

TALADU!

Assessing learners' needs for developing a mobile app for practicing spoken Icelandic L2

AUTHORS

Fanny Sissoko
Independent Designer & Researcher
fansissoko@gmail.com

Branislav Bedi
The Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic
branislav.bedi@arnastofnun.is

1 BACKGROUND: A LACK OF OPPORTUNITY TO PRACTISE SPOKEN ICELANDIC

Many migrants experience the lack of opportunities in practicing spoken Icelandic L2 in Iceland. This phenomenon tends to equally include areas within and outside of the capital region, thus having an effect on both short-term visitors, e.g., exchange students, tourists, short-term workers, and on long-term migrants living in the country. The tendency of locals to switch to English when speaking to foreigners seems to be a common phenomenon in the Nordic countries (Kristinsson, 2020).

For this reason, there have been several attempts made to increase learners' exposure to spoken language practice through online computer games or other projects involving locals in a face-to-face conversation. This poster presents the development of one such attempt: TALADU!, a mobile application aiming to assist with spoken language practice in Icelandic L2.

2.2. User needs

Thematic analysis was used, which indicated five core needs that will drive the design of the learning app. The key one is around finding meaningful connection and breaking the first barrier and moving beyond superficial interactions with Icelandic speakers.



2.3 Learners' profiles

The needs analysis based on semi-structured interviews with participants also helped to indicate 3 main learner profiles, based on their mindsets and journeys. The design of the app will use these profiles to both personalise and maximise the learner experience.

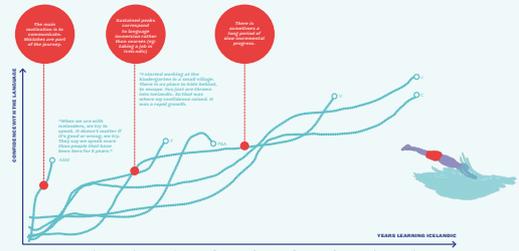
DIVING IN

MINDSET

- I try, even if I don't speak perfectly. I've learned to do so with making mistakes.
- I need a real motivation to dive into situations where I have no choice but speaking Icelandic.
- Grammar is boring so I don't talk to me too much about it, I'll pick it up.
- I like to absorb the language through various mediums: everything is an opportunity to learn: books, radio, tv, youtube ads, podcasts, etc.

FEELINGS TO AVOID | **FEELINGS TO RECREATE**

Boredom | Stagnation | Curiosity | Immersion



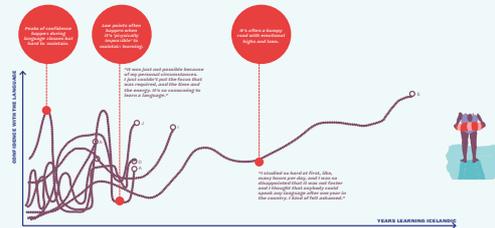
WITH CAUTION

MINDSET

- I have a solid base, but don't have the confidence to speak unless I know I can handle it perfectly.
- The grammar overwhelms me if I'm not taught in a structured, step-by-step way.
- I don't feel I can be my full self unless I speak Icelandic. I want people to see me for who I am.

FEELINGS TO AVOID | **FEELINGS TO RECREATE**

Anxiety | Frustration | Achievement | Clarity



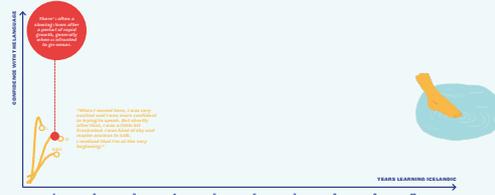
DIPPING A TOE

MINDSET

- I feel like I'm right at the start of a long and hard journey.
- I'm quite isolated and don't have many Icelandic connections to practice with, so I feel completely overwhelmed.

FEELINGS TO AVOID | **FEELINGS TO RECREATE**

Loneliness | Overwhelm | Connection | Encouragement

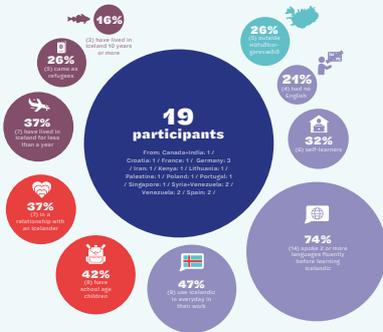


2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The development of this app follows a human-centered methodology (Buchanan, 2001), whereby potential users take part in the research and design of the solution.

The first stage involved a qualitative deep-method user needs study conducted with nineteen participants. Selective sampling method was used to collect data from migrants from fourteen different countries living in Iceland.

2.1. Participants breakdown



3 APP DESIGN

The main goal is to encourage learners to have real-life conversations with Icelandic speakers by accomplishing conversational missions. While using the app, the learner will be able to personalise their journey by choosing a level, set a daily time for practice, and select topics they want to grow their confidence in.

Each day, they will then be sent new vocabulary, common phrases and cultural cues relevant to their chosen topics. Finally, they will be pushed to practise by immersing themselves in the real-life environment while interacting with local speakers using spoken language.

The communicative approach, task-based learning, and role-play are the main learning approaches used in the app. The app will use gamified features and reward learners for building confidence in speaking by fulfilling individualised tasks.

Key features



User journey

