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ZNANIYA

A Conversational Russian Course
for Advanced Speakers

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ZNANIYA



Background

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I was born on March 28, 1985 in Vallejo, California. I spent the majority of my very happy childhood in Davis, a college town outside of Sacramento.

As a child, my main aspiration was to be a meteorologist; I was fascinated by the weather. In 1998, when I was thirteen years old, I created my first website: Davis Weather Service. I created my own forecasts and updated the site daily. In high school, two websites later, I became president and founder of the web design club at my high school. I probably should have known what I really wanted to do at that point, but it took me several meandering years to realize it.

I graduated from Davis Senior High School in 2003 and headed to college at University of Washington in Seattle, where I began my studies in atmospheric science; however, I eventually realized that I was not meant to be a meteorologist and changed my major to European Studies. The major required both that I take at least three years of foreign language, and that I study abroad, so in the summer of 2006, I lived in St. Petersburg, Russia for just over two months. That fateful trip to Russia also instilled in me a fascination

with, among other things, Soviet propaganda art, which is in the midst of its nostalgic comeback in Russia.

I graduated from University of Washington in 2007, obtaining my Bachelor of Arts in European Studies with a minor in Russian language. At the time, I was working with a program through UW's Technology department called DO-IT, which is a non-profit program focused on making technology accessible to people—specifically children and teenagers—with disabilities. Among many other things, that job helped me learn the value of accessibility in web design.

I worked with DO-IT until early September 2007, when I got a job at Milliman, a global actuarial firm headquartered in Seattle. After working in the Employee Benefits department's call center for a year or so, I became the department's webmaster, as I was the only person on the payroll who knew any coding languages and was not already working in the IT department. I was simultaneously doing freelance web design work, although it took a backseat to my full-time job.

In 2009, both my stepfather (Lance) and my father were diagnosed with Stage 4 colorectal cancer. My father has since recovered and is doing well; however, Lance passed away in August of 2010 after ten months battling the disease. After that traumatic year, I coped by reevaluating what I wanted to do with my life, which eventually led me back to web design.

In 2011, still working for Milliman, I was promoted to Operations Manager of the department; however, I began reconsidering my career path and ultimately decided to refocus it. I began my online studies part-time through Academy of Art in Fall 2012, planning to move to San Francisco in January 2013. The plan went off without a hitch, and on January 6, 2013, my Chocolate Lab and I arrived at our new apartment on Nob Hill. I have since been attending school both part-time and full-time, building my freelance business, and continuing to build my full-time career as a UI/UX Designer.

After a few short stints at contract-based design jobs, I landed my first permanent full-time design job in December 2014, as a UI/UX Designer at Ask Partner Network (now Ask Applications). I worked at APN for almost

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

two years, creating offer screens, landing pages, and even helping with a mobile app, among other things; unfortunately, the company decided to rebrand and refocus, shutting down its West Coast operations. The layoff allowed me to take the time to study and improve my design skills independently. After a year of job searching and freelance design work, I finally landed at Risk and Safety Services, where I am charged with designing the user interfaces for our high-profile mobile and desktop applications, as well as designing and conducting the user testing efforts to ensure that the organization's applications are as beneficial to our users as possible.

Design is an iterative process, as is my career as a designer. When I first began my graduate studies, I had a general idea of what I wanted to do for a living; now that I'm nearing the completion of this program, and have a few years of work experience under my belt, I know my real passion for this industry is in user interface and user experience design.

RÉSUMÉ

EDUCATION

Master of Fine Arts Candidate

Web Design & New Media

Academy of Art University / 2012-2017

Bachelor of Arts

European Studies

University of Washington / 2003-2007

FREELANCE PROJECTS

Mainstream Unlimited

mainstreamunlimited.com

Branding, UI/UX, User Research,
Development / 2017-Present

Lake County Wine Alliance

winealliance.org

UI/UX, User Research, Development
2017-Present

Innervoice Vocal Studio

innervoicestudio.com

Branding, UI/UX, User Research
Development / 2014-Present

Ron Alan Cohen

ronalancohen.com

UI/UX, Development / 2015-Present

EXPERIENCE

UI/UX Designer

UC Davis—Risk and Safety Solutions / Davis, CA / 2017-Present

Lead UI and UX design initiatives for web application development teams supporting enterprise wide deployment across all UC campuses and medical centers. Develop a unified user experience across all R&SS applications.

Freelance UI/UX Designer

Access Communications / San Francisco, CA / 2016-2017

Designing and developing Wordpress-based sites for agency clients; UX design, including wireframes, mockups, user research and testing; UI design, including producing visual assets; copyediting.

UI/UX Designer

Ask Applications / Oakland, CA / 2014-2016

Designing application download offer screens for the Ask toolbar, browser extensions, and related products; creating UI/UX product design proposals; collaborating with designers, the engineering team, and the product team.

Web Production Designer (Contract)

Smart Meetings / Sausalito, CA / 2014-2014

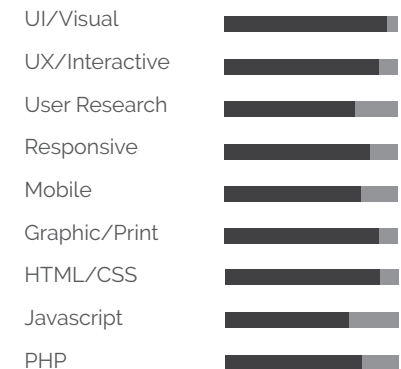
Scheduling, building, and shipping 15-20 emails per week using Hubspot; posting banner advertisements for the company website using OpenX; collaborating with web, marketing, production to redesign style of emails.

Associate Designer

eFusion Consortium / San Francisco, CA / 2013-2014

Responsive/adaptive web design and development, analytics monitoring for agency clients; coordinating and collaborating with lead designer/CEO, client, and engineers.

SKILLS



APPLICATIONS



Photoshop



Illustrator



InDesign



Dreamweaver



Flash



Premier Pro



InVision



Sketch



OmniGraffle

INFLUENCES

KAZIMIR MALEVICH

EL LISSITZKY

ALEKSANDR RODCHENKO



Kazimir Malevich

I have always been drawn to avant garde art, and Kazimir Malevich was one of the first artists to adapt avant garde in Russia, during the years preceding and immediately following the October Revolution in 1917. I am particularly intrigued by his use of geometric shapes and strong colors, as depicted by the pieces I have chosen to display; for Znaniya, I will be making use of equally strong colors and a style reminiscent of the avant garde style Malevich has employed.

Clockwise, from upper left:

Taking in the Rye, 1911

Portrait of Matiushin, 1913

Complex Presentiment: Half-Figure in a Yellow Shirt, 1928-1932

Composition with the Mona Lisa, 1914



INFLUENCES

KAZIMIR MALEVICH

EL LISSITZKY

ALEKSANDR RODCHENKO



El Lissitzky

El Lissitzky's creative and unusual use of typography is largely what he is known for, and has had a tremendous impact on me as an artist. Before I understood typography, I was drawn to his art. "Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge" is arguably his most famous work.

My design concept for Znaniya is heavily influenced by El Lissitzky's work. The work featured to the left makes use of black, red, and white, which will be the main colors I use for the visual design. Like with Malevich, I am also drawn to and plan to make use of the geometric shapes Lissitzky uses; of course, typography will also be crucial. Lissitzky's aesthetic also translates well to a "flat" visual design, which will be my focus as well.

Clockwise, from upper left:

Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge (Клином красным бей белых), 1920

Catalog cover (no title), 1923

To all the children (Всем ребятам), 1920

Four (arithmetic) actions (Четыре (арифметических) действия), 1928

INFLUENCES

KAZIMIR MALEVICH

EL LISSITZKY

ALEKSANDR RODCHENKO



Aleksandr Rodchenko

I own several prints of Rodchenko's work, most of which are framed and decorate my living room. He was one of the major players in early Soviet avant garde; in fact, you may recognize Lengiz in the bottom left corner, as it has been emulated and satirized frequently. It remains one of his best-known works. He made frequent use of photomontages, as in three of the four posters displayed here; he was the photographer as well as graphic designer.

Clockwise, from upper left:

Rezinotrest, 1923

Trade union poster, 1925

Kino glaz/Cinema Eye, 1928-1932

Lengiz, 1923



Project Overview

OVERVIEW

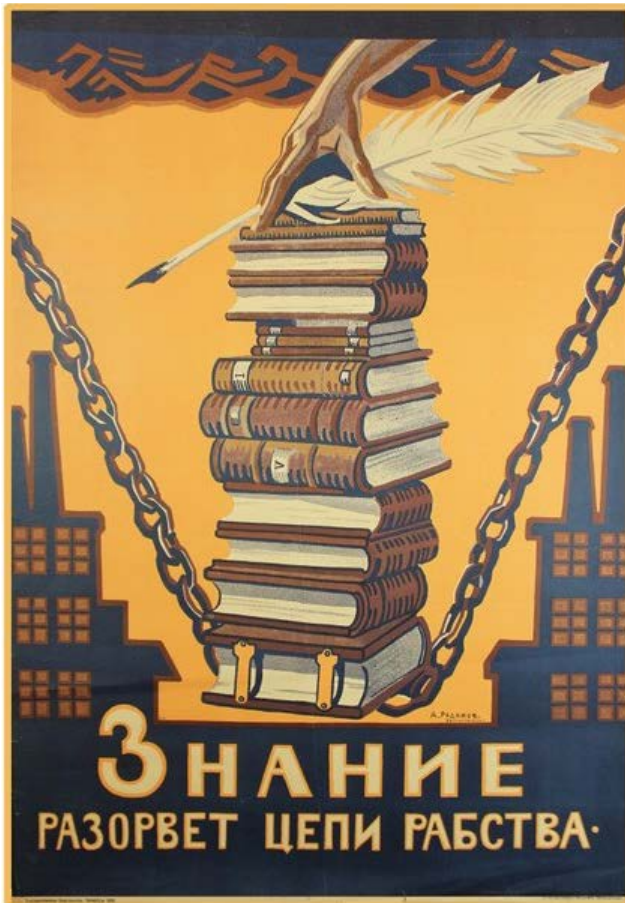
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DETAILED ABSTRACT

STATEMENT OF INTEREST

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION



Znaniya, a Russian word which is spelled “Знания,” directly translates to “knowledge,” as used in the well-known phrase, “Knowledge is power, power is knowledge.”

The plural form of this word is Знание, or Znaniye, which is featured on the Soviet propaganda poster to the right, the full translation of which is “Knowledge will break the chains of slavery.”

Znaniya, the mobile application I have created, has been so named for both the word’s literal meaning and for its implications in Russian, particularly Soviet, history.

Znaniya is an educational mobile application, made specifically for former students and advanced non-fluent speakers of the Russian language. Because its students will be familiar with Russian culture and history through their language studies and backgrounds, the history of the word “knowledge” will have additional impact: early Soviet leaders, before and in the ten or so years after the October Revolution of 1917, promoted the Soviet state through use of propaganda, detailing its lofty plans for, among other things, education for all. Because Znaniya will be an educational service that is free of charge, it has that in common with the Soviet education system.

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Znaniya is a mobile application specifically geared toward intermediate to advanced Russian speakers or students to practice their conversational skills, primarily to build confidence before attempting to speak the language in real-world scenarios. It makes use of the interactive features available solely on iOS, such as utilizing the built-in microphone to test pronunciation skills. The app also allows the user to walk through real-world exercises, such as assembling a traditional Russian dish based on a recipe. The grammar and vocabulary lessons play a role as well, but have more of a focus on conversational and colloquial use rather than formal or academic. Although other apps in existence have similar functionality, they lack the focus on Russian language (they are often produced for multiple languages) and also lack the focus on more advanced speakers that Znaniya provides.

As a former Russian language student, I have been looking for ways to maintain and build upon my own conversational skills, but while there exist myriad apps to serve that purpose, most were created for people

who had less of a background in Russian, particularly less of an academic background. In addition, many apps have not focused solely on conversation; some of my personal favorites have great interactive features (like games), but little to no focus on the conversational piece, or are so committed to entertaining their users with gamification that the actual educational value is diminished.

For users whose writing, reading, and listening comprehension is relatively strong, it can be intimidating and often discouraging to try to practice speaking when their speaking skills are not as strong; the solution to this lack of confidence is often as simple as practice in a non-judgmental forum.

Znaniya focuses on users between the ages of 22 and 35, as the target user will have some level of academic background in the language, and is not too far removed from his or her formal education. In addition, Znaniya caters specifically to users who are employed or have otherwise busy schedules that do not allow them to continue pursuing language studies in traditional classrooms.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Russian is not a common second language, especially for English-speakers. There are several resources available online that are geared toward learning the Russian language, but seldom are they well-organized and easy to use; most are also aimed at those new to the language. As far as mobile apps are concerned, the selection is a bit better, but could still use improvement and benefit from a more focused target audience, as well as a more pronounced focus on conversational rather than written and academic Russian. As a former Russian language student, I have had difficulty retaining my own language skills; I took four years of Russian in college and studied abroad in St. Petersburg, but I have lost much of what I learned, especially in terms of my conversational skills.

The mobile application I have created will be a refresher course for people like me: former Russian students who want to renew and retain some semblance of fluency in the language, but may not remember all the vocabulary or grammar rules and do not have the opportunity they once had to practice

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

the language in conversation. The age of the target audience spans from young adults, a few years removed from college (25), to adults up to age 45. It is mainly focused on conversational Russian rather than academic, although it retains the structure of an academic course.

Perhaps most importantly, Znaniya has a heavy focus in confidence-building for non-native Russian speakers. Russian can be a very intimidating language to take on, partly because of its difficulty and partly due to the intimidating and insular nature of many Russian speakers. Znaniya allows its users to practice their Russian skills in a safe, controlled, unthreatening environment, allowing its users to build a level of confidence and comfort with the language prior to using it to communicate with fluent Russian speakers.

This Russian course itself makes use of interactive features, such as audio and video. It includes video clips from popular Russian television shows and movies, as these are often at least somewhat reflective

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PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

of contemporary life in Russia. There will also be examples of Russian popular music. Interactive exercises, such as assembling a dish based on a recipe or walking from Point A to Point B based on verbal and written directions, will also be a part of the course. In order to test the speaking skills of the student, each lesson features an entire module devoted to practicing a dialog using the device's built-in microphone.

Due to my background with Russian language, as well as a few other foreign languages, I am very familiar with how language courses are usually structured as well as with the target audience, and I do see a need for this type of app, if only for a relatively small group. I have been able to utilize and develop my own Russian language skills during the course of this project and have also reconnected with former classmates and professors.

As far as my professional career is concerned, this project has enabled me to further develop my skills as a UX designer and mobile UI designer.

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I attended University of Washington, graduating in 2007 and earning a degree in European Studies with a focus in Russian, Eastern European, and Central Asian Studies, and a minor in Russian language. As part of that program, I studied abroad in St. Petersburg, Russia in 2006. I had always wanted to learn Russian; my family is Russian, but the generations that spoke the language have long since passed away. I also lived in San Francisco until recently, where there happens to be a sizable Russian community.

When I moved to San Francisco in 2013, I began searching for Russian language courses so I could have an excuse to brush up my language skills. I have not had much opportunity to speak Russian since college, aside from occasional visits to Russian restaurants in the Richmond District; however, it is intimidating to try to speak Russian with native Russian speakers, and I admit, I'm not very gregarious about it. There are a few mobile apps that cater to learning Russian, but none seem overwhelmingly organized

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

or useful for my purposes. The language skill levels leave something to be desired as well: I'm not a beginner, and I have retained much of the grammar and vocabulary that I learned in college; where I'm lacking is in my conversational skills. There does not seem to be a Russian language course that would fill that specific need, which is how I arrived at the concept for this project.

Due to my Russian language minor, I am very familiar with how Russian language courses are typically structured and how they work, from a student's perspective. I have kept in contact with several of my undergraduate and study abroad classmates, as well as Russian language instructors, so I have had good resources and developed a diverse test audience for the development stages of the project. As I am part of the target audience, I began with a good idea of what I would like to get out of this type of app, which enabled me to effectively challenge some of my own assumptions. This project has given me the opportunity to not only

DETAILED ABSTRACT

STATEMENT OF INTEREST

hone my research, design, and development skills, but to practice my own Russian language skills while assembling the content.

In addition to the content of the project, I'm very drawn to Russian contemporary art, so the design aspect of this project has been of interest to me. Because the language course covers practical, conversational use, I factored in other interesting points about Russian culture as it relates to the language, including art, music, and other forms of entertainment and pop culture. The project has challenged me as a designer, and the technical demands of developing a prototype for a mobile app has challenged my development skills.

As far as career development, this project has bolstered my skills as a UI designer, and has also allowed me to build my credentials as a UX designer. It has also enabled me to pursue a career designing complex mobile applications with a focus on creating the best user experience.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

OVERVIEW

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Russian can be a difficult language to learn, due in large part to the intimidation factor: native Russian-speakers, particularly in Russia, tend to be suspicious of outsiders and unfriendly to non-native speakers. Znaniya aims to create an unthreatening environment for advanced-level Russian learners to practice their conversational speaking skills.

It can be expensive and time-consuming for former Russian language students to maintain their language skills once their formal studies have ended, especially in a conversational context. The same is true of native Russian speakers who have moved away from their networks (whether it be family or social affiliations). My mobile app, Znaniya, will provide the means for these groups of relatively advanced Russian speakers to maintain and build upon their conversational skills so the years spent speaking the language are reinforced.

Because it is a mobile app, and because the course is designed to be self-paced, Znaniya

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DETAILED ABSTRACT

will fit easily into its students' lives. One of the main problems with taking an in-person course is the lack of convenience; Znaniya mitigates that by providing some of the interaction of that type of course (via its listening comprehension and use of the device's microphone) without the need to physically go to a class. It will be unique in its integration of real-world exercises, such as assembling a recipe, watching and listening to a variety of media clips, and dialog practice.

Upon completion of each lesson, users will be able to carry on conversations on the lesson's subject matter. Users will also be able to understand and adapt to variations, due to extensive practice within the lessons.

STATEMENT OF INTEREST

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION



Proof of Concept

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3



“As a former Russian student who learns best kinesthetically, I want to be able to practice my language skills by achieving a tangible goal so that I can have a practical understanding of the language.”

David Kinsey

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3

1



David launches the Znaniya app and is taken to the app's launch screen.

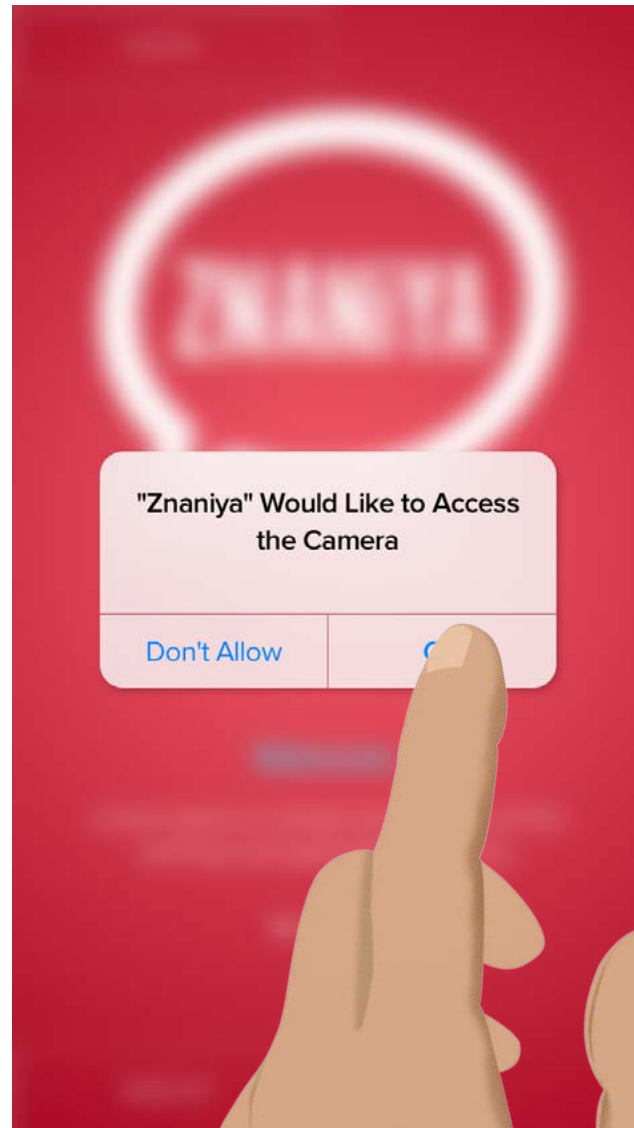
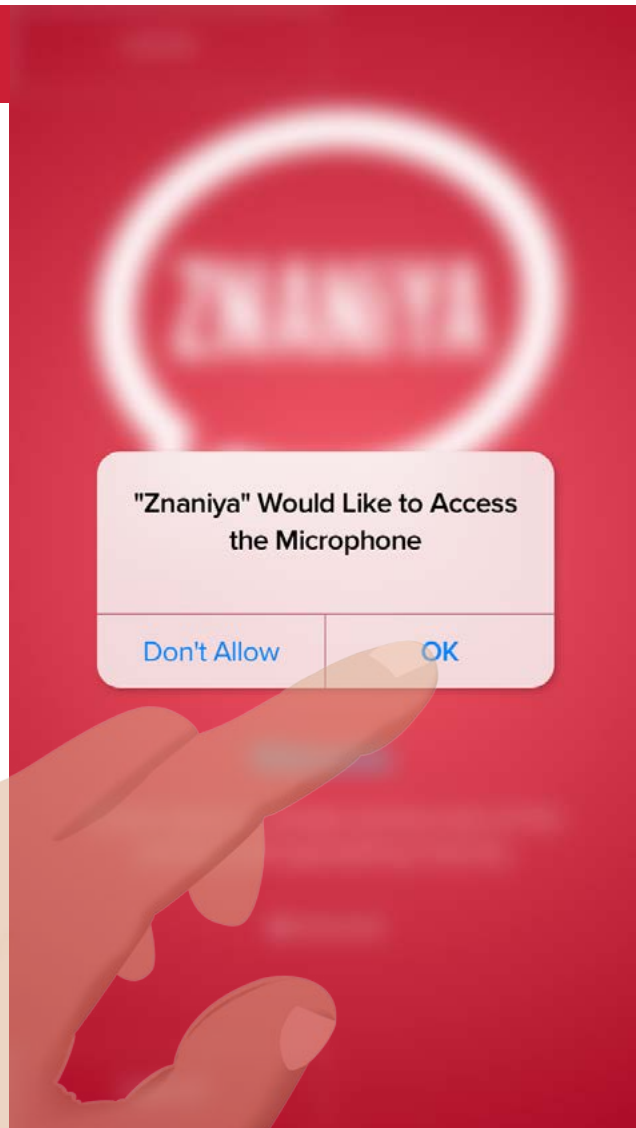
PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3

2



Since he's recently installed some updates on his phone, the app prompts the user for camera access (which he'll need for the exercise) and microphone access upon initial startup in order to activate some of the Exercise and Speaking features. He chooses to enable access to both the camera and microphone and taps "OK."

