent travel there but you want more in-depth proficiency. You download a language learning mobile app and start creating an account.
2. One of your main goals is to be able to communicate in written language with the locals. You begin to chat with an AI messaging bot for writing practice.
3. After finishing learning, you realized there are some new vocabularies that you would like to add to your flashcard deck for review in the future. You open the app to add new vocabulary.
4. After one month of learning, you decide to upgrade your plan in order to access more learning material. You open the app to complete in-app purchase.

Participant 1

Name: B. Lin

Age: 28

Occupation: Dentist

Location: Austin, TX

Quotes & Notes:

B. is a busy professional who enjoys apps that require as less clicking as possible.

“Interests and hobbies. Oh! I like this one. It’s like a dating app.”

“It’s kind of confusing that it doesn’t say ‘okay, we will now start testing your proficiency.’”

Task 1: B. thought the registration process is fairly straight forward. However, the proficiency assessment part is a bit confusing because there was no indication that the assessment part has begun. She also thinks that having to choose a native language is not necessary. To improve the efficiency of user flow, B. suggested not having to click “Start Learning” again after manually selecting proficiency. Lastly, Brittany enjoys the personalization aspect where the app asks for her interests and hobbies.

Task 2: B. suggested to have “Based on your hobbies and interests” topic selections to be placed at the top of the page for easier access. She thought the lightbulb icon was a little bit confusing as she wouldn’t understand that it is an icon for the hint. She suggested to change it to a question mark or a confused person emoji.

Task 3: B. thinks the flashcard feature of the app is “old school” and requires too many steps when she wants to add a vocabulary immediately before she forgets. She suggested to have a function where a word can be added to the flashcard deck automatically when being long clicked while keeping the manually adding vocabulary option open. She thought the add new vocabulary feature was straightforward and easy to use.

Task 4: B. thought the last task was fairly standard and straightforward.

Participant 2

Name: D. Gulla

Age: 31

Occupation: Project Manager

Location: San Diego, CA

Quotes & Notes:

D. suggested to include more explicit directions and more frames to make the user flow more clear.

“Normally after you register, it brings you back to login, and then you log in.”

“It should say like ‘okay, now we’re going to assess your level.’”

“If you tell me the definition, and then you give me three choices, I’m a bit confused of what I need to do. I’d like to be more guided.”

Task 1: D. was really confused on the video for listening assessment showing up right after the registration page. He thought there should be an indication that registration has been completed with an opportunity to login with the new username and password created. He also suggested to have an indication that the assessment for proficiency will begin before showing a video for listening test.

Task 2: D. thought the writing practice with the AI messaging bot is fairly intuitive and easy to understand.

Task 3: In the flashcard feature, D. thought that it would be more clear if the “Definition” part could be changed to be more instructional - “Write down what this word means”, “Say or share a story of what this word means”, “Upload a picture that reminds you of this word”.

Task 4: D. thought the user flow was intuitive and straightforward. However, he suggested to change the wording from “Subscribe” to “Upgrade Plan” because users are already subscribed to the app.

Participant 3

Name: A. Savetti

Age: 30

Occupation: Neuroscientist

Location: San Diego, CA

Quotes & Notes:

“I think interests and hobbies is good because it is supposed to drive you toward the vocabulary which is closer to those fields.”

A. thought the onboarding video and conversation were confusing because he thought they were for learning.

Task 1: A. thought the registration process was straightforward and standard. He was confused on the purpose of the video and message conversation at first due to the lack of clarity of instructions. He commented giving categorical options (“none” “some” “most”; “beginner” “intermediate” “advanced”) to choose from for the assessment portion is better than using a sliding scale.

Task 2: A. suggested to eliminate the general prompt selection when practicing writing because interests were already selected during onboarding. He thought it would be more straight forward if the writing practice just include conversations relating to interests. For the actual practice, A. thought the placement and design of the hint button is not intuitive.

Task 3: A. thought the “Filter” and “Memorized” features of the flashcard deck were useful and interesting. He commented that the “Add New Word” feature was easy to understand.

Task 4: A. expressed that there were no confusing or frustrating parts of the last task.

Usability Test Report - Metrics

Jakob Nielsen's Error Severity Rating Scale

- 0** - I don't agree that this is a usability problem at all
- 1** - Cosmetic problem only: need not to be fixed unless extra time is available on project
- 2** - Minor usability problem: fixing should be given low priority
- 3** - Major usability problem: important to fix and should be given high priority
- 4** - Usability catastrophe: imperative to fix before product can be released

Usability Test Report

Task #	Observation	Severity	Recommendation
1	All participants found the transition from registration to proficiency assessment portion was not clear and confusing.	4	Add “Complete Registration” and “Login” after entering information for registration. Add “Begin Assessment for Proficiency” before showing assessment video.
2	The design and placement of the hint icon is confusing.	2	Change design of hint icon to a question mark. Place the icon in the textbox.
3	There could be clearer instructions on the function of each feature when creating definitions for new words.	3	Add instructions such as “write down what this word means” “tell a story of what this word means to you” “upload a picture that reminds you of this word”.
4	In general, participants found this task straightforward and easy to understand. There is minor issue with wording.	1	Change “Subscribe” to “Upgrade”.