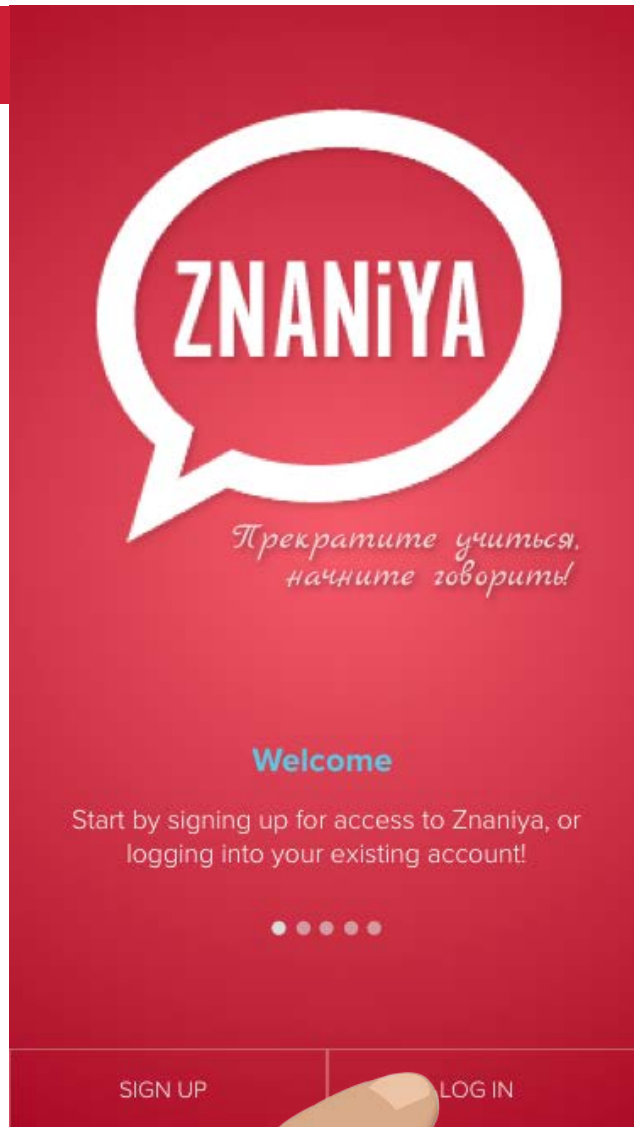
PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3

3



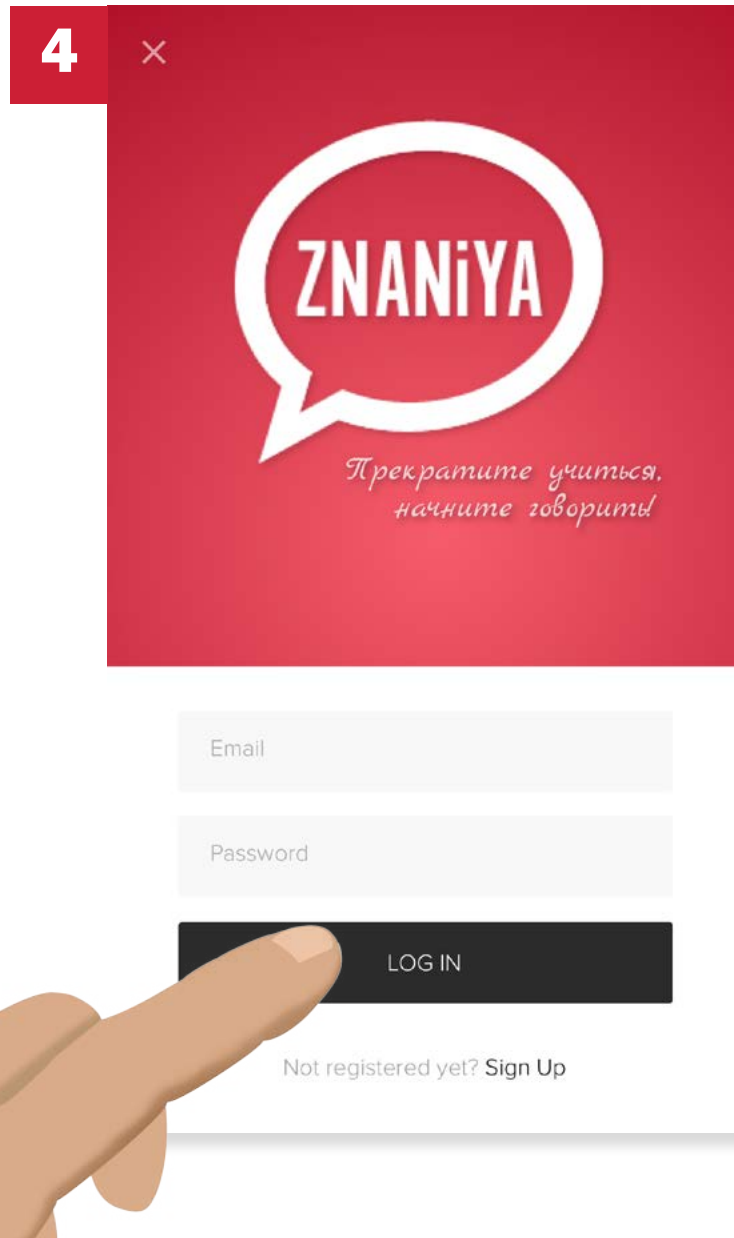
David has a choice of Sign Up or Log In. Since he has logged in previously, he chooses “Log In.”

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3



David enters his email and password and logs in.

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3

5



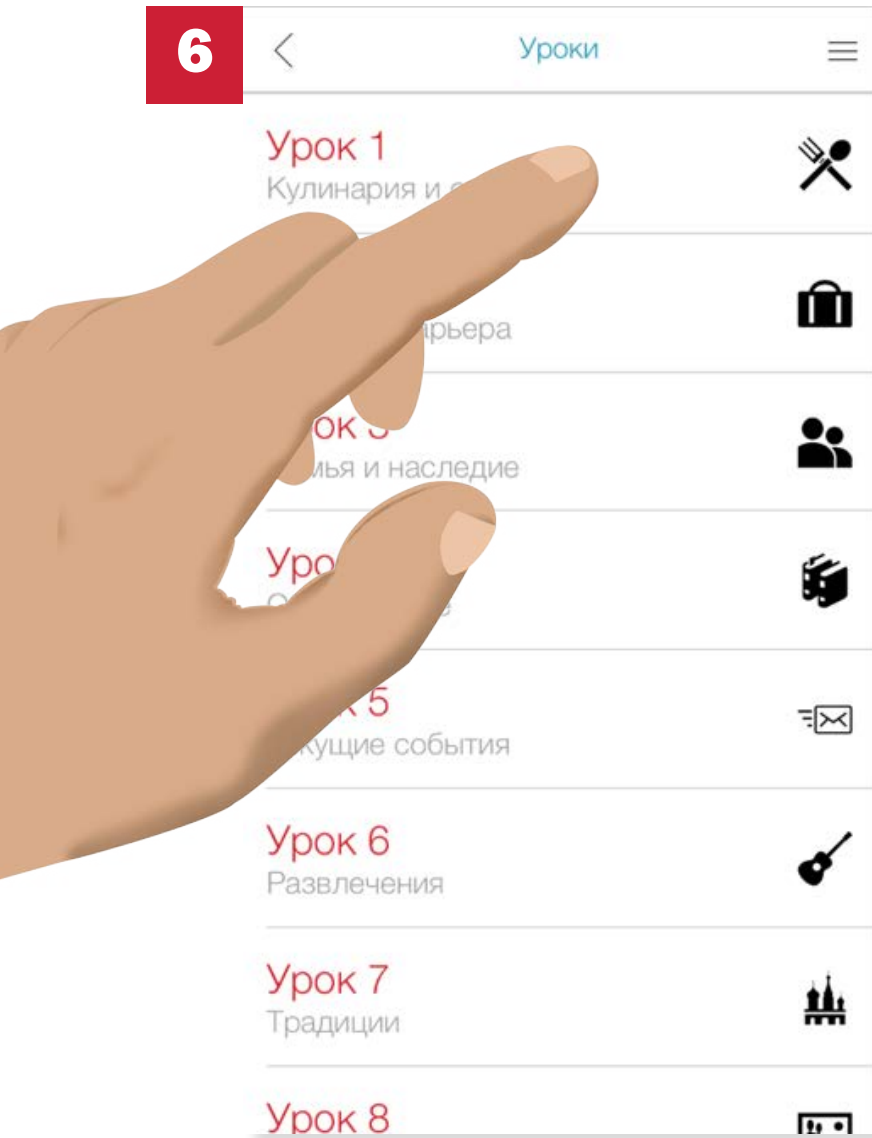
Once he's logged in, David is taken to the home screen and taps on "Lessons" (Уроки).

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3



David taps on Lesson 1 to access the Lesson 1 menu.

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3



From the Lesson 1 menu, David taps “Culture” (Культура).

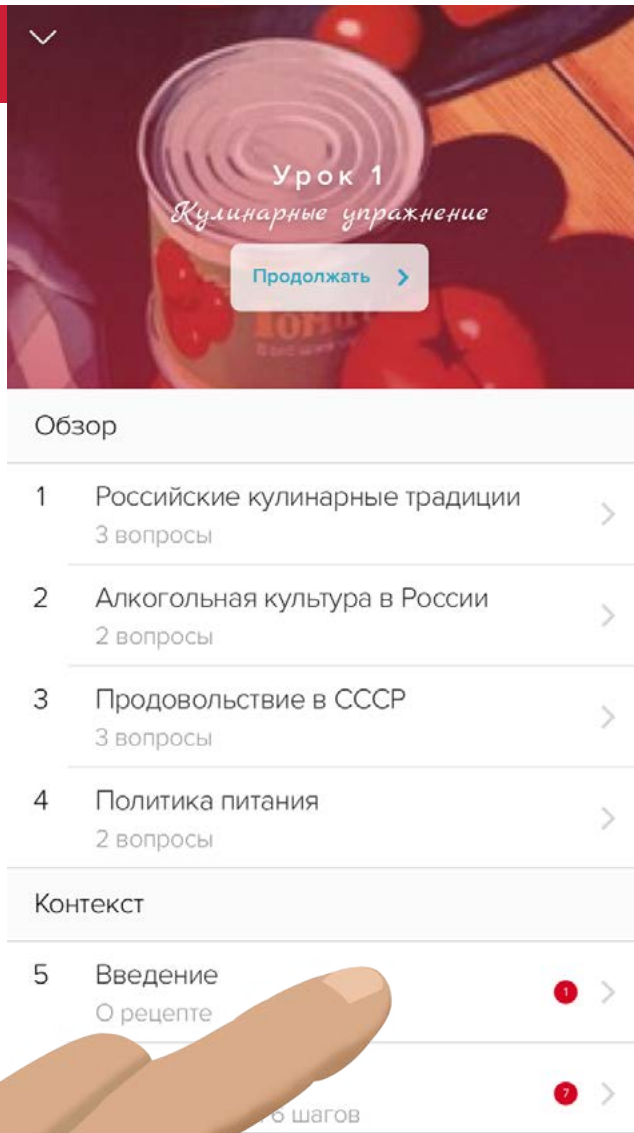
PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3

8



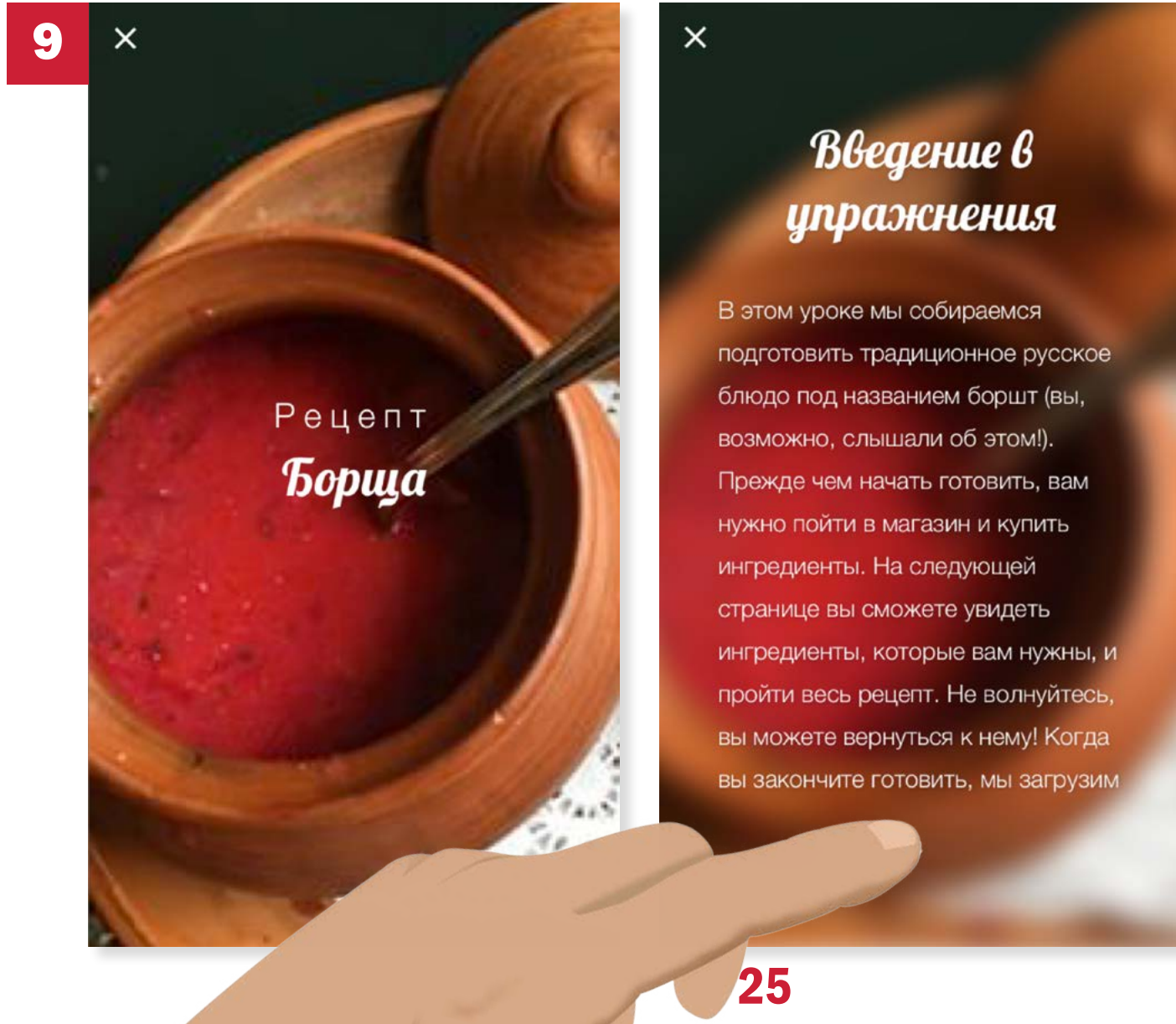
On the Culture menu, David taps on “Introduction,” located under “Exercise.”

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3



David reads the introduction to the exercise, which tells him that he's about to make a recipe (borscht, a Russian beet soup) and will need to go to the store to get ingredients.

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3

10



Рецепт борща



Ингредиенты

1 средний лук, фарш

1 зубчик чеснока, фарш

немного масла или укорочения (для обжиги)

2 маленьких моркови или **1 большой**, очищенный и нарезанный на маленькие диски

1 очищенная, кубиковая репа или пастернак

14-унция может нарезать кубиками жареные помидоры



Прогресс урока



Настройки

The first portion of the recipe exercise is the list of ingredients. David must go to the store to purchase them.

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3



David next goes through Steps 1-6, following the recipe instructions to cook the borscht.

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3



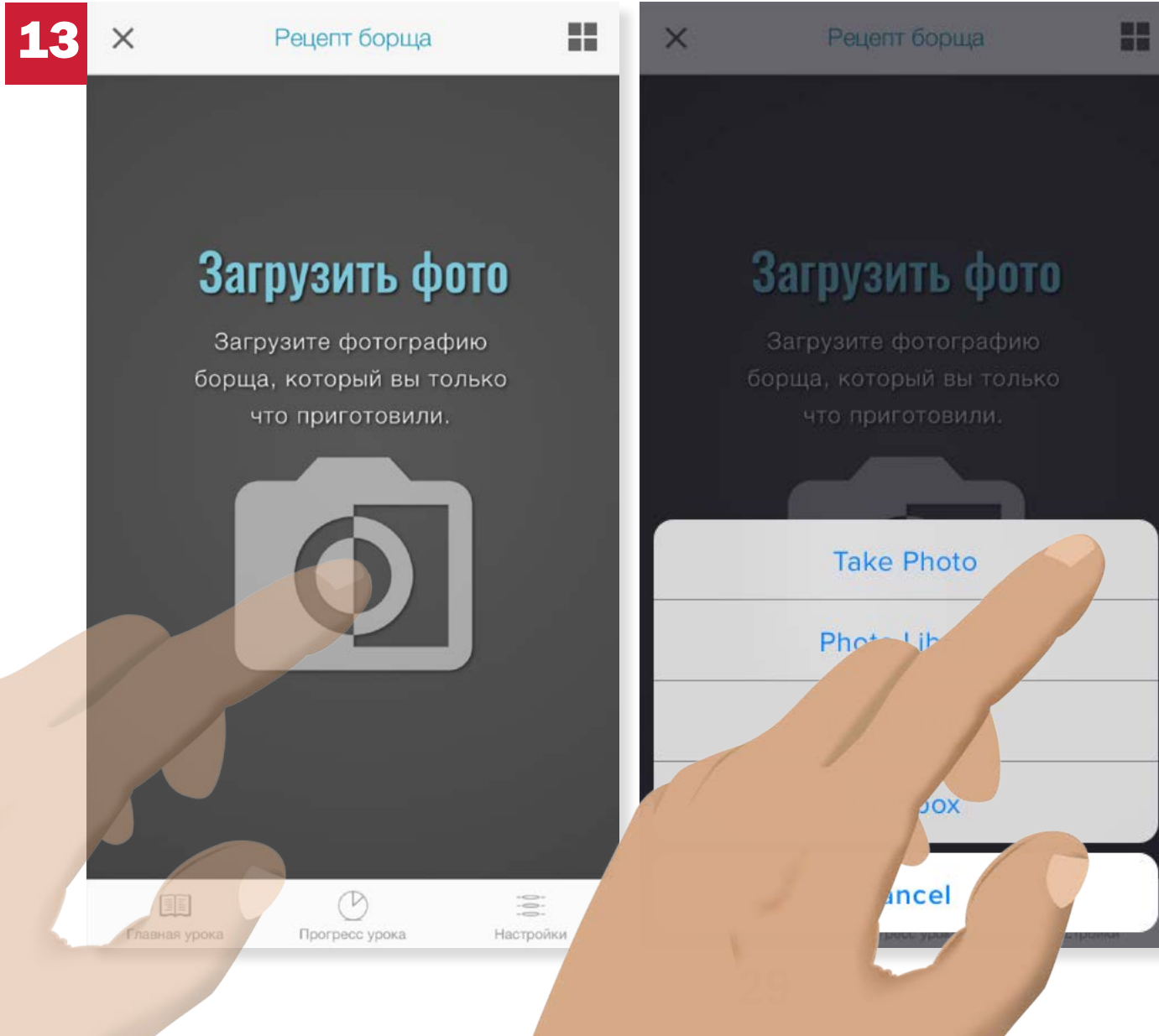
Once he reaches the end of the recipe and his soup is done cooking, he scrolls to the bottom of the screen, which reads, “that’s all! Done cooking? Show us how your borscht turned out!” and taps on the button which reads, “upload photo.”

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3



David follows the prompts to take a photo of his completed recipe.

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3

14



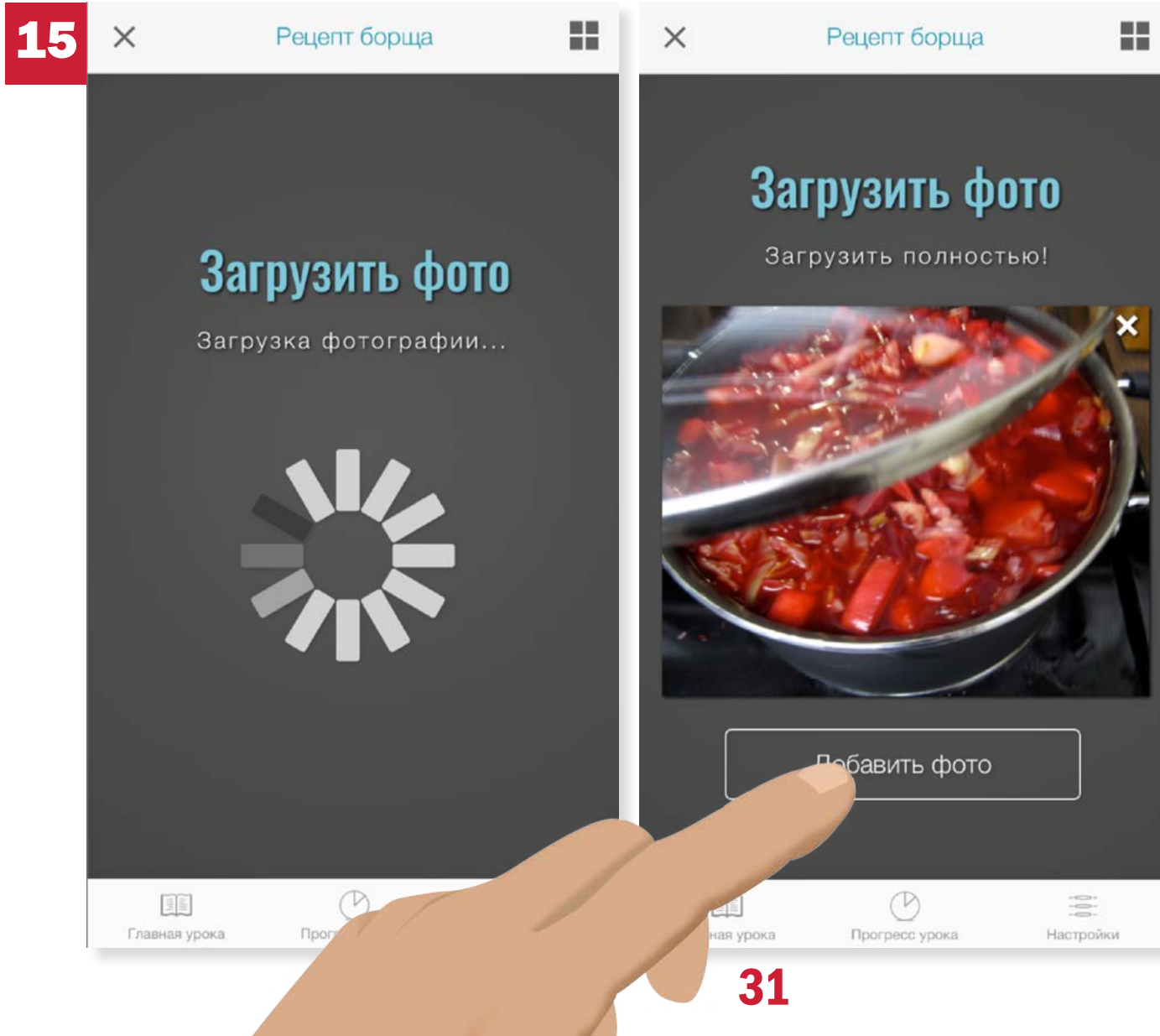
David takes the photo and taps
“use photo.”

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3



The photo uploads and displays on the next screen once the upload is complete. He's happy with the photo, so he taps "submit photo."

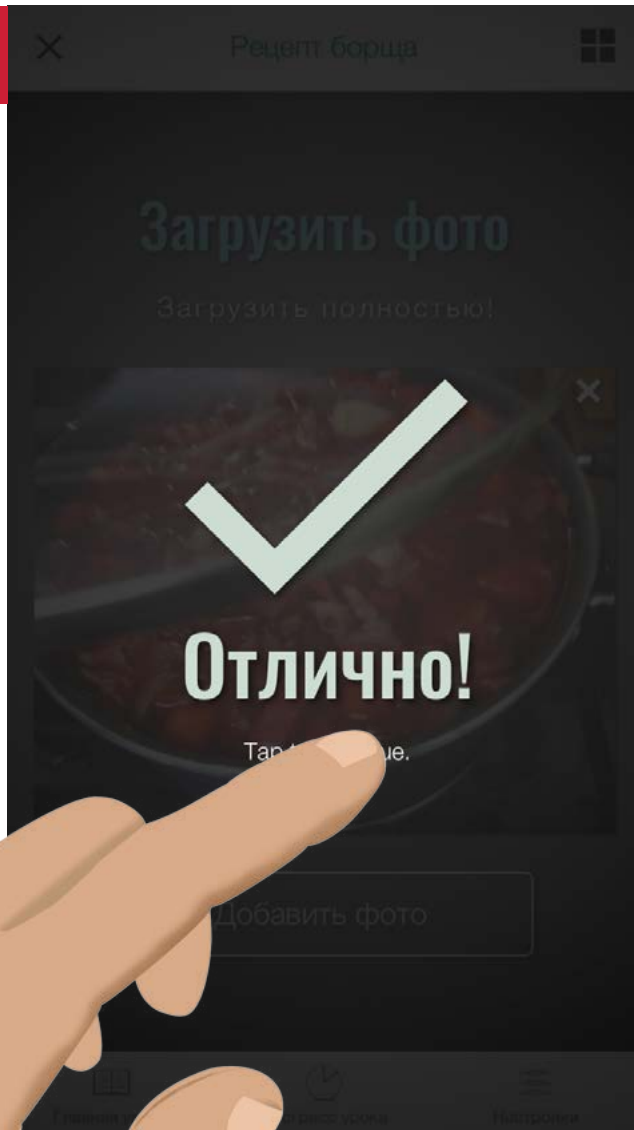
PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3

16



The system records that the photo has been submitted. It stores the photo in the app, and stores David's progress in the lesson.

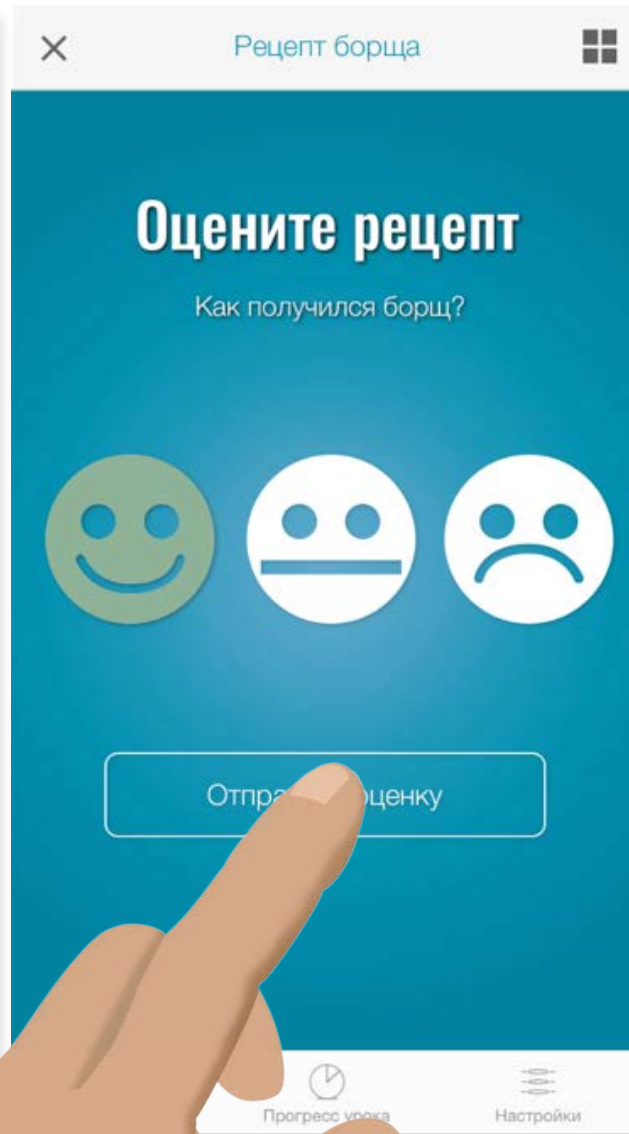
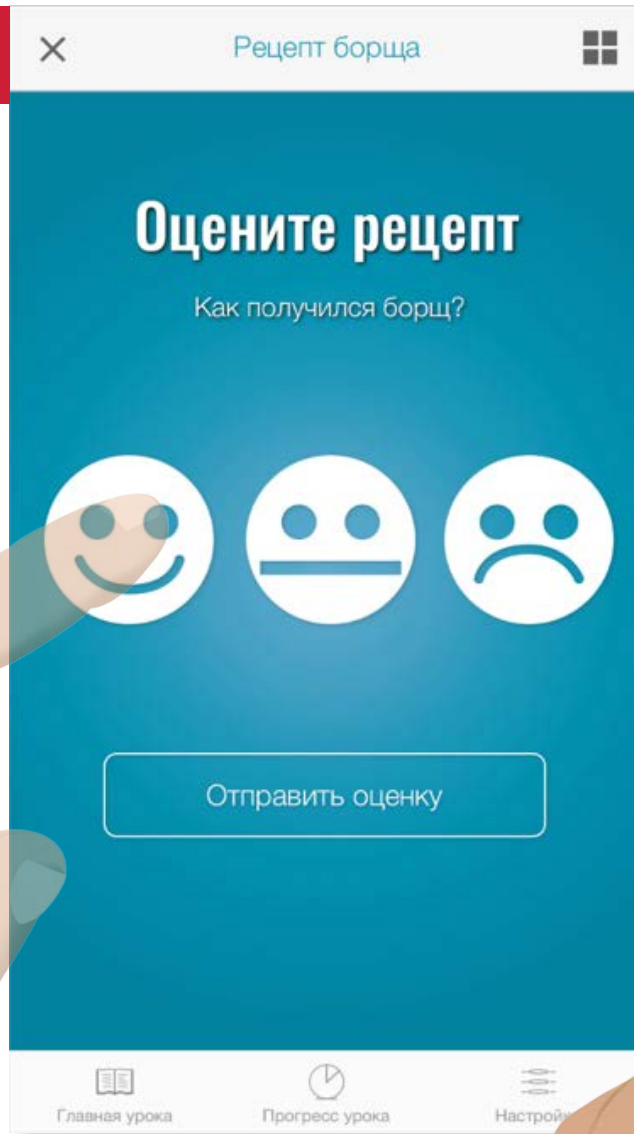
PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3

17



Next, the app prompts David to rate the recipe by tapping the corresponding face. He does, and taps "submit rating."

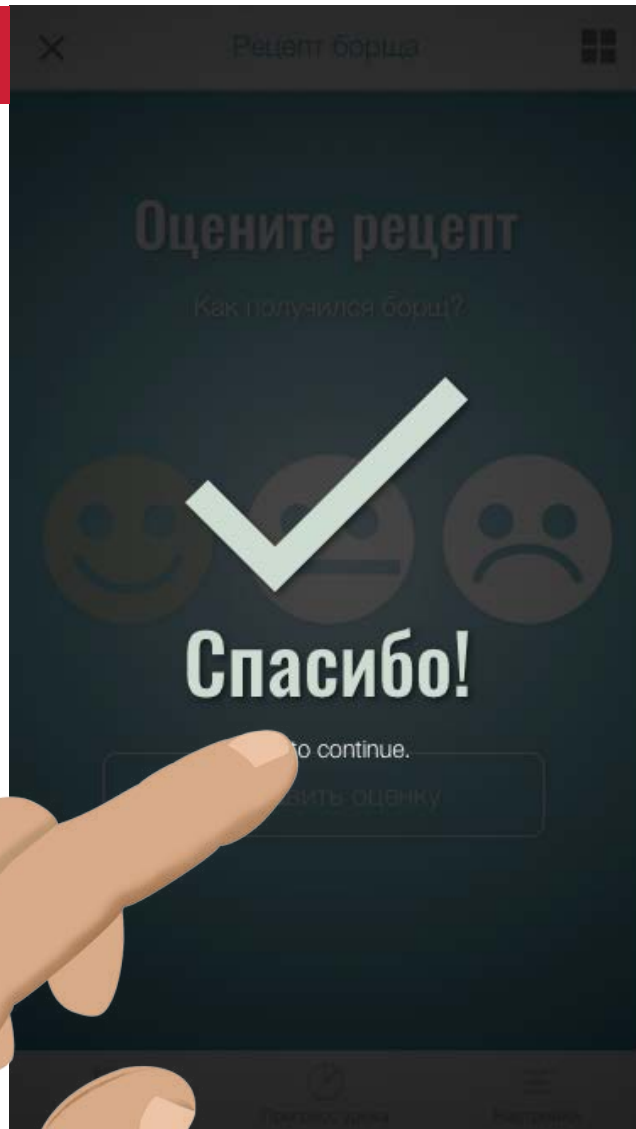
PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3

18



The rating is submitted, the app displays its feedback (a “thank you” message) acknowledging the submission, and David is then transferred to the next module.

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3



“As a former Russian student who grew up in a Russian-speaking community, I want to be able to immerse myself in the language so that I can remember how to speak it correctly.”

Liz Smolnyak

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3



From the Home screen/main menu, Liz taps on the shortcut prompt, “Lesson 1 Multimedia - ‘The Americans’,” which indicates where she left off the last time she used the app.

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3

2

×



×

Введение

В эпоху холодной войны в 1980-х годах американцы - это история Элизабет и Филиппа Дженнингса, двух советских офицеров КГБ, представляющих американскую супружескую пару в пригороде Вашингтона, округ Колумбия, и их соседа, Стэна Бимана, агента ФБР, который Работает в контрразведке.

На сцене, которая следует за этим, есть два офицера КГБ, которые работают в советском штабе (в

The title for the clip is displayed, then fades to the description (without user action/intervention).

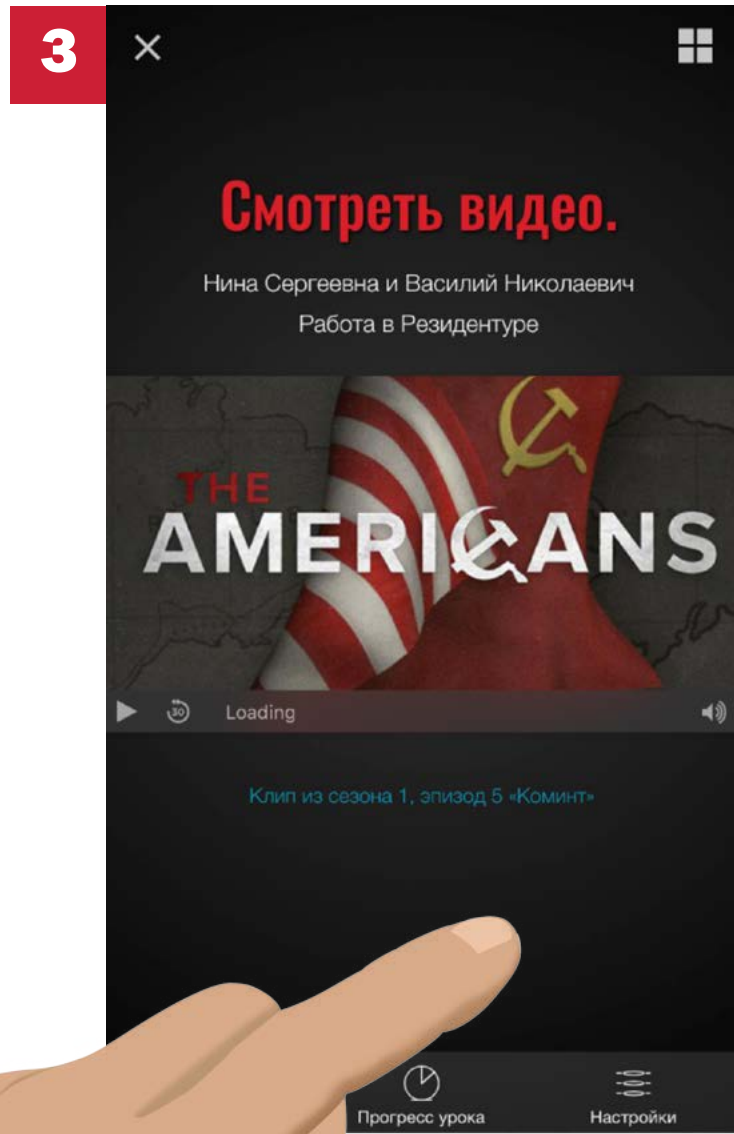
Liz reads the description and background/context for the video clip she is about to watch. The description gives her vital information that may not be readily available in the clip, but will allow her to understand the context and answer the quiz questions following the clip.

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3



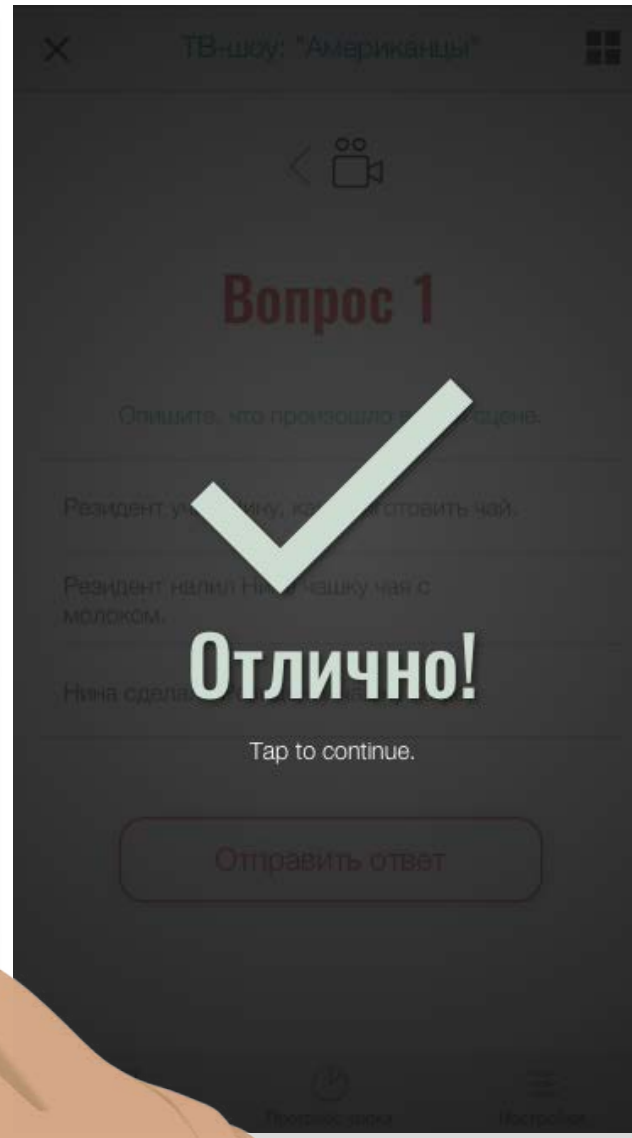
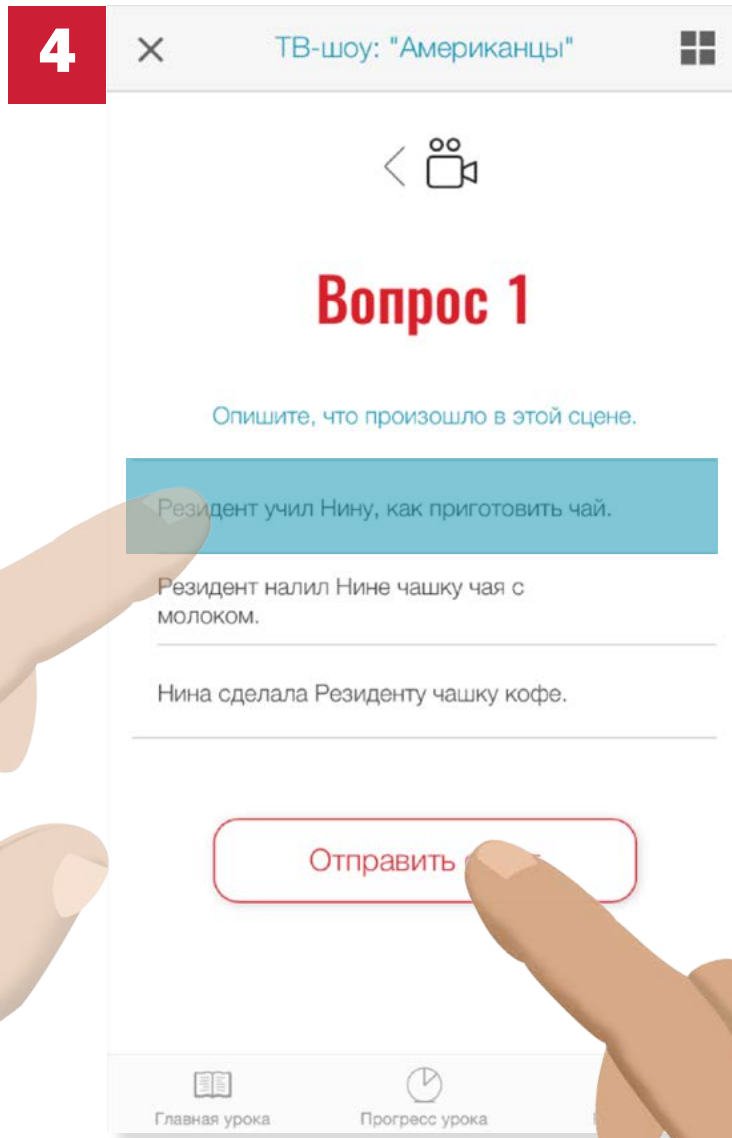
Liz watches the video clip.

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3



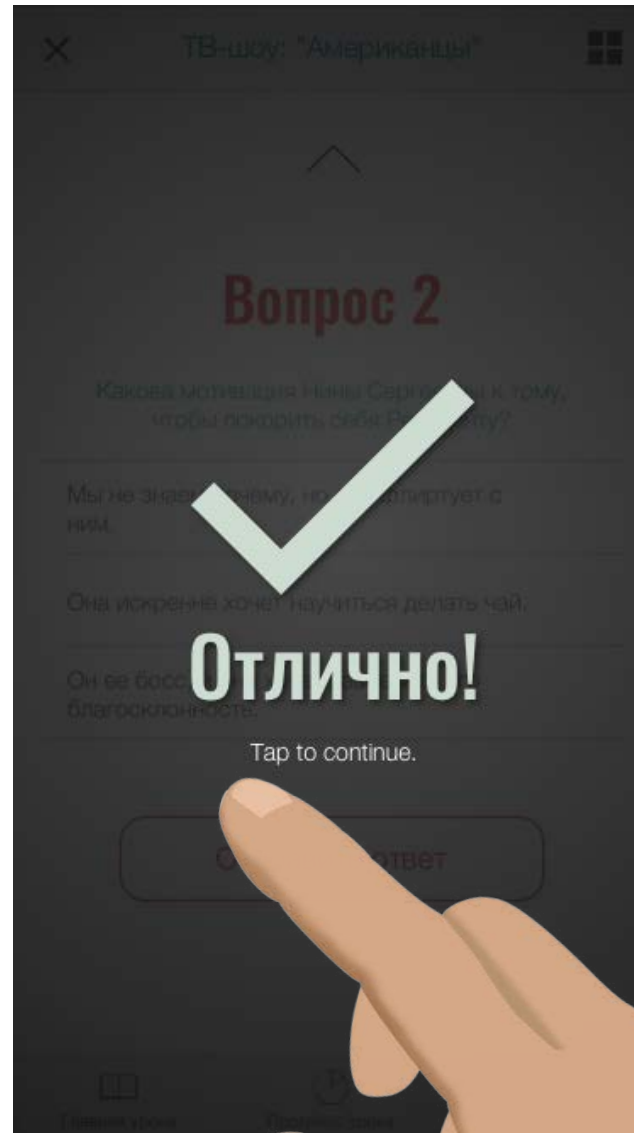
Liz answers Question 1 correctly, submits the answer, and the "correct" overlay appears. The overlay then disappears after a second, and the app scrolls to Question 2.

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3



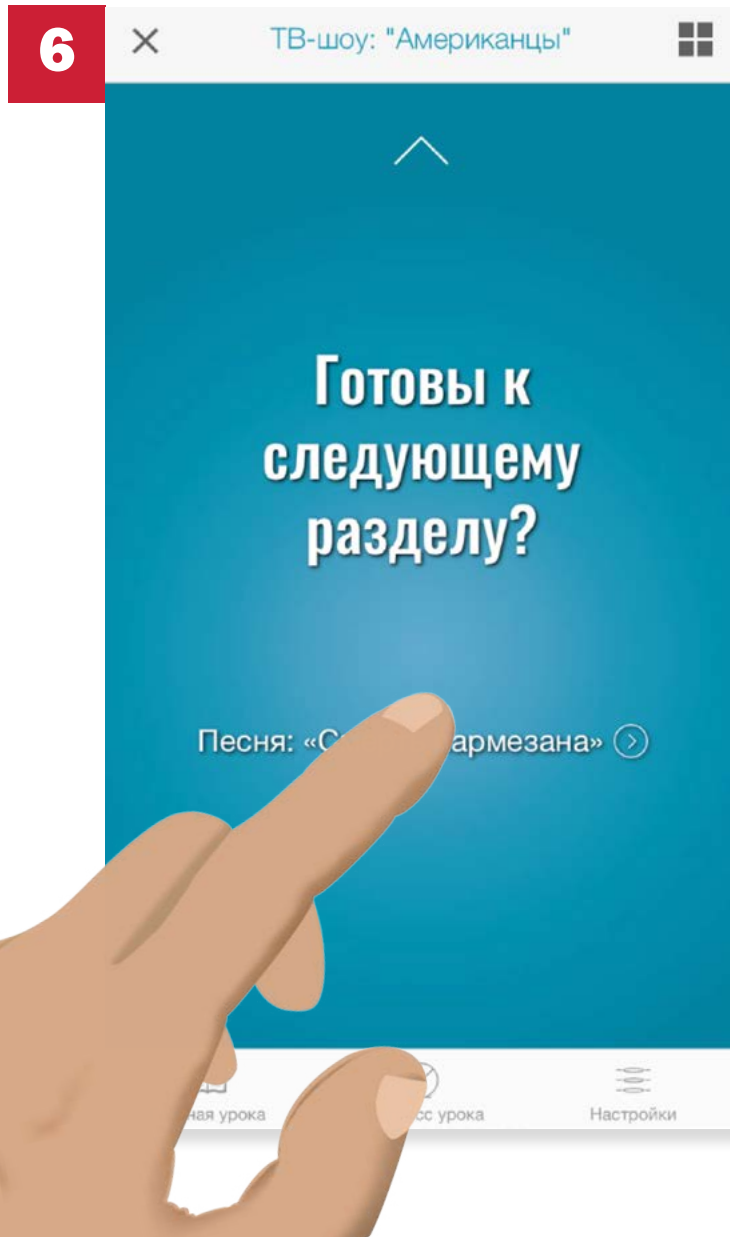
Liz answers Question 2 correctly and receives feedback, then transferring her to the next screen.

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3



The final portion of this screen reads, "Ready for the next section?" The button indicates that the next section will be a song: "Death of a Parmesan."

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3



“As an attorney who used to speak Russian nearly fluently, I want to rehearse my Russian-speaking skills so that I can converse comfortably with native Russian speakers.”

Melanie Jensen

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3



From the Home screen/main menu, Melanie taps on the shortcut prompt, “Lesson 1 Conversation - talking at the ice cream shop,” which indicates where she left off the last time she used the app.

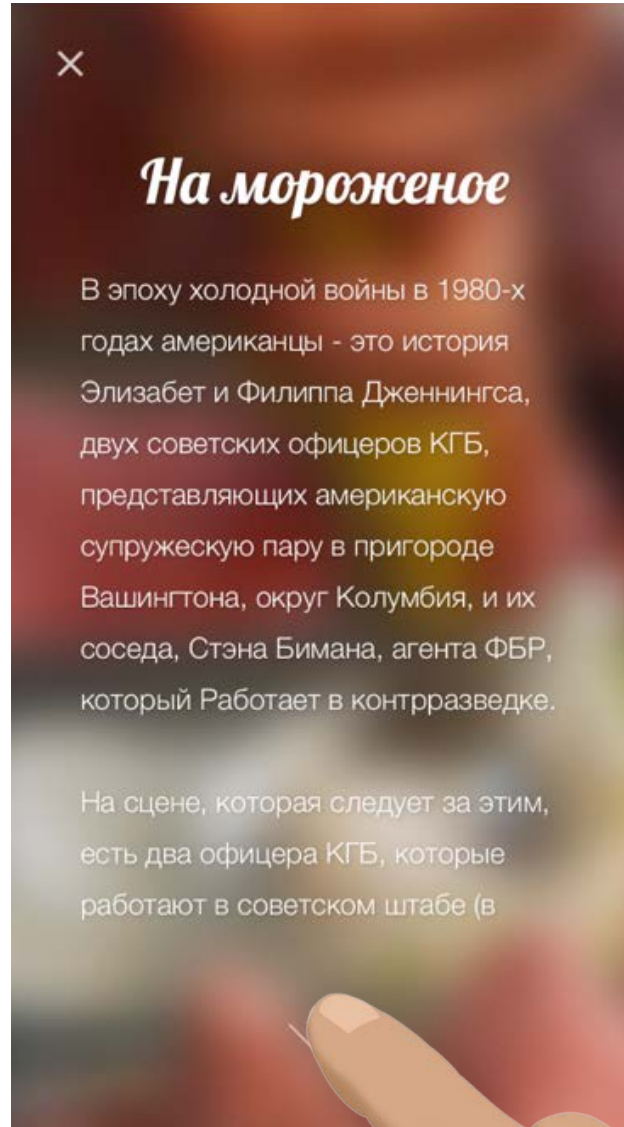
PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3

2



The introduction screen appears, then fades to the description page.

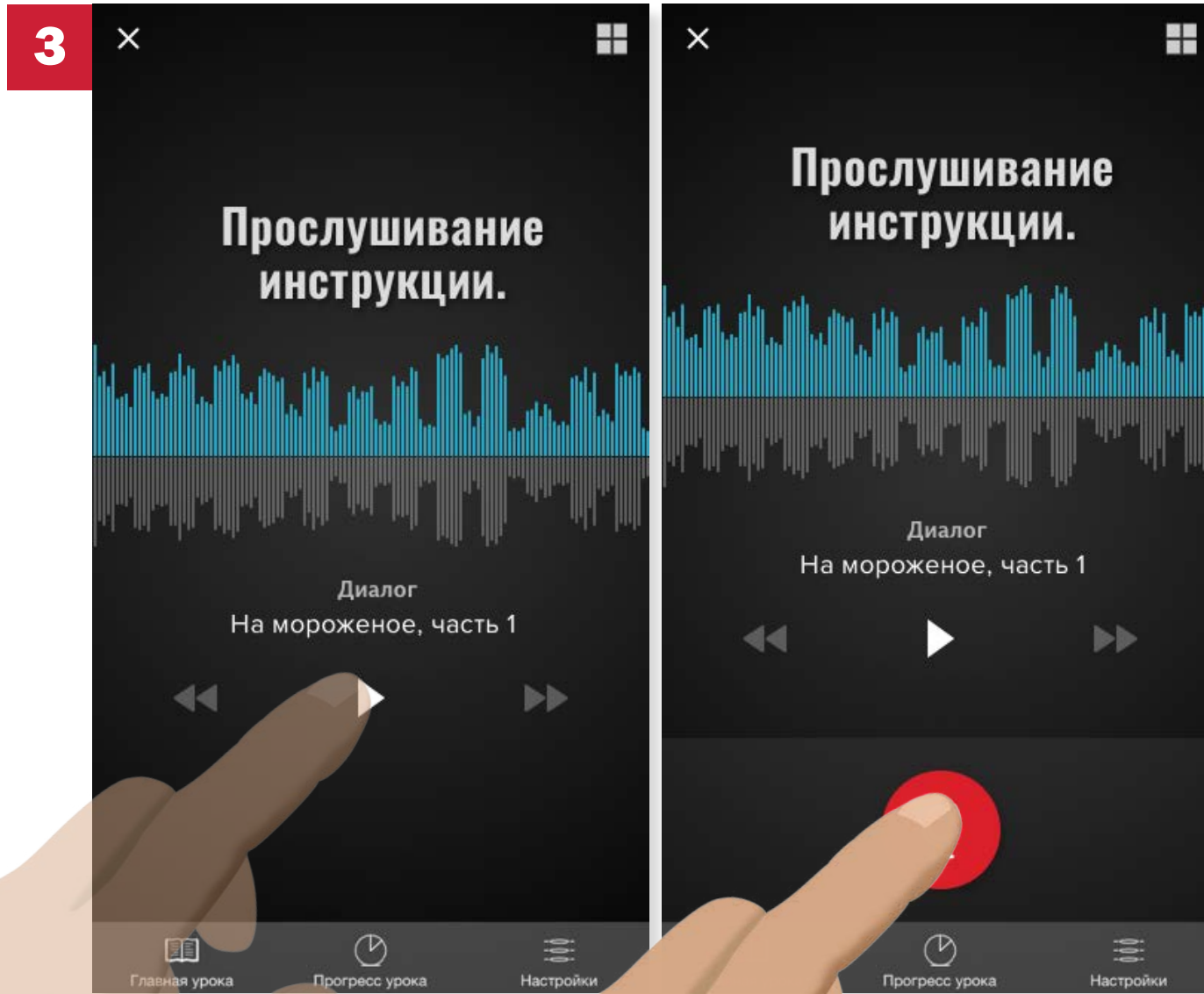
The section begins with an introduction to the scenario: the dialog will take place at an ice cream shop (на мороженое), and Melanie's role will be to have a conversation with a friend of hers at the shop. The introduction sets up the conversation so Melanie's response to her friend's prompt is most likely to be accurate and validated by the system.

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3



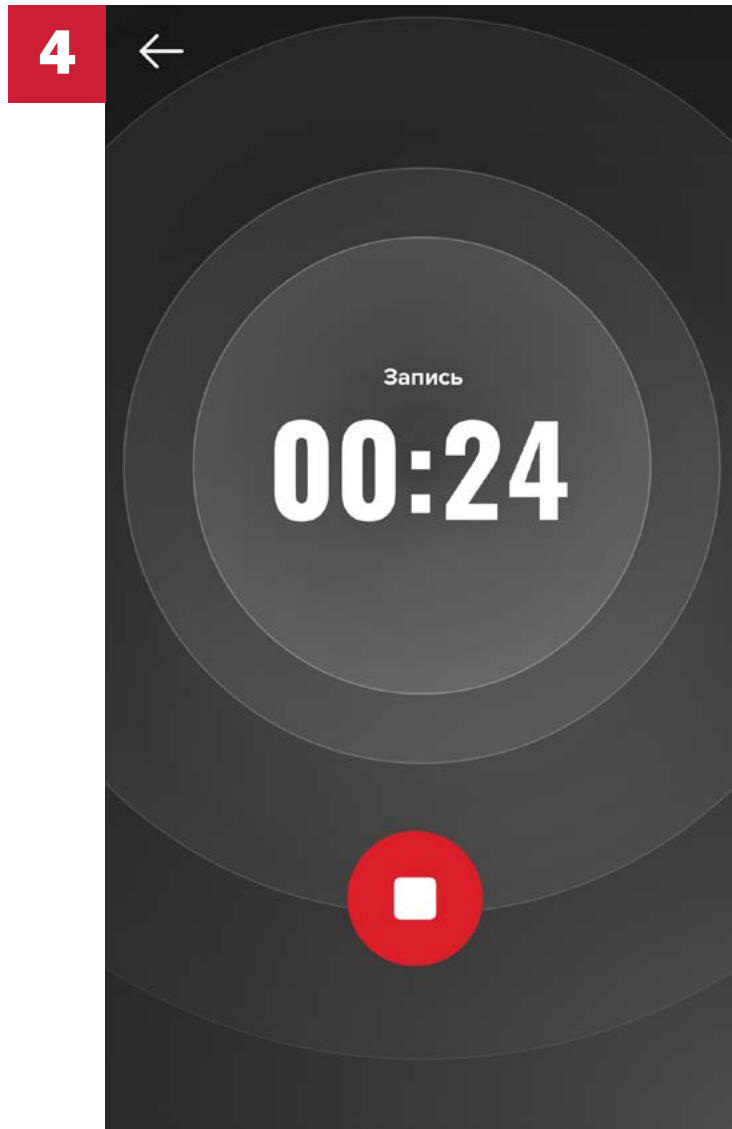
The Speaking screen appears, which displays a button to play the first part of the dialog (the play icon) and a microphone icon, to be tapped once the user is ready to record the second part of the dialog.

PROOF OF CONCEPT

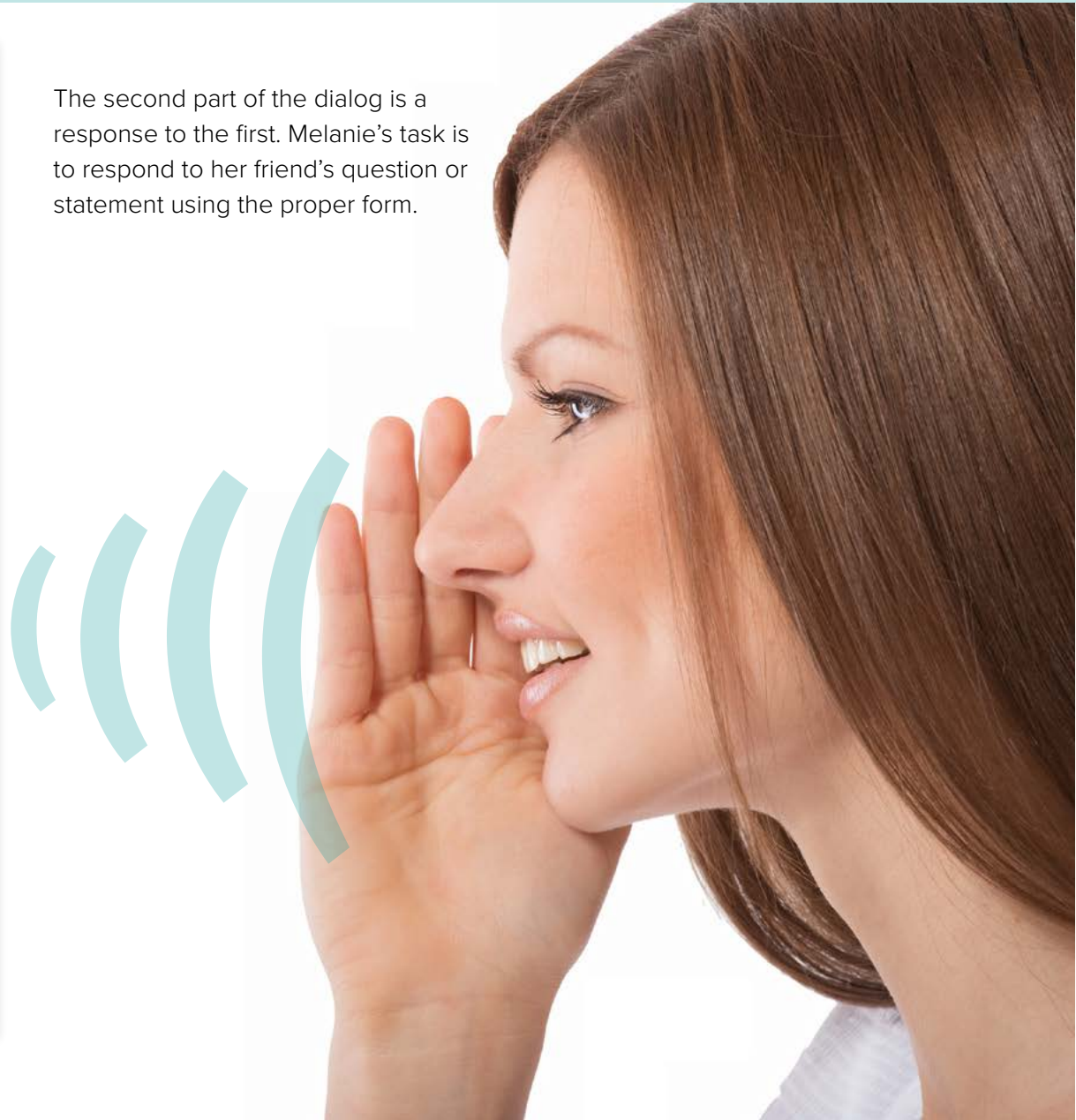
USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3



The second part of the dialog is a response to the first. Melanie's task is to respond to her friend's question or statement using the proper form.



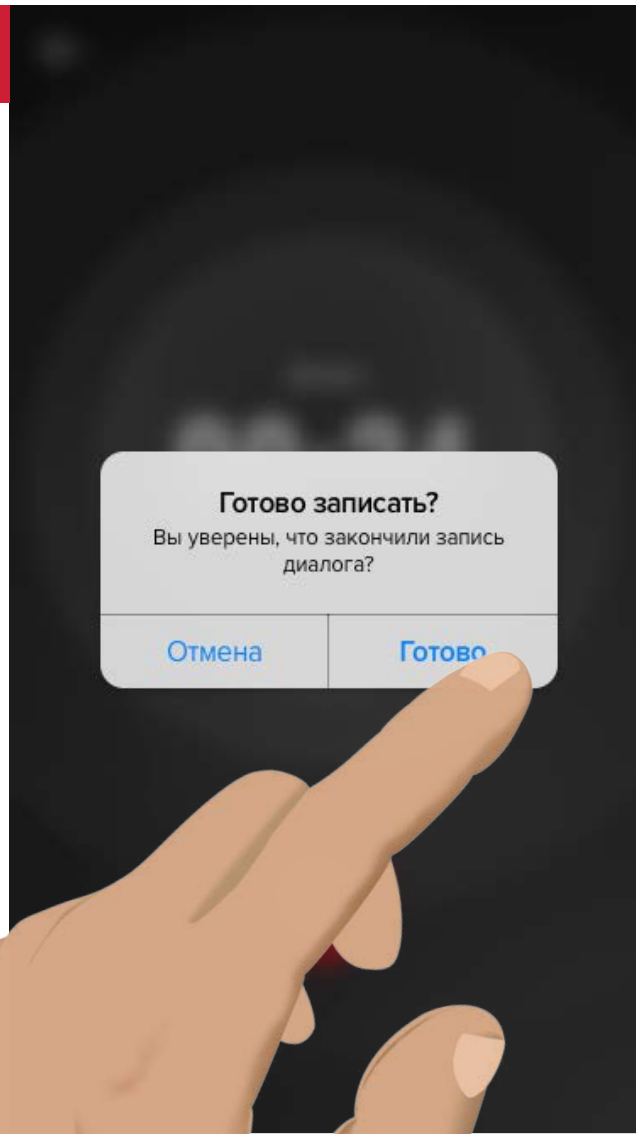
PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3

5



The system prompt asks Melanie if she's sure she's done recording. If she chooses "Done," she's taken to the next screen; "Cancel" allows her to continue recording. She taps "done."

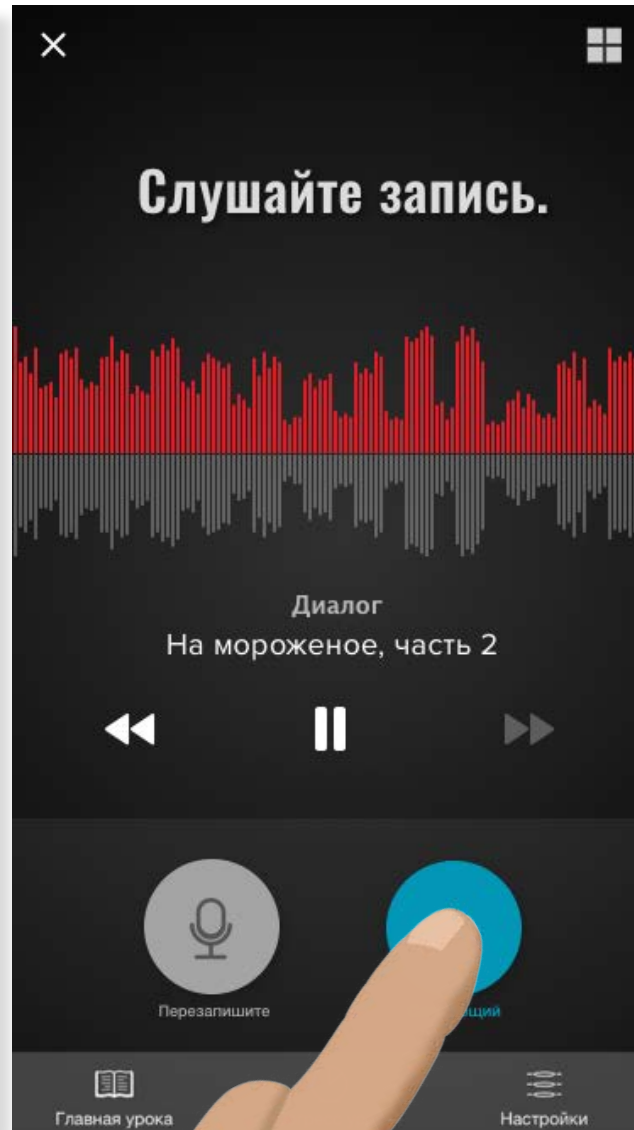
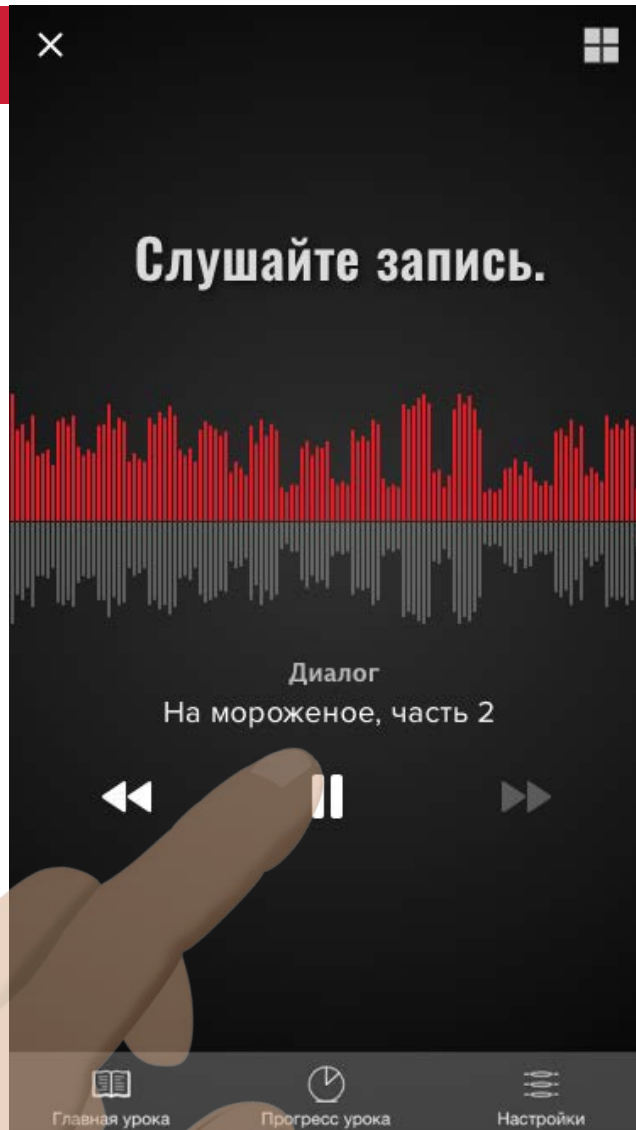
PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3

6



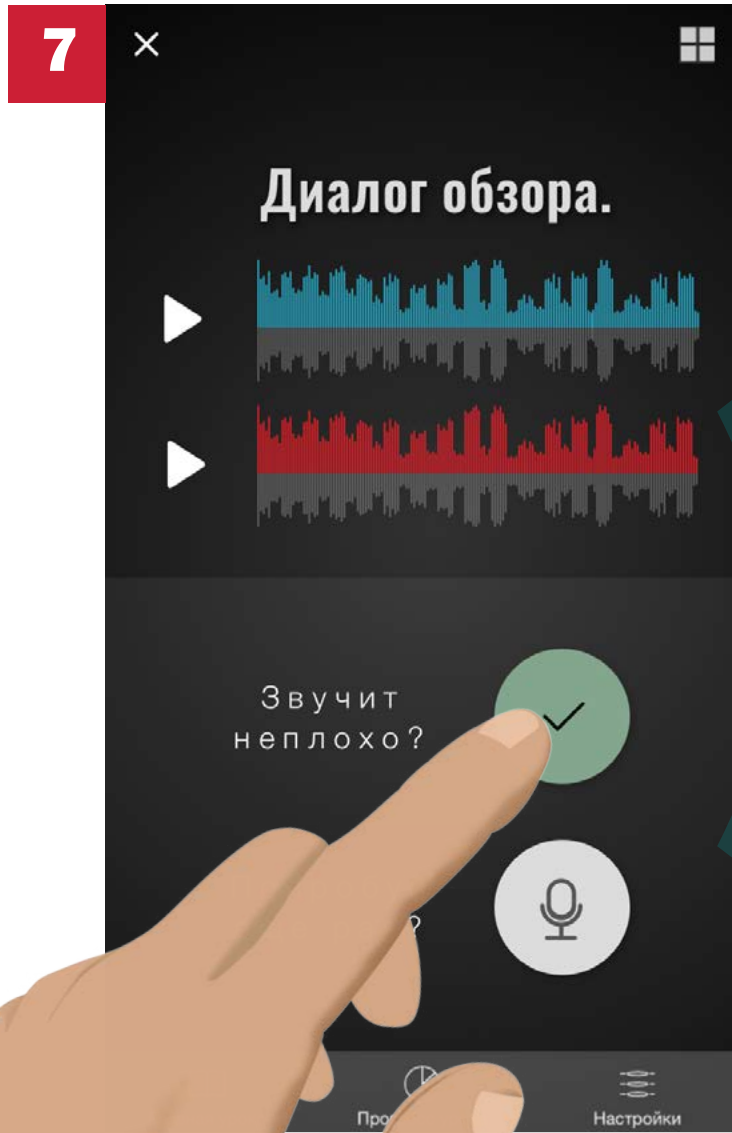
Melanie then plays back the response she has recorded, then proceeding to the next screen.

PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3



Melanie reviews both parts of the dialog—the prompt and her recording—then submits her final answer by tapping “Sounds good?” (“Звучит неплохо?”)



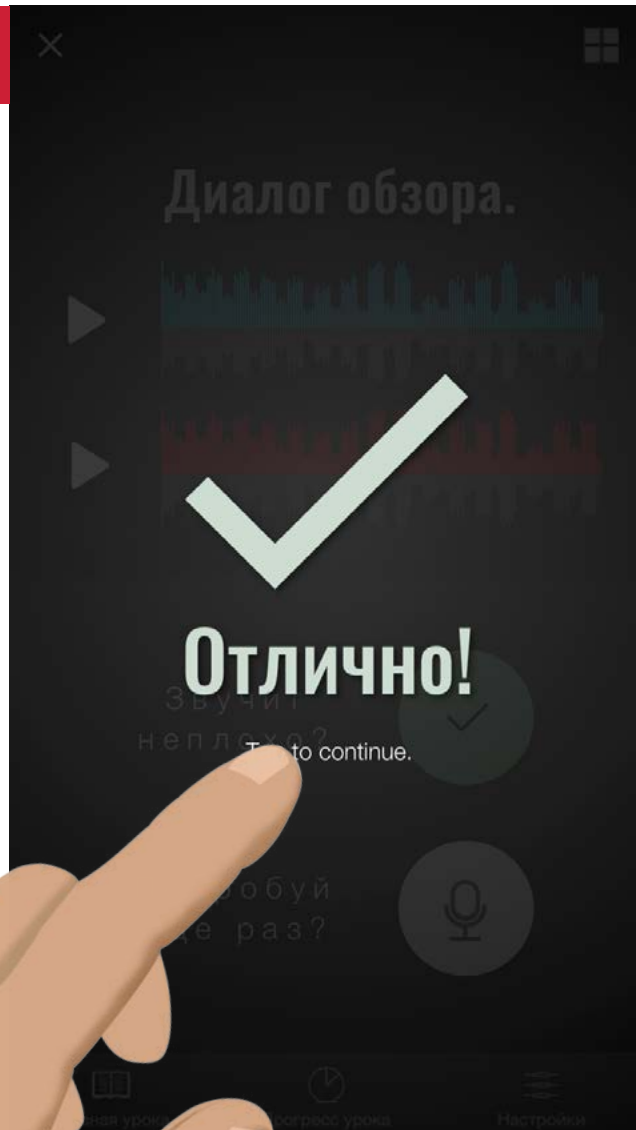
PROOF OF CONCEPT

USER SCENARIO #1

USER SCENARIO #2

USER SCENARIO #3

8



The app will then validate whether her answer is correct, using speech/voice recognition, and present her with either the “correct” or “incorrect” overlay (feedback).



Strategic Process

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Functionality / Features

The app is free and features three available levels—Essential, Intermediate, and Advanced—which can be purchased individually or as a set (the app allows in-app purchases). For purposes of this analysis, I purchased and tested the Intermediate level.

Each lesson contains several spoken pronunciation examples, denoted by a Play symbol next to the applicable lesson sections. The written examples also use accent marks to denote emphasis (these are not always used in written Russian). The plethora of conversation examples, especially, is incredibly useful in this type of a course.

User Requirements

As mentioned, this course has three levels—Essential (Beginning), Intermediate, and Advanced. I concentrated on the Intermediate and Advanced levels, which, when comparing to the Russian textbook I used for my upper-level courses, were accurately determined skill levels. I found that some of the Advanced lessons were even somewhat challenging.

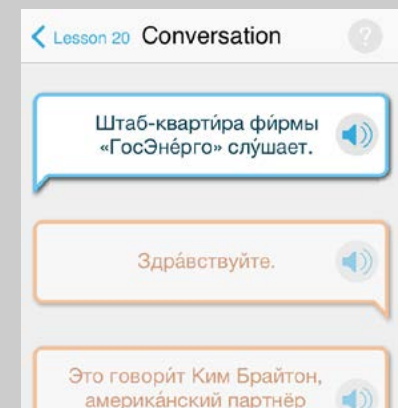
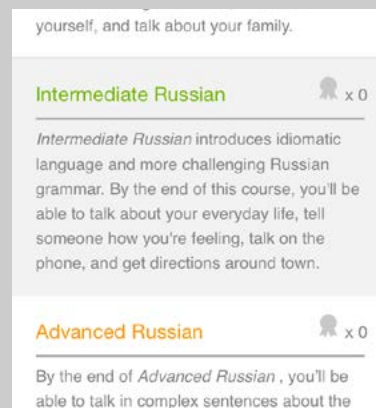
Usability

STRENGTHS

Living Language did a great job with this app's usability. I found that it was very easy to

navigate and is well-organized, especially for the amount of content each level contains.

Each level is organized according to the same lesson structure, and the consistency serves to create a seamless and enjoyable user experience. features a total of 20 lessons, divided into 5 units. There are 4 lessons per unit: Words, Phrases, Sentences, and Conversations. Each lesson has 6 parts: an introduction ("Get Set"), two alternating sections pertaining to the lesson subject, two alternating grammar sections, a section entitled "All Games" (which contains 3 games reviewing the lesson material), and a lesson recap, which includes a bullet point list of what the lesson covered, as well as links



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back to the material if the user is still unsure of the material. The games, specifically, are what kept me engaged and interested in the lessons. A few examples of games would be Matching Bubbles, Sentence Builder, and Multiple Choice; these are truly just quizzes, but with a more fun, engaging interface. The games allow the user to have fun with the lessons while still reviewing and solidifying the acquired knowledge, and also result in merit-based medals.

WEAKNESSES

In terms of usability, overall, I was very pleased with this app. The few difficulties I had involved the games; specifically, the “Fill In” games, which required that the user type

in a Russian word to complete a sentence, did not first instruct the user to switch to the Russian keyboard. This is an easy fix for the user, but with that lack of instruction, I was almost expecting the app to switch the keyboard input source for me.

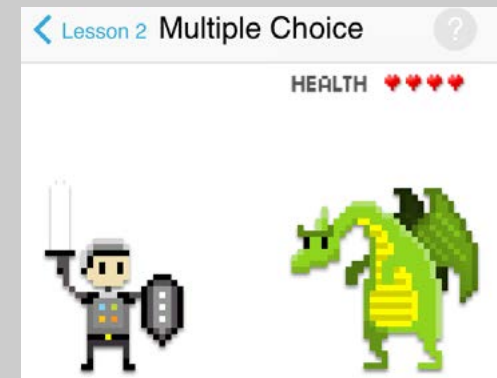
Visual Design

Living Language’s visual design is consistent for all of its language apps, so it kept the design simple and light. Aside from the games, the majority of the app is focused on its text, which makes sense for an educational app. The design has a fun and casual look, and features a pastel color palette.

Relation to my project

Living Language has created an app that is very similar to my concept for Znaniya. It features both Intermediate and Advanced levels. The organization of the lessons is similar to the one I had in mind, as is the focus on conversation and pronunciation; in addition, the interactivity demonstrated in the games is intriguing, and something I would like to explore for Znaniya.

The only real dissimilarity is that the course, while fun, is not truly conversational. It does teach the user how to pronounce words and phrases, but without the added benefit of allowing the user to record his or her own speech for comparison.



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Functionality / Features

Busuu is a free app which contains several levels—Beginner A1, Elementary A2, Intermediate B1, Upper Intermediate B2, and a Travel Course. For purposes of this analysis, I tested the Intermediate B1 level.

Intermediate B1 contained 7 subjects, which each contained 3 categories (things like The Press, Express Yourself, and Writing, although each was different), and each category contained Vocabulary, Dialog, and a Quiz (which required a paid Premium Membership).

Also, upon submitting the written exercises in the lessons, they are sent to native speakers for evaluation and correction, which is a useful feature and allows interaction between the users and native speakers.

User Requirements

As mentioned, this course has five levels—Beginner A1, Elementary A2, Intermediate B1, Upper Intermediate B2, and Travel Course. I concentrated on the Intermediate B1 level, which was an appropriate category for its lessons' contents.

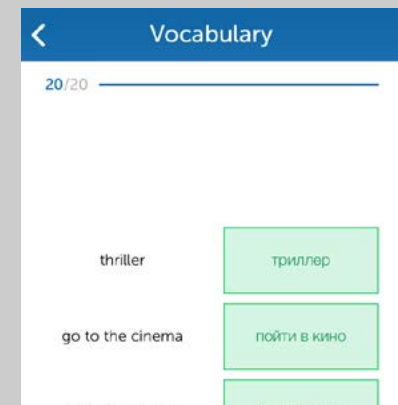
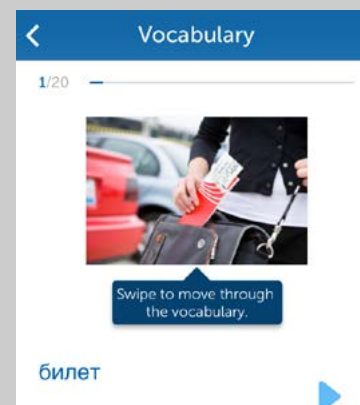
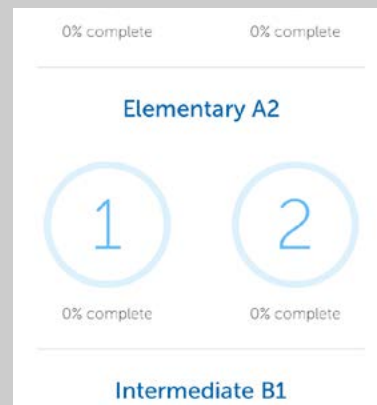
Usability

STRENGTHS

The app is easy to navigate and its navigation is well thought out. I liked that the navigation was a little deeper; it kept each screen simplified, which allowed me to investigate all the options before I selected one.

WEAKNESSES

While the app was relatively easy to use, I found the subjects and categories to be illogical in the context of the lesson, and considering the app seemed (from its features) to be more academic than conversational. The subjects (with titles



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like “Is that correct?” and “That’s really interesting!”) were not very intuitive, and I found I had to read the subtitles (“Learn how to check understanding in a conversation,” and “Learn how to express your thoughts and opinions more clearly”) to clarify them.

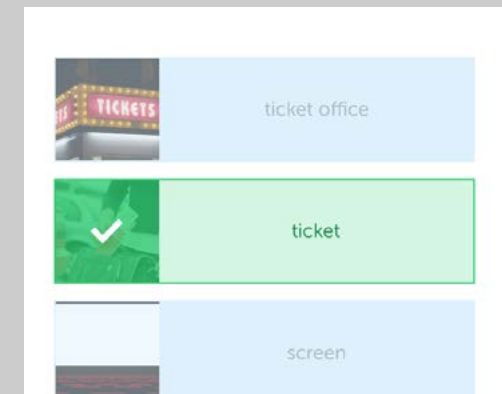
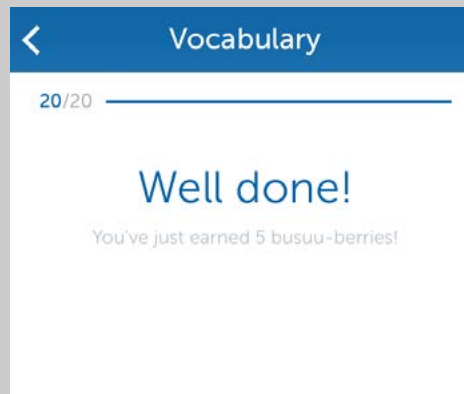
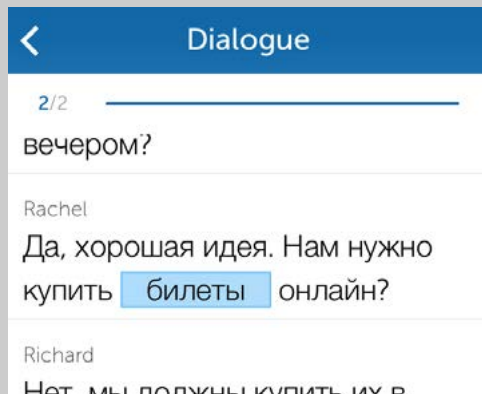
Visual Design

Busuu’s color palette is simple and clean—white, blue, and green—and the app uses a flat design, which looks very modern. It is consistent with the Busuu logo’s design and colors. Because the app is intended for languages other than Russian as well, the visual design needed to remain simple and clean, and it is.

Relation to my project

Busuu is a Russian language learning app that seems to be more suitable for academic Russian learning than conversational, but it has conversational elements and ideas that may be appropriate for Znaniya as well. It has multiple levels, but the Upper Intermediate is the closest it gets to the advanced level that I will be pursuing for Znaniya.

I do like and will be able to incorporate its use of audio and listening exercises throughout the lessons.



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Functionality / Features

The main feature of the iTalk app, as evidenced by its name, is the fact that it allows the user to record him- or herself speaking the language aside the recorded example. The words and phrases are organized into multiple categories, all of which appear on the app's home screen. The app also features quizzes that the user can take after completing a category.

User Requirements

iTalk's target audience seems to be travelers, and is largely focused on phrases concerned with travel (although not exclusively). It is

more suitable for beginning-level speakers than intermediate or advanced.

Usability

STRENGTHS

The app's home screen consists of icons representing each lesson (each lesson covers one topic). The icons are somewhat easily identifiable, but are also subtitled for ease of use. Tapping on an icon leads to a page of "cards" (see lower right screen capture), with phrases in Russian (Cyrillic), transliterated Russian, and English. There are three buttons: the first plays the native speaker's version of the phrase, the second plays back the user's recording, and the third allows the

user to record the phrase. This feature was very easy to use, but seemed to be more of a work-around for the lack of voice recognition capabilities. Navigating between cards was also very easy and simply required an intuitive swipe upward.

WEAKNESSES

The features of this app were fairly simple, so few usability problems existed. One minor issue concerned the cards: It seemed illogical that the recording playback button should be placed before the recording button and not after. Overall, though, the usability is strong.



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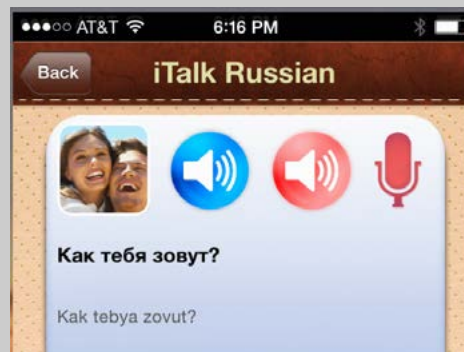
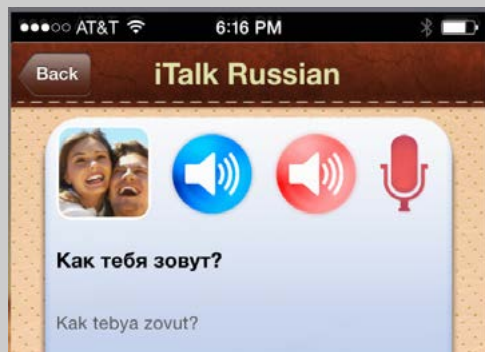
Visual Design

The app is designed in a more skeuomorphic manner, which ends up having the effect of seeming slightly out-moded. The color scheme is comprised of mostly blue and brown. The logo is the best part of the visual design, in fact: it has the Russian flag colors and pattern as its backdrop with a cartoon woman in the foreground, in addition to speaker and microphone symbols. The logo's design isn't very consistent with the rest of the app's design, with the exception of the speaker and microphone icons, which follow the red/blue color palette.

Relation to my project

iTalk is intended for conversational Russian practice, like Znaniya. iTalk is geared toward beginning-level speakers, whereas Znaniya will be for advanced speakers.

I like the simplicity of iTalk's speaking feature, and the card-like format of it. I also liked that the lessons were grouped by subject.



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Functionality / Features

Hello Hello is a conversational Russian app that features video-based animated conversations, followed by writing, translation, and speaking exercises.

User Requirements

Hello Hello's Russian language app targets beginning-level speakers and focuses on the basics of the language. The app is free and comes with Lesson 1, but has a total of 5 lessons. Each of the other 4 lessons can be downloaded in-app for \$1.99 each.

Usability

STRENGTHS

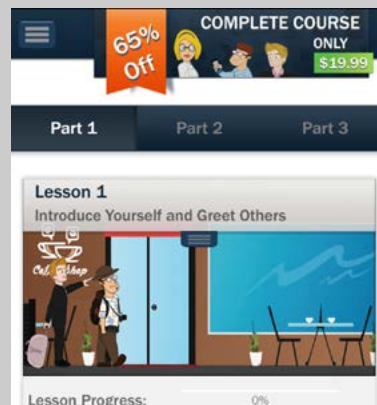
This app, overall, was very easy to use and navigate. The tasks were easy to complete and required little explanation.

After tapping on Part 1 of Lesson 1, the user is taken to a screen that features several tiled cartoon pictures and a video. The user plays the video and is then taken to the first part of the course, Here's How to Write It, which displays the written dialog of the video as it plays. The next page, Get the Meaning, translates the dialog beneath the subtitles as the video plays. The next page is Now You Say It, where the user plays each phrase,

then records him- or herself recording the phrase. The recorded phrase can be played back to compare, but (like iTalk) is not run through any voice recognition processor. The pages continue until all aspects of the dialog from the video have been covered. The next few pages are: Now You Write It, Now You Read It, Now You Listen, and Build Your Vocabulary (which is simply a vocab review).

WEAKNESSES

The one big issue with the app's usability was the initial screen of the lesson. It consists of five tiled cartoon pictures, one of which was a frame from the featured video. The pictures, which were at the top of the screen, turned out to be just that—pictures, not links or other



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media. After trying to yield results tapping on the pictures, I realized the video was the only functional media or link on the page.

Also, while I enjoyed the overall structure of the site, I found that there was no way to skip the video without starting to play it then immediately clicking “Done.” In fact, there was no way to directly exit the Lesson 1 start screen without beginning the video.

Visual Design

The visual design of this app is fun and playful, while still being functional. It features lessons illustrated by cartoon drawings and animations. The color palette is black, navy,

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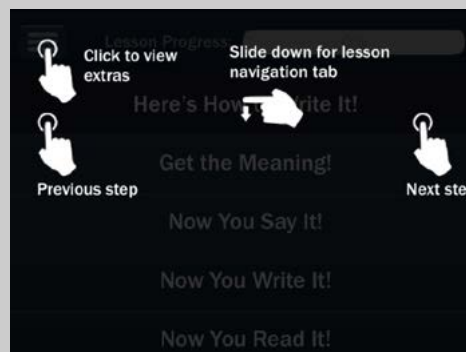
DUOLINGO

gray, and white; the simplicity manages to complement the animations. The logo on the app icon uses Hello Hello’s own logo, as well as a Russian flag in the shape of a dialog box. It isn’t the most original logo, but it does convey the app’s purpose very well at a glance. It is also worth noting that, like the other apps I evaluated, Hello Hello is not an app exclusive to the Russian language, so its non-culture-specific design is appropriate.

Relation to my project

Hello Hello is related to Znaniya in that it is an app focused on conversational Russian language. The target audience has little or no experience in Russian language speaking,

which is most of what differentiates it from my idea for Znaniya. What I enjoyed most about this app was its use of video and audio, as well as the overall structure of the lessons.



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ROSETTA STONE

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Functionality / Features

The mobile Rosetta Stone app, called Languages, is a more limited version of the full Rosetta Stone software. It retains the emphasis on conversational language learning, but is specifically for travelers and beginning-level speakers.

User Requirements

The Languages app by Rosetta Stone targets users who have no background in Russian. It is aimed at beginning-level speakers, since it covers mostly very basic words and phrases.

Usability

STRENGTHS

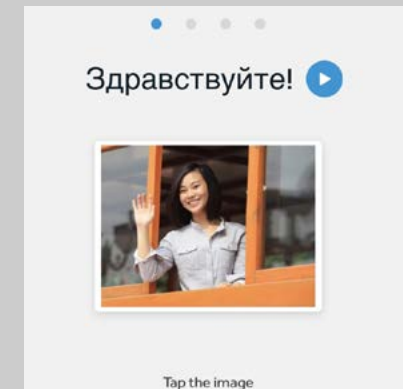
Given Rosetta Stone's reputation for being one of the top language-learning systems, I had high expectations for this app. I was initially impressed with the ease of navigation—the home screen features a grid menu with pictures representing each lesson's topic. In addition, upon navigating to the main lesson of Language Basics, I found that the format was simple and straightforward.

Initially, in Practice Speaking, I was pleased with the usability: There was a picture and a written phrase, and the user could play

the recording of the native speaker reading the phrase. The system then automatically prompted the user to repeat the phrase into the microphone. The app uses voice recognition technology and seemed quite accurate.

WEAKNESSES

The app forces landscape mode, which is cumbersome for users on iPhones, particularly when requiring keyboard entry. Unfortunately, about three screens into the first module (the only free module), the UI became awkward and confusing, with only labels above two photos and no labels in the lower photos; upon closer inspection, it turned out the user was supposed to match the phrase above the upper photos to the lower photos.



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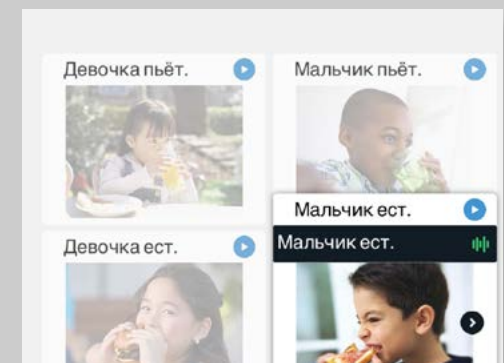
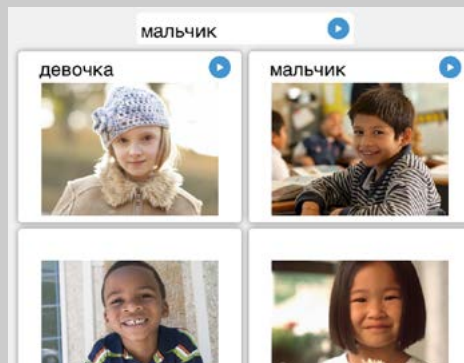
DUOLINGO

Visual Design

Rosetta Stone is very consistent with its branding on this app and the rest of its products. The app, like the full software package and accompanying website, uses a color palette consisting of white, black, blue, and yellow. The app is cleanly designed. It is worth noting that this app was not specific to Russian language, so the design was intended to be appropriate for multiple different languages.

Relation to my project

Although the target audience for this app is different than the audience I am targeting for Znaniya—this app focuses on beginning-level speakers, and tourists—the conversational focus is similar to the one I am pursuing for Znaniya. I especially liked some of the ways they incorporated the voice recognition feature into the speaking practice, although, as I stated previously, part of the implementation can be confusing to the user and should be reexamined. While elements of this app work fine on an iPhone, it seems better suited for a tablet.



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DUOLINGO

Functionality / Features

Duolingo's focus is on conversation and speaking, and it is offered in a variety of different languages. Its placement test also allows for more advanced users to benefit from its lessons.

User Requirements

Duolingo is very well-suited for beginning Russian speakers, and is also well-suited for more advanced speakers due to its placement test.

Usability

STRENGTHS

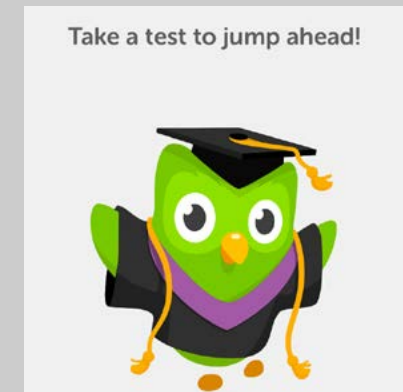
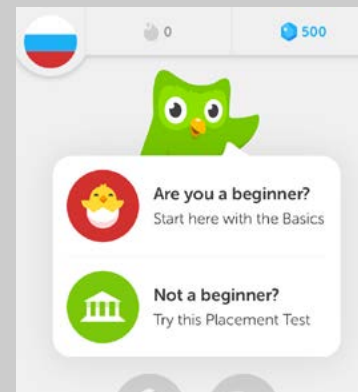
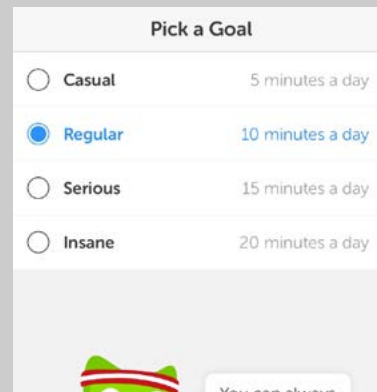
Just about everything about the interface is simple and easy to follow. Onboarding was quick; I selected my language (Russian), my "goal" (four goals, increasing by 5-minute increments, from "casual" to "insane," representing the target for the user to spend practicing per day), and my self-perceived level ("beginner" or "not a beginner"). On selecting "not a beginner," I was taken to a placement test, which was meant to place me in my applicable level of experience.

The app "gamifies" the user experience in a delightful way—the iconography and imagery

is whimsical, and sounds are used mostly effectively. Exercises cycle between a few different layouts and types to keep the user engaged. The app also keeps a score of the user's progress.

WEAKNESSES

While the sounds are mostly effective (i.e., the sentences are spoken once completed and words are spoken when tapped), some of the sounds were distracting and bordered on annoying (like the "dings" when the user earns points or answers a question correctly/incorrectly). Also, while the exercises are clear and easy to use, I would have liked to see a bit more variety in order to further increase engagement. Additionally, while



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the points system makes sense with the gamification aspect of the design, I was unsure of the context of the points and it wasn't immediately clear how they benefitted me, nor what the purpose was beyond the instant gratification of earning points.

Visual Design

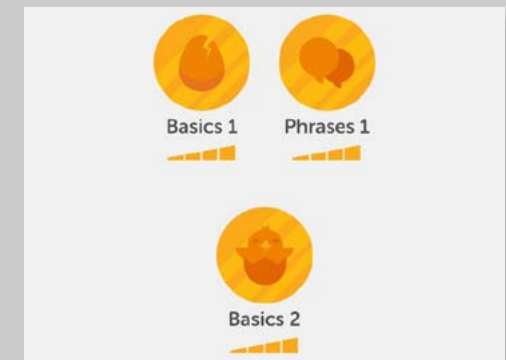
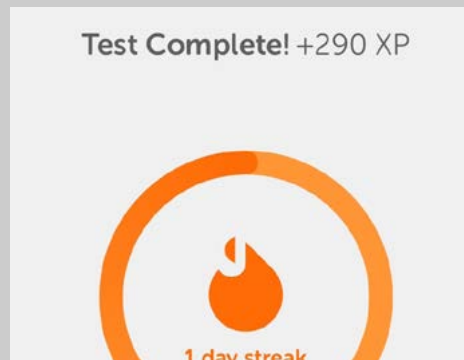
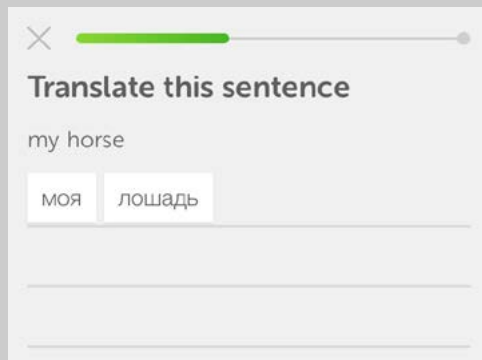
Duolingo is meant to appeal to a wide variety of users, and its visual design does not cater solely to a Russian-speaking audience, so its visual design is appropriately simple. It also features a good deal of fun and whimsy, which makes sense, since the app's functionality focuses so heavily on gamifying each lesson/exercise.

Relation to my project

The target audience for Duolingo is probably closest of all the apps I evaluated to that of Znaniya—this app allows for use by intermediate-level speakers through use of a placement test—and the conversational focus is similar to the one I am pursuing for Znaniya.

As a user, Duolingo was the most enjoyable app to use at first—due to the gamification aspect—but the repetition grew tiresome. I did like how the translation and sentence-building exercises were constructed, and I also liked the subtle integration of audio on each screen. Additionally, after conducting user interviews, this app seems to have the

best reputation and be the most well-known among the users I surveyed, so it stands to reason that Duolingo would be considered one of my app's main competitors.



COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS MATRIX

	Living Language	Busuu	iTalk	Hello Hello	Rosetta Stone	Duolingo	Znaniya
Visual Design	★★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Usability	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Listening Exercises	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Speaking Exercises	✗	✗	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
Ease of Navigation	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Suitability for advanced speakers	★★★★★	★★★★	★	★	★	★★★★	★★★★★
Course design	★★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★★
Interactive content (i.e., drag and drop)	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Multimedia (audio/video)	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Conversation-based exercises and content	★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
User login/profile	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓

INDIRECT COMPETITORS

LYNDA.COM

Functionality / Features

Lynda.com is a professional development training website and also has a mobile app. Subscriptions are paid and can be company sponsored, and allow users to access a variety of professional development courses, ranging from design to business to musical instrument lessons. Courses are structured by lesson, broken down into sections, and feature videos (with optional transcript/subtitles) as the main method of learning.

User Requirements

Users are typically in a professional industry of some sort, but industries vary widely. Most users are in an office setting or work in a corporate environment.

Usability

STRENGTHS

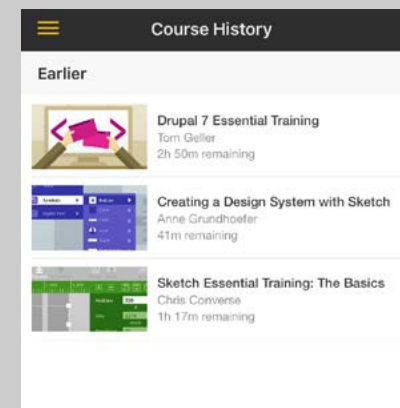
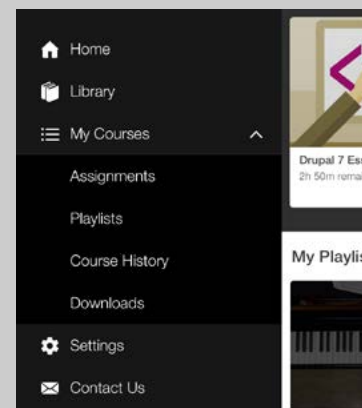
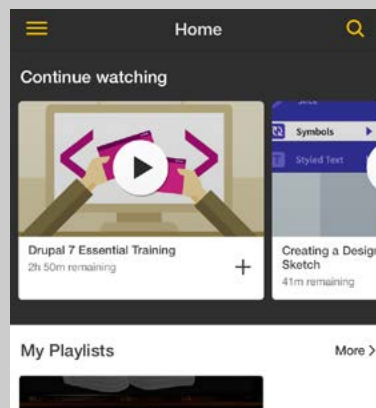
Lynda.com's mobile version is easy to use; I had no trouble finding each lesson, where I left off, and searching for additional courses. The overall visual design is stark, but that works well with the otherwise diverse visuals contained within each of the lessons. The

SPEAK & TRANSLATE

lesson videos (or what I was able to see of them) were easy to follow, relatively uniform in their design, and well-structured. I especially liked the hierarchy of the start page, containing "continue watching" at the top, similar to other types of apps, like streaming video apps (Netflix comes to mind).

WEAKNESSES

The app is very well done, overall, and ties in well with the desktop product. It seems as though the desktop site is probably more often used, based on some of the features I found lacking on the mobile app (the search, specifically, seemed more detailed and accurate on the desktop site). My one difficulty with this app is that the lessons are



INDIRECT COMPETITORS

LYNDA.COM

UDEMY

SPEAK & TRANSLATE

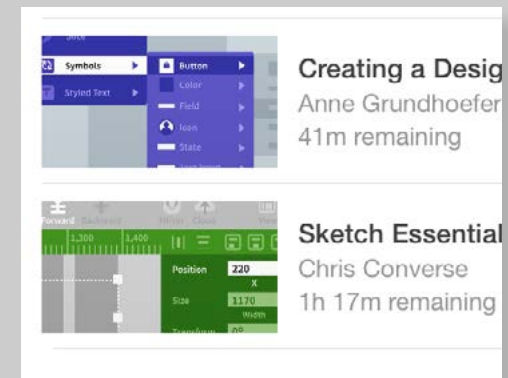
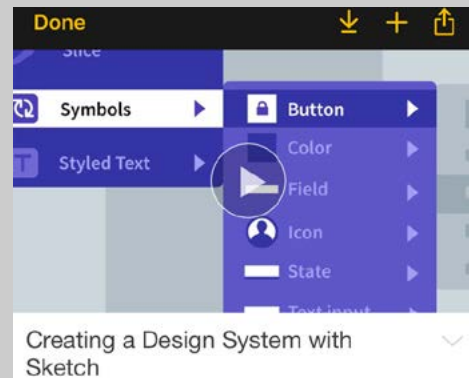
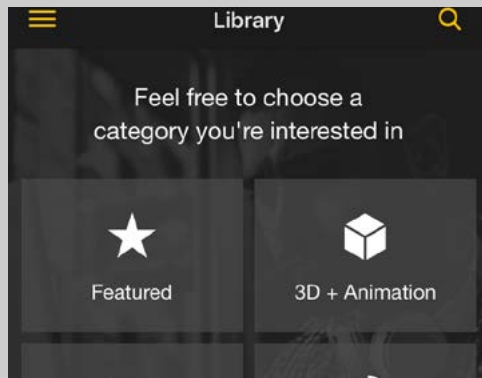
definitely structured to accommodate users who are most comfortable with video-based learning, which probably excludes a large portion of their potential audience.

Visual Design

As mentioned, Lynda.com has a very clean, simple, black and white visual design with gold accents (icons and other symbology). This simple color palette works very well with the content, which is typically in color and has more variety in its design. The app is merely a holding container for the video content, which works effectively with this layout.

Relation to my project

Lynda.com relates to Znaniya in the sense that it is a course-based method of learning. There are no Russian language lessons available on its platform, but some ideas can possibly be translated from one type of educational app to another—for instance, the way the courses are organized is simple and appealing, and the course history may be something I can integrate, depending how I decide to structure the course. I also like the way Lynda.com's app uses navigation icons.



INDIRECT COMPETITORS

LYNDA.COM

UDEMY

SPEAK & TRANSLATE

Functionality / Features

Udemy is a mobile app that provides several different types of courses, similar to Lynda.com but with more variety in the types of courses available and generally with less prohibitive pricing (compared to individual users of Lynda.com). Its audience is widely varied, as it offers such a myriad of courses, but the audience for its mobile app likely skews younger.

User Requirements

Udemy is available on both mobile and desktop, and is a video-based learning system. Unlike Lynda.com, the videos are independently produced by their respective teams/instructors, and each is purchased separately through the app, rather than by subscription.

Usability

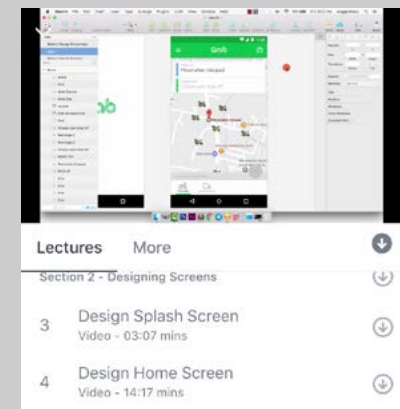
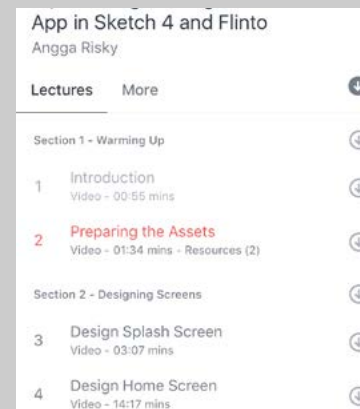
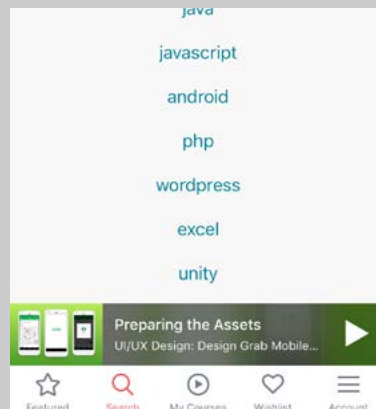
STRENGTHS

Udemy's mobile app is structured very similarly to Lynda.com's mobile app. Again,

the lessons are all video-based with the option of including subtitles or a transcript (on desktop), but video-only on mobile. The way the courses are organized and the way the menus are laid out is very satisfying and comforting to me, as a user; I like that the app highlights the user's location while playing the video, and I like that each section is organized by content, and is broken into subsections based on the videos. Overall, the app is very well done and easy to follow.

WEAKNESSES

Again, like Lynda.com, Udemy is a video-based course app, which is limiting for users who learn better via other methods. There is



INDIRECT COMPETITORS

LYNDA.COM

some interaction, based on the tutorial; for instance, with the Sketch tutorial, the user can download files to follow along with the lesson. For users who have difficulty following the video and prefer written content, the mobile app is not ideal. I also don't particularly care for the landing page, which is a bit cluttered and seems to have a lot of promotional material.

Visual Design

Similar to Lynda.com, Udemy is dealing with a lot of different types of content and different visual styles within the app, so it uses a

UDEMY

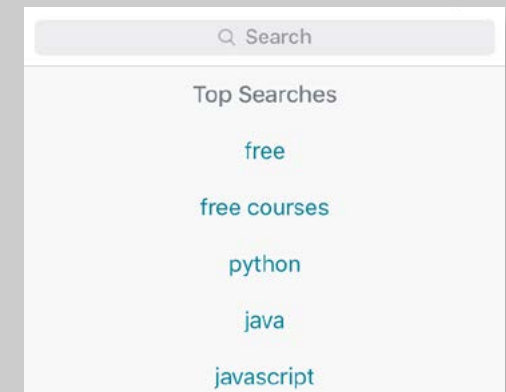
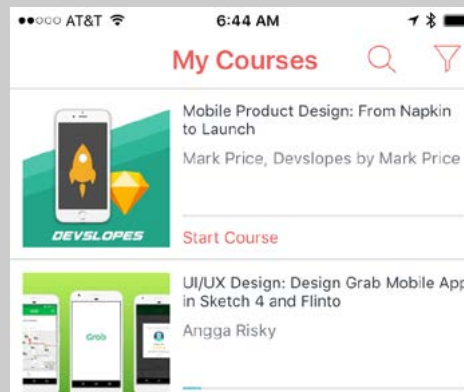
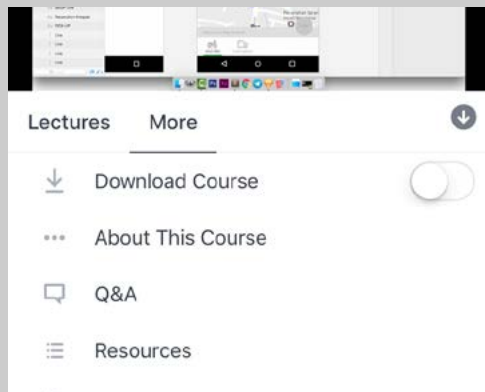
simple color palette: white background with black text and pink and blue accents. This type of style works well with the content, which is much more varied than even that of Lynda.com.

Relation to my project

After evaluating Udemy, I'm finding that its value is similar to that of Lynda.com in relation to my app. It does have a few Russian courses in its course arsenal, unlike Lynda.com, but there isn't anything that stands out about any one of the courses in relation to the others that Udemy has available; the

SPEAK & TRANSLATE

majority are for beginning-level speakers, and all are contained in Udemy's app. The most useful aspect is probably how the courses are structured.



INDIRECT COMPETITORS

LYNDA.COM

UDEMY

SPEAK & TRANSLATE

Functionality / Features

Speak & Translate is a mobile voice and text translator that allows a user to input either voice (via microphone and speech recognition) or text into their phone and output a translation. It supports over fifty languages for both input and output.

User Requirements

iTalk's target audience seems to be travelers, and is largely focused on phrases concerned with travel (although not exclusively). It is more suitable for beginning-level speakers than intermediate or advanced.

Usability

STRENGTHS

Overall, I like the idea for this app, and its execution is mostly well done. The translation UI is very simple, and once the user gets past choosing the language input and output (which is confusing), it's easy to know what to do. I like that the translations read out as a dialog rather than as one translation at a time, so the user can scroll up to see previous translations, even if the languages change. This particular user interaction is very intuitive and refreshing.

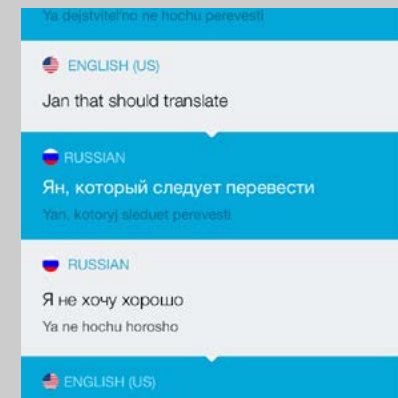
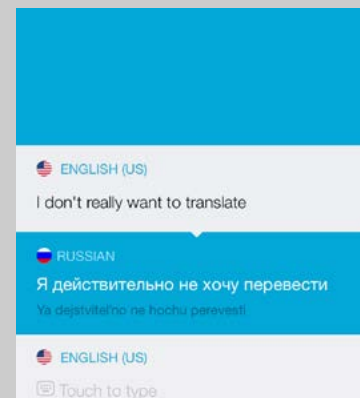
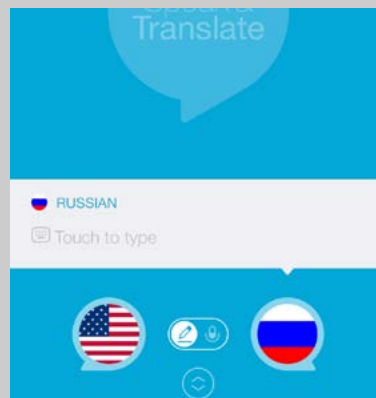
WEAKNESSES

While the app is simple and mostly easy to

use, I did stumble over a few UI issues during setup; namely, I didn't immediately know that tapping on the up/down icon at the bottom of the page would allow me to change the languages (I first tapped on the country flags, but that ended up being the speech input). Once I got going, it was easy to use, but this initial step caused a lot of confusion.

Visual Design

The app uses a simple blue and white color palette, which works nicely with the flag icons (which represent each country's flag). Overall, the simple design is very effective and easy for the user to understand the hierarchy, with the exception of having the button at



INDIRECT COMPETITORS

LYNDA.COM

the bottom for settings, which is perhaps not prominent or clear enough for the user to immediately recognize or properly interpret.

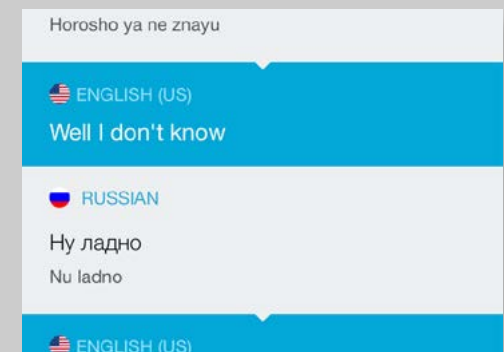
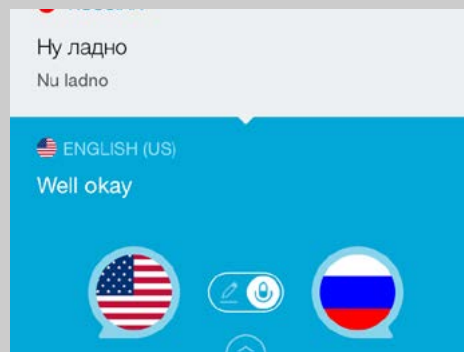
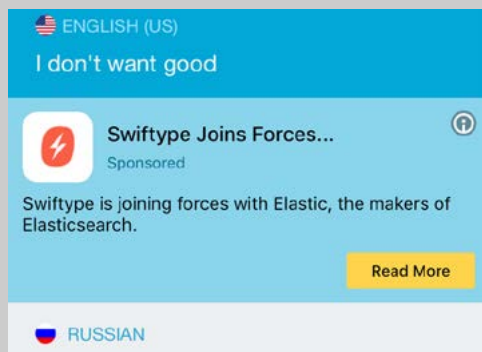
Relation to my project

I really like the overall concept of Speak & Translate, and like that the user is able to input the phrase via either voice or text. Overall, the translations were fairly accurate (or accurate enough to be passable). The speech-to-text function was also fairly accurate. This app relates to Znaniya in its speech recognition function, which is something Znaniya pulls from and emulates to some degree. Although this app is not a

UDEMY

course, it does have some features I would like to incorporate into a course, and users could benefit from some of the relative simplicity of its UI.

SPEAK & TRANSLATE





Visual Process

VISUAL DESIGN

MOODBOARDS

LOGOS & FONTS

COLORS & SPECS

WIREFRAMES

MOCKUPS

Moodboard #1



VISUAL DESIGN

MOODBOARDS

LOGOS & FONTS

COLORS & SPECS

WIREFRAMES

MOCKUPS

Moodboard #2



VISUAL DESIGN

MOODBOARDS

LOGOS & FONTS

COLORS & SPECS

WIREFRAMES

MOCKUPS

Moodboard #3



VISUAL DESIGN

MOODBOARDS

LOGOS & FONTS

COLORS & SPECS

WIREFRAMES

MOCKUPS

LOGO

As you will see in the following moodboards, this logo's style was heavily influenced by much of the early Soviet constructivist and avant garde art, which will be the theme of the site's design. The logo also indicates the emphasis on the conversational language course through the use of the dialog bubble.

FONTS

The fonts chosen for this project are similar to the typography used in avant garde posters from the early Soviet years: A strong heading font (Oswald), sans serif for the body text (Proxima Nova), and handwriting fonts for slogans and subheadings. These fonts were chosen in part due to compatibility with the Cyrillic keyboard and are all web-safe.



OSWALD

Lobster

Proxima Nova

Marck Script



VISUAL DESIGN

MOODBOARDS

LOGOS & FONTS

COLORS & SPECS

WIREFRAMES

MOCKUPS



LOGO (COLOR VERSION)

This is the main logo for Znaniya. The logo type is Alternate Gothic No. 1, 48 pt.

LOGO (BLACK & WHITE VERSION)

This black and white version can be used in instances where the color version is not available or not appropriate.

LOGO (DARK BACKGROUND)

Depending on usage, this logo may be used on a dark background, in which case an alternate color scheme may also be necessary.

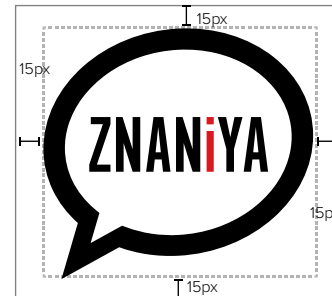
LOGO (APP ICON)

This version of the logo may be used as the mobile app icon for Znaniya, where appropriate.



COLOR PALETTE

The three main colors used in the main color version of the logo, along with hexadecimal, CMYK, and RGB values.



CLEAR SPACE REQUIREMENTS

The logo is best viewed with sufficient space surrounding its outer edges. To that end, the minimum amount of white space surrounding the logo must be no less than 15px.

VISUAL DESIGN

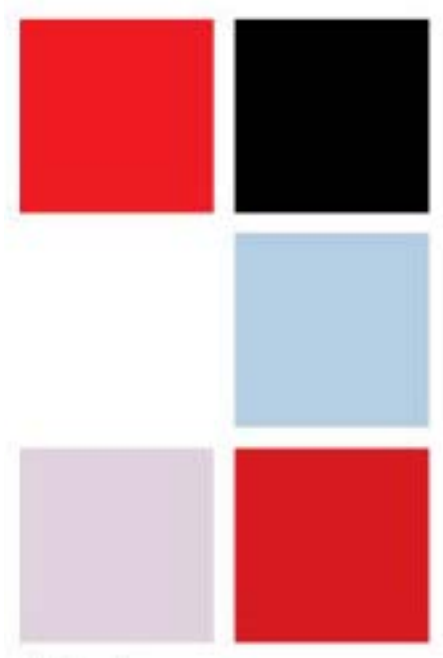
MOODBOARDS

LOGOS & FONTS

COLORS & SPECS

WIREFRAMES

MOCKUPS



Color Palette #1



Color Palette #2



Color Palette #3

VISUAL DESIGN

MOODBOARDS

LOGOS & FONTS

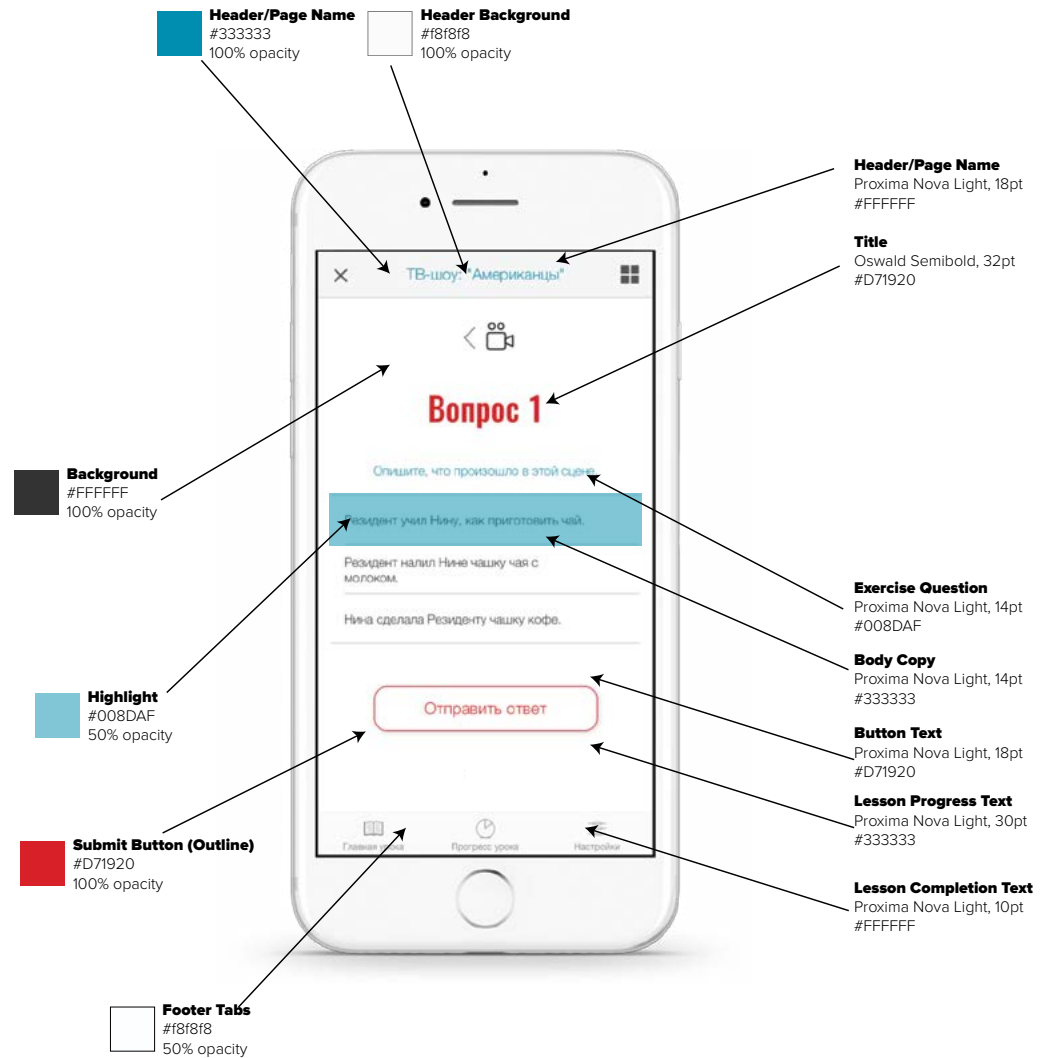
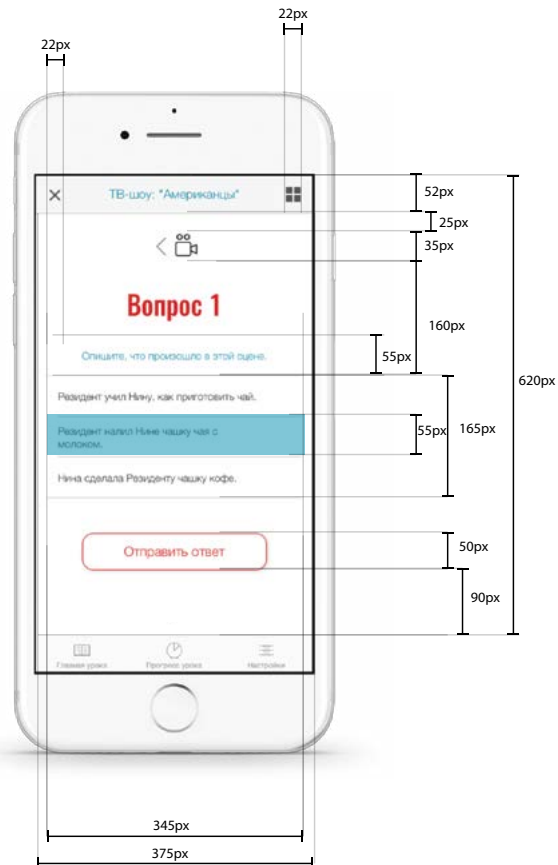
COLORS & SPECS

WIREFRAMES

MOCKUPS

MOBILE LAYOUT SPECIFICATIONS

Based on the dimensions of iPhone 6S/7/8



VISUAL DESIGN

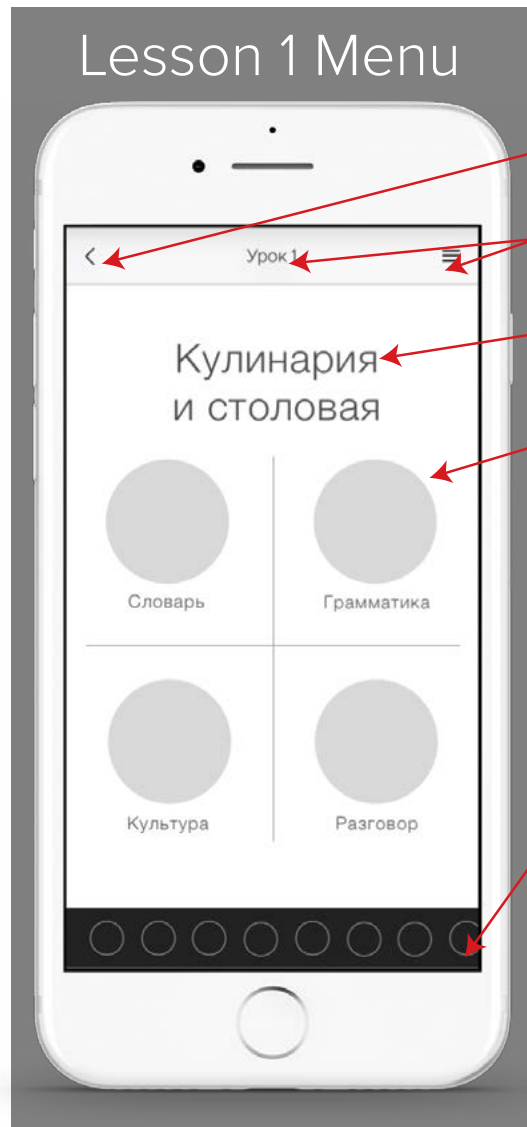
MOODBOARDS

LOGOS & FONTS

COLORS & SPECS

WIREFRAMES

MOCKUPS



- 1 Back button: Returns user to previous page
- 2 Menu button: Displays hidden menu
- 3 Title: Displays user's location
- 4 Lesson title: Displays lesson topic
- 5 Lesson menu: Lesson categories in image grid
- 6 Active lesson/completed lesson status: Active lesson is highlighted; inactive, incomplete lesson is greyed out and circle is not filled; inactive, complete lesson is greyed out and filled.

VISUAL DESIGN

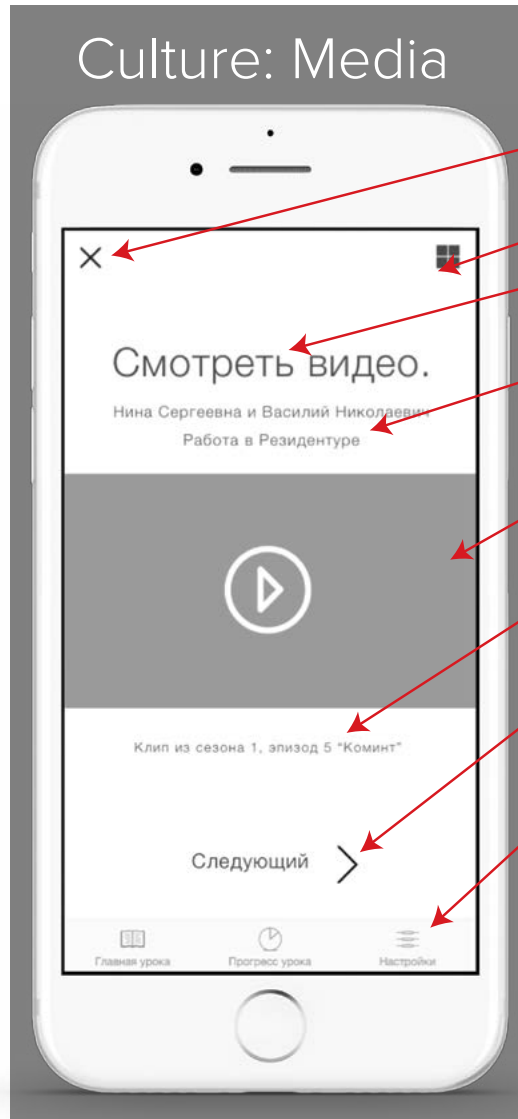
MOODBOARDS

LOGOS & FONTS

COLORS & SPECS

WIREFRAMES

MOCKUPS



- 1 Close button: Returns user to module menu.
- 2 Module preview button: Displays module section previews.
- 3 Title: Displays user's location.
- 4 Description: Displays summary of media clip.
- 5 Media container: For video. Aspect ratio 16:9. Can enlarge to full screen
- 6 Media description/copyright information. Scrolls if content warrants.
- 7 Moves to next screen (comprehension quiz based on video).
- 8 Footer tab bar: Relevant to module. Contains "exit lesson," "lesson progress," and "settings" (to set reminders).

VISUAL DESIGN

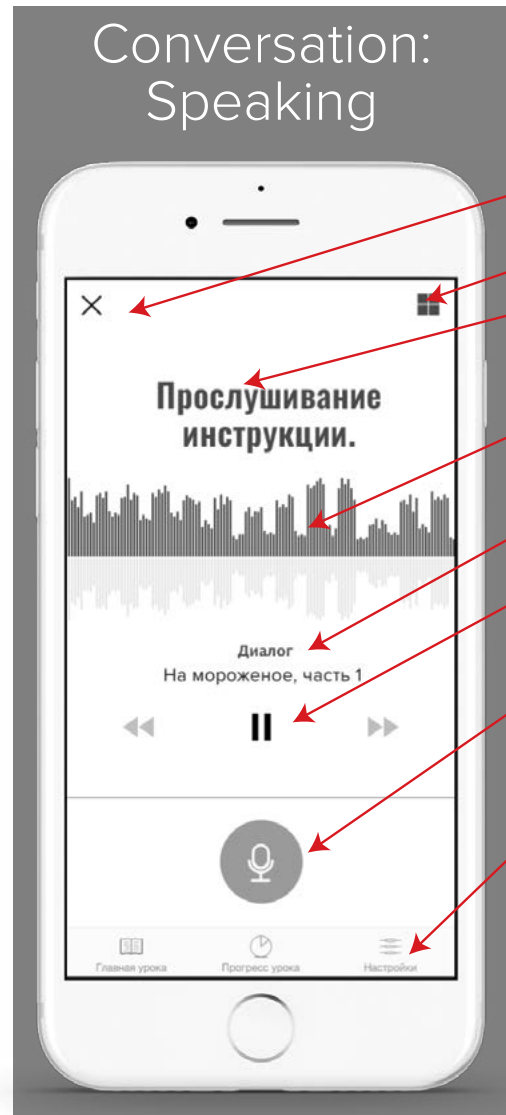
MOODBOARDS

LOGOS & FONTS

COLORS & SPECS

WIREFRAMES

MOCKUPS



- 1 Close button: Returns user to module menu.
- 2 Module preview button: Displays module section previews.
- 3 Title: Displays user's location/action.
- 4 Media container: For audio. Embedded pre-recorded dialog file.
- 5 Description: Dialog, scenario, and part (1/2 or 2/2).
- 6 Play/pause and forward/back buttons for audio.
- 7 Moves to next screen (recording screen).
- 8 Footer tab bar: Relevant to module. Contains "exit lesson," "lesson progress," and "settings" (to set reminders).

VISUAL DESIGN

MOODBOARDS

LOGOS & FONTS

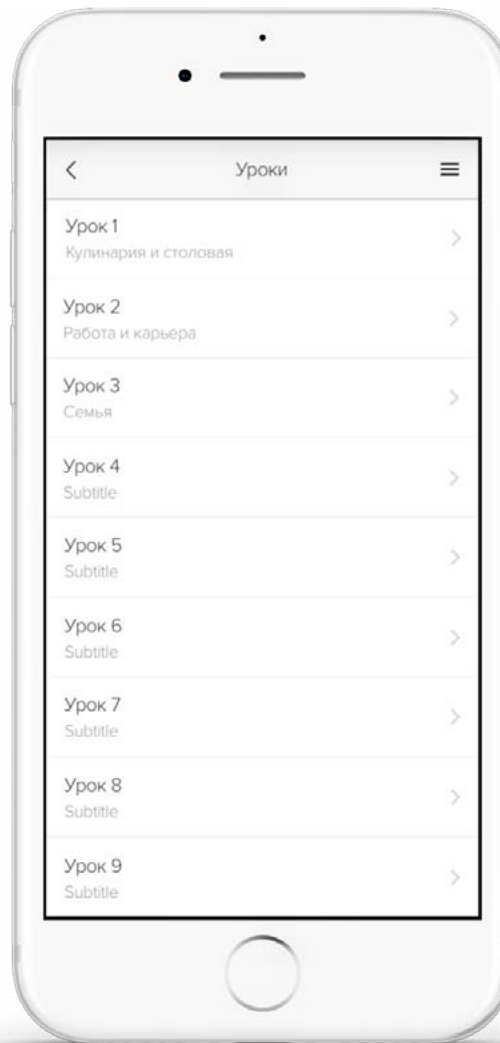
COLORS & SPECS

WIREFRAMES

MOCKUPS



Main Menu



Lesson Menu



Lesson Submenu

VISUAL DESIGN

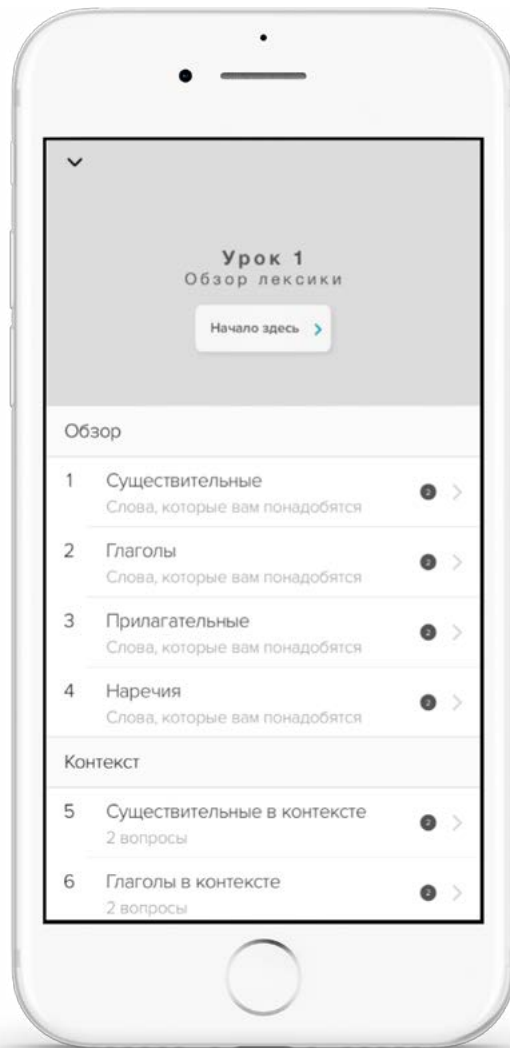
MOODBOARDS

LOGOS & FONTS

COLORS & SPECS

WIREFRAMES

MOCKUPS



Vocabulary menu



Vocabulary context page

VISUAL DESIGN

MOODBOARDS

LOGOS & FONTS

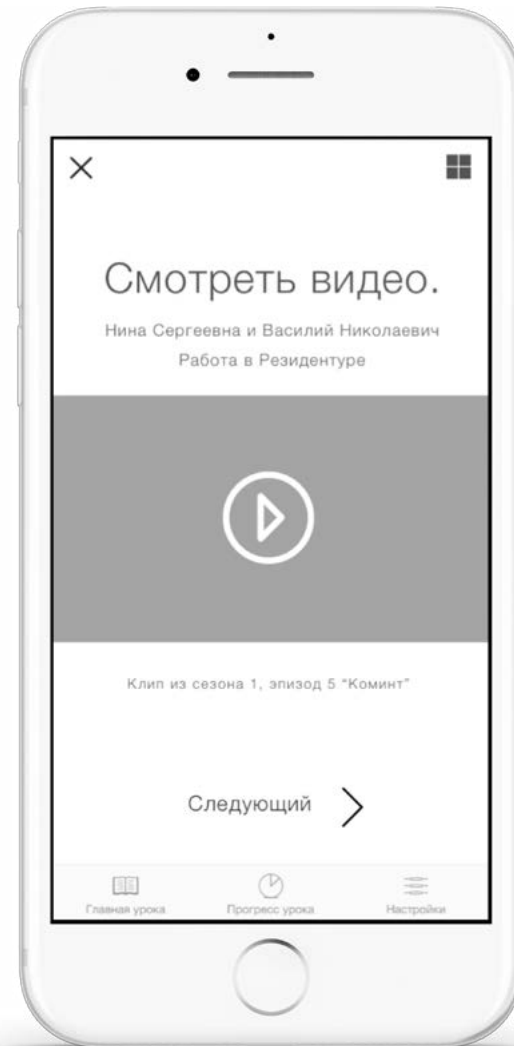
COLORS & SPECS

WIREFRAMES

MOCKUPS



Culture: Exercise
(recipe step 1)



Culture: Media (video)

VISUAL DESIGN

MOODBOARDS

LOGOS & FONTS

COLORS & SPECS

WIREFRAMES

MOCKUPS



Conversation: Speaking
(listening, dialog 1/2)



Conversation: Translation
(question screen)

VISUAL DESIGN

MOODBOARDS

LOGOS & FONTS

COLORS & SPECS

WIREFRAMES

MOCKUPS



Launch Screen

This screen appears when the user launches the app.



Main Menu

The app's main menu, or home screen. Menu items: Intro, Settings, Lessons, Resources, Contact.



Lesson Menu

Lists all the lessons. Each lesson is grayed out once it has been completed.

Top Level Menus

Main Menu

The main menu features a flat design, with five menu items: Introduction (the app's walkthrough/instructions), Settings, Lessons (the largest and most prominent button, as it will be the most often used), Resources, and Contact. The icons for the four less-common options may change to become more obvious to the user.

The Lessons menu text will be in Russian (although this version is in English for easier review by English-speakers). This sets the stage for the Lessons menu and most of the content to be in Russian.

VISUAL DESIGN

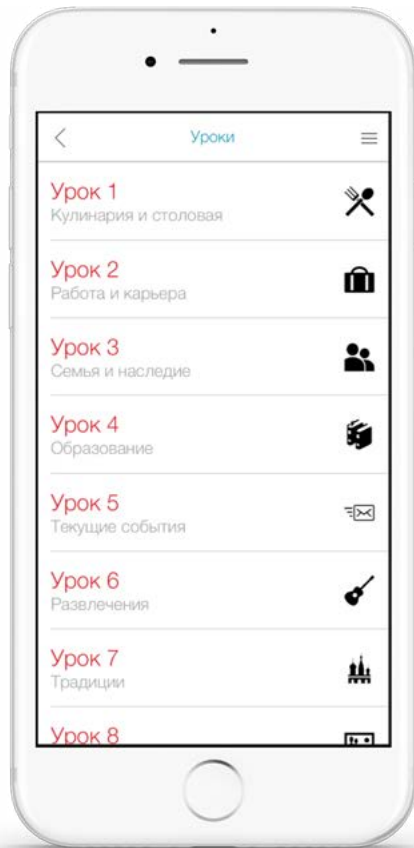
MOODBOARDS

LOGOS & FONTS

COLORS & SPECS

WIREFRAMES

MOCKUPS



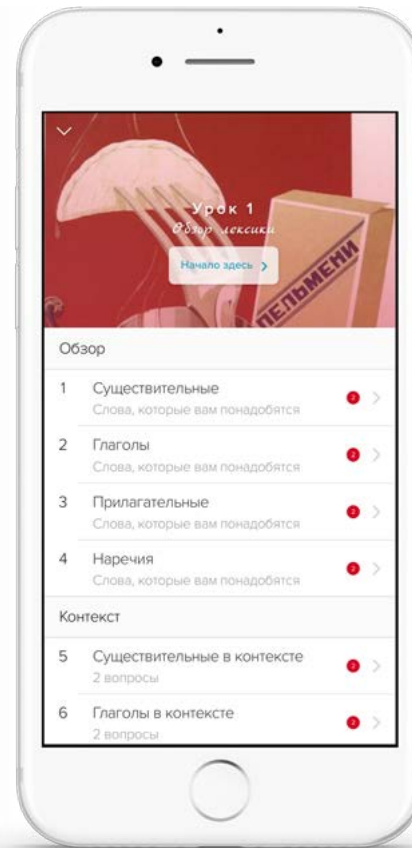
Lesson Menu

Lesson numbers and titles, alongside icons representing the subjects.



Lesson 1 Menu

Vocabulary, Grammar, Culture, and Conversation modules.



Vocab/Module Menu

Vocab: Overview, Context, and Comprehension sections, broken into four parts each.

Vocabulary

Lesson Menu

The menu will be entirely in Russian, with the lesson numbers as headings and descriptions as subheadings. Lesson 1's subheading is Cooking & Dining.

Lesson 1 Menu

The Lesson 1 Menu uses icons and Russian titles to communicate the menu items. Because the user is assumed to be an advanced Russian speaker, the Russian titles should be easy to read. The user also has the option of starting at the beginning by tapping the “start here” call-to-action in the image.

Vocabulary Menu

The menu is broken into three sections, with four categories per section. A red alert signifies that the user has not completed the category in question.

VISUAL DESIGN

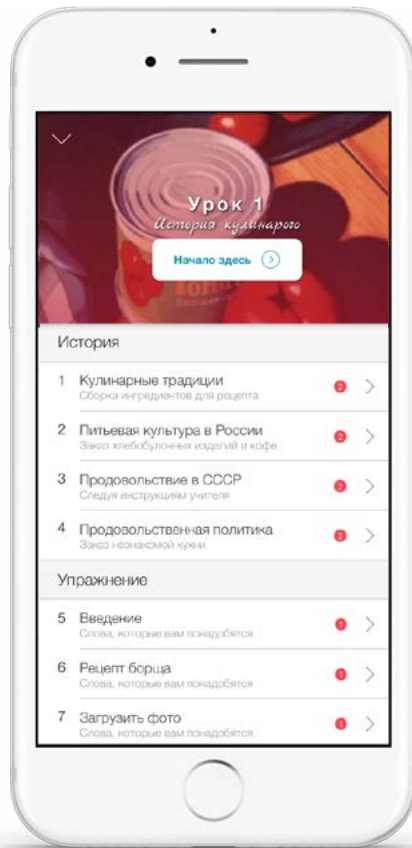
MOODBOARDS

LOGOS & FONTS

COLORS & SPECS

WIREFRAMES

MOCKUPS



Culture Menu

Sections, top to bottom:
History, Exercise, Media.



Culture: Multimedia

The user watches the
multimedia clip on this
page, then taps the “next”
button.



Multimedia Quiz

Quizzes the user on the
clip he or she has just
watched.

Multimedia

Culture Menu

The Culture menu of each section includes Exercise, Multimedia, and Comprehension. It is in the same style as the Vocabulary menu, as they are all Lesson submenus.

Culture: Multimedia Page

The multimedia page features a video clip of a scene from The Americans (in this case) which is related to the context of the lesson (the conversation is about how to properly make tea, in keeping with the cooking and dining theme).

Multimedia Quiz

Following the video, the user answers questions about the video (i.e., the video's subject). This is in a similar format to the vocabulary exercise.

VISUAL DESIGN

MOODBOARDS

LOGOS & FONTS

COLORS & SPECS

WIREFRAMES

MOCKUPS



Speaking (Review)

This is the format of the conversation review: Context, Dialog 1, Dialog 2 (record and playback).



Correct Answer

This is the overlay for a correct answer. On tap, the screen moves to the next dialog.



Incorrect Answer

This is the overlay for an incorrect answer, with instructions to tap to close and try again.

Speaking Practice

Conversation: Speaking

The Speaking section will contain more than one dialog, but only one will be presented at a time. The top section will contain the dialog's context (in this case, at an ice cream shop, or creamery), the next is the first part of the dialog, and the last is the second part of the dialog, with buttons for the user to 1) record, then 2) play back the recording. When the user is done, he or she taps "Submit Answer".

Correct/Incorrect Answer

After the user taps "Submit Answer", the device detects whether the answer is correct or incorrect via voice recognition, and provides either positive or negative feedback. Positive feedback allows the user to advance to the next dialog; negative allows the user to go back and try the dialog again.



Technical Process

TECHNICAL PROCESS

CONTENT INVENTORY

GRAPHICAL MIND MAP

EXPERIENCE MAP

SPECIFICATIONS

DIAGRAM

User Interface Area	Content Item	Task	Have	Need
Launch/intro	Logo art	bitmap/vector	x	
	Background image	bitmap/vector	x	
	About	write	x	
	Legal/Disclaimer	write	x	
Walkthrough	Screenshots	bitmap		x
	Script/instructions	write, record	x	
Lesson 1	Vocabulary - overview	write	x	
	Vocabulary - context	write, record	x	
	Vocabulary - context, images	bitmap/vector	x	
	Vocabulary - comprehension	write, record	x	
	Vocabulary - comprehension, images	bitmap/vector	x	
	Grammar - overview	write	x	
	Grammar - context	write, record	x	
	Grammar - context, images	bitmap/vector	x	
	Grammar - comprehension	write, record	x	
	Grammar - comprehension	bitmap/vector	x	
	Culture - exercise	write	x	
	Culture - exercise, images	bitmap/vector	x	
	Culture - media	mp3 or mp4 clip	x	
	Culture - history	write, record	x	
	Culture - history, images	bitmap/vector	x	
	Conversation - listening	write, record	x	

TECHNICAL PROCESS

CONTENT INVENTORY

GRAPHICAL MIND MAP

EXPERIENCE MAP

SPECIFICATIONS

DIAGRAM

User Interface Area	Content Item	Task	Have	Need
Lesson 1	Conversation - listening, images	bitmap/vector	x	
	Conversation - translation	write, record	x	
	Conversation - translation, images	bitmap/vector	x	
	Conversation - speaking	write, record	x	
	Conversation - speaking, images	bitmap/vector	x	

TECHNICAL PROCESS

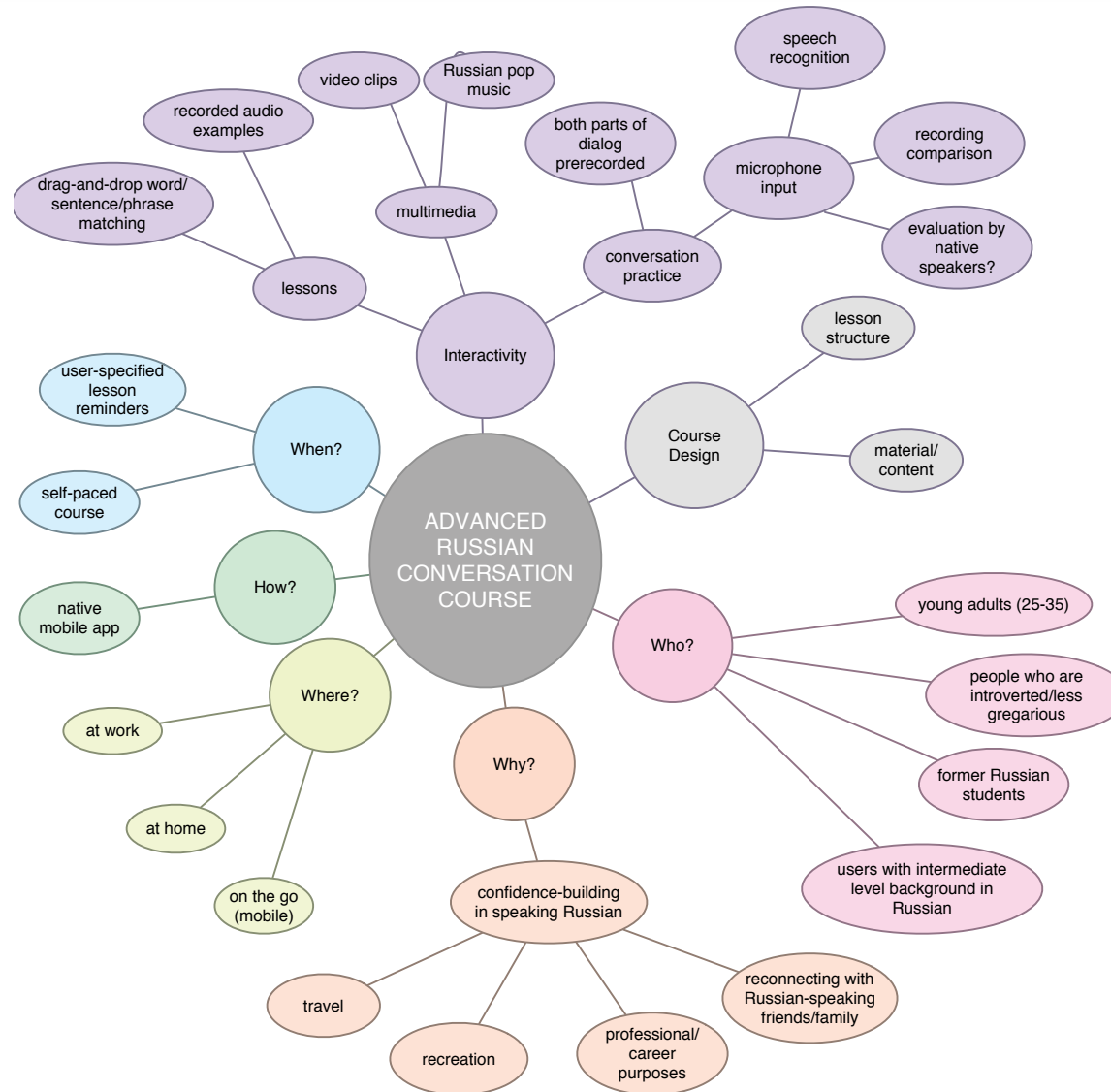
CONTENT INVENTORY

GRAPHICAL MIND MAP

EXPERIENCE MAP

SPECIFICATIONS

DIAGRAM



TECHNICAL PROCESS

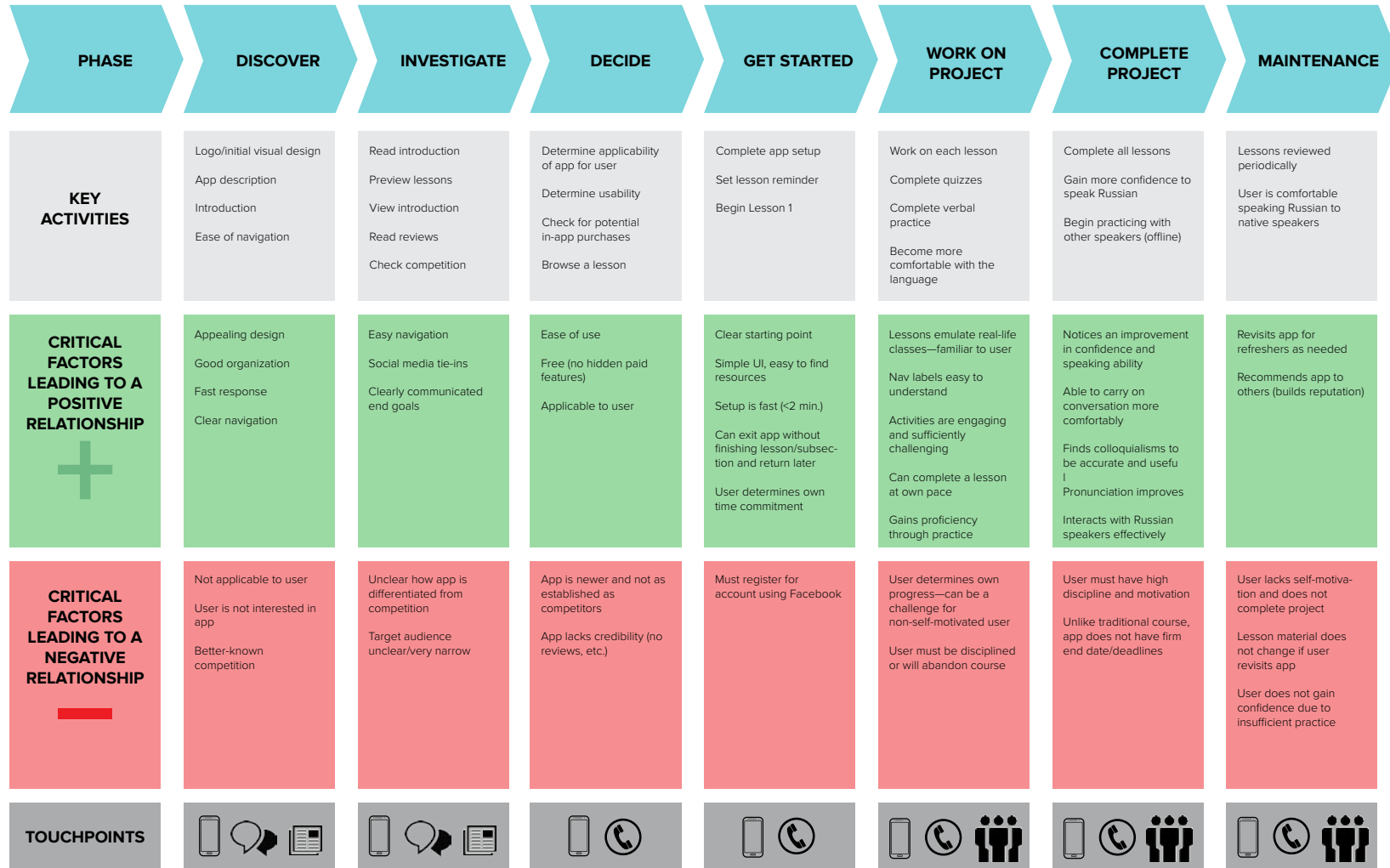
CONTENT INVENTORY

GRAPHICAL MIND MAP

EXPERIENCE MAP

SPECIFICATIONS

DIAGRAM



TECHNICAL PROCESS

CONTENT INVENTORY

GRAPHICAL MIND MAP

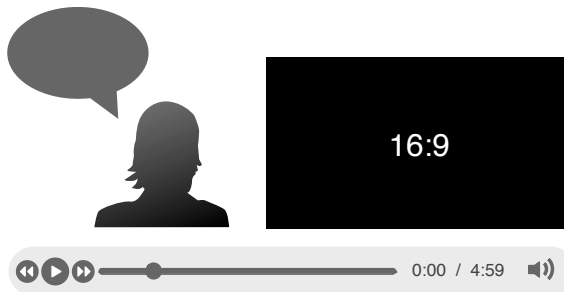
EXPERIENCE MAP

SPECIFICATIONS

DIAGRAM

Scope

Znaniya is designed as a native (iOS) application focused on the conversational use of Russian language. The final build of the app will be native rather than hybrid or web, as it will need to access the phone's hardware (its microphone and camera) in order to take advantage of its full range of features. I have constructed only the first lesson based on a general course outline: there is an introduction to the course, followed by lesson 1, which will contain 4 sections. This project focuses largely on interactivity, particularly conversation, between the user and the application.



Technology

The final app build will require Xcode, as well as coding in Swift. It will also make use of Yandex SpeechKit's mobile SDK for speech recognition. I chose the Yandex SDK primarily due to its Russian speech recognition capabilities (Yandex is the primary search engine in Russia).

The current build was constructed using Proto.io and supplemented with front-end development technologies (including HTML/CSS and Javascript).

System Requirements

PLATFORMS

iOS 10+ (iPhone 6+)

Development

FRONT-END

HTML5, CSS3
JavaScript, jQuery
jQuery UI
TouchPunch

MOBILE

X-code/Swift

APIS/SDKS

SpeechKit by Yandex

TECHNICAL PROCESS

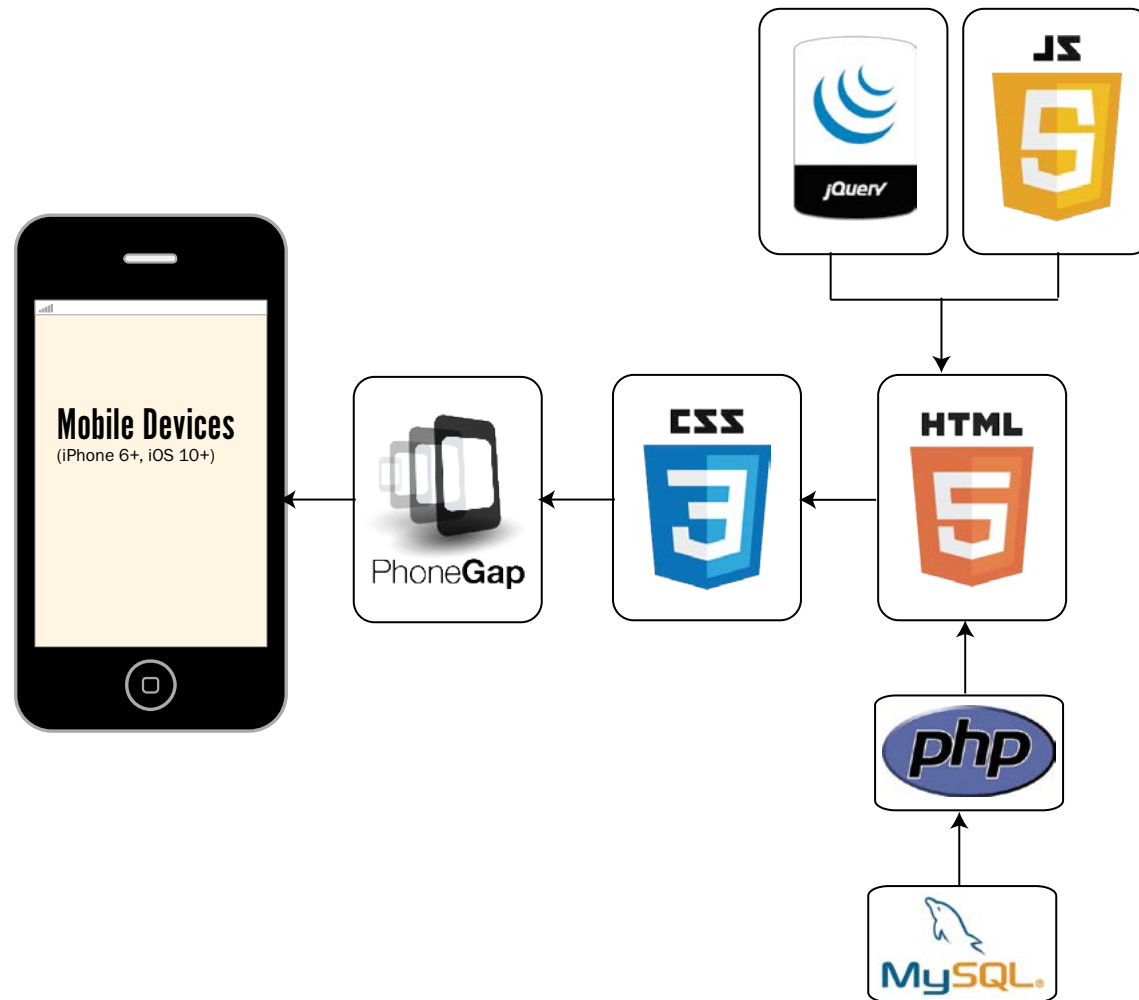
CONTENT INVENTORY

GRAPHICAL MIND MAP

EXPERIENCE MAP

SPECIFICATIONS

DIAGRAM



A stylized, light blue profile of a person's head, facing right, with a thick black outline. The person appears to be speaking or shouting, with their mouth open.

User Experience

TARGET AUDIENCE

DESCRIPTION

PERSONA #1

PERSONA #2

PERSONA #3



1

PRIMARY

Former college students and adults who took at least three years of college-level Russian language courses. Ages 25-45, gender agnostic.



2

SECONDARY

Adults who grew up speaking Russian and have some educational background, but have lost the language due to lack of recent opportunity to engage in regular speaking practice. Ages 25-45, gender agnostic.



3

TERTIARY

Adults traveling to Russia, who have intermediate Russian language skills, have possibly taken at least one formal course, and need to build confidence through practice with conversational Russian.

TARGET AUDIENCE

DESCRIPTION

PERSONA #1

PERSONA #2

PERSONA #3

Melanie Jensen

AGE: 34
PERSONALITY TYPE: ISFP
OCCUPATION: Attorney
LOCATION: Washington, DC
TARGET GROUP: Primary

PRIMARY MOTIVATION FOR ENGAGING IN THE USER INTERFACE

Melanie studied Russian language as an undergraduate student, during which time she also studied abroad in Moscow. She has since attended Georgetown Law School and is now an attorney in Washington, DC, for a firm that specializes in immigration law. Some of her clients are Russian-speaking, and she would like to be able to converse with them in Russian; however, she is no longer fluent, since she has not taken a Russian class in several years. Her goal is to increase her comfort level with the language in order to build her confidence while speaking to clients.

QUOTE

“When I was in college, I wasn’t certain what I wanted to accomplish through my study of Russian. Now that I’m a practicing attorney, and I happen to have a use for the skills I learned and have since forgotten, it would be nice to be able to have an efficient way to relearn the language and build up my confidence.”

TARGET AUDIENCE

DESCRIPTION

PERSONA #1

PERSONA #2

PERSONA #3



Elizabeth Smolnyak

AGE: 28
PERSONALITY TYPE: INFJ
OCCUPATION: Marketing Associate
LOCATION: Renton, WA
TARGET GROUP: Secondary

PRIMARY MOTIVATION FOR ENGAGING IN THE USER INTERFACE

Elizabeth grew up speaking Russian at home, and also took Russian classes during her undergraduate years in order to formalize her language skills and continue practicing the language. She wants to be part of the Russian community that resides close to her home in Renton, but has become unaccustomed to and intimidated by speaking Russian with strangers. She describes herself as a “social introvert” and is generally confident; Russian has become her Achilles heel.

QUOTE

“It’s so frustrating to have grown up speaking a language and to no longer be able to speak with others in the community. I transpose words all the time and I’m never quite sure if people will understand what I’m saying. It would be great to be able to practice in a more unintimidating setting.”

TARGET AUDIENCE

DESCRIPTION

PERSONA #1

PERSONA #2

PERSONA #3



David Kinsey

AGE: 36
PERSONALITY TYPE: INTJ
OCCUPATION: Front-End Developer
LOCATION: Austin, TX
TARGET GROUP: Primary

PRIMARY MOTIVATION FOR ENGAGING IN THE USER INTERFACE

David was a Russian student, studied abroad in Russia, and worked in Russia for a year. He is of Russian descent (his maternal grandmother emigrated from Russia), but his family, all of whom live in the Boston area, doesn't speak the language. His most recent direct interaction with Russian language was five years ago via his graduate studies. He currently lives in Austin and wants to plan another trip to Russia, but his speaking skills are rusty and he doesn't have easy access to a local Russian community for practice.

QUOTE

"Growing up in Boston, I had much easier access to a local Russian community, but even then, the community was so insular that I wasn't able to do much to get involved in it. Now that I'm in Austin, there's not much opportunity for me to practice my Russian. I want to travel to Russia again at some point, but before I do, I need to be able to immerse myself in the language again."

USE CASES

USE CASE #1

USE CASE #2

USE CASE #3



Use Case #1: First-Time Use & Setup

Primary actor: user

Supporting actor: system, server

Goal: begin using the Znaniya app

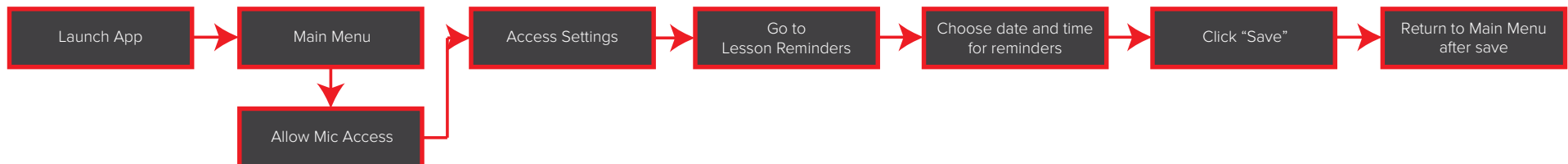
Preconditions: none

Trigger: user opens app

Ending condition: app settings stored

Main Success Scenario:

- User downloads, then launches the app.
- System displays launch screen.
- App checks with system whether it has access to user's microphone.
- App prompts user to give permission to access system's microphone.
- User allows microphone access.
- System stores microphone access setting.
- System prompts user to set a lesson reminder alarm.
- User inputs alarm frequency, days, and times, and saves changes.
- System records lesson reminder alarm settings.
- User is taken to main menu.



USE CASES

USE CASE #1

USE CASE #2

USE CASE #3



Use Case #2: A Practice Dialog

Primary actor: user

Supporting actor: system, server

Goal: practice a scripted dialog

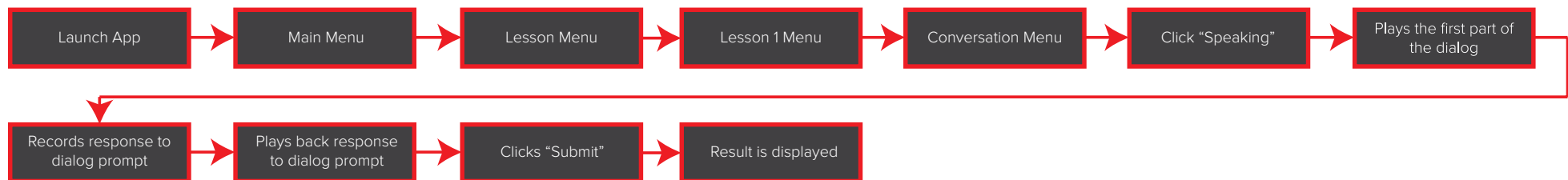
Preconditions: app has been used previously and microphone is enabled

Trigger: user accesses “Speaking Practice”

Ending condition: user practices a conversation

Main Success Scenario:

- System accesses and displays main menu.
- User selects “Lessons” from main menu.
- System accesses and displays Lessons table.
- User selects the applicable lesson (Lesson 1) from the Lesson submenu.
- System accesses and displays the Lesson 1 submenu.
- User selects the Conversation subcategory.
- System accesses and displays the Conversation submenu.
- User selects the Speaking Practice subcategory.
- System accesses and displays the dialog audio files and accompanying images.
- User plays the first part of the dialog.
- User reviews the image suggesting the correct answer and records his response.
- System writes and stores recording.
- System accesses prerecorded audio file with correct answer and displays a “play” button.
- System access user recorded audio file and displays a “play” button.
- User plays correct answer, then his own answer for comparison.
- System compares similarities in answers and stores user progress.



USE CASES

USE CASE #1

USE CASE #2

USE CASE #3



Use Case #3: Watching a video

Primary actor: user

Supporting actor: system, server

Goal: watch the Lesson 1 video for comprehension practice

Preconditions: app has been used previously and microphone is enabled; user has reviewed the Vocabulary and Grammar sections

Trigger: user accesses “Culture” section

Ending condition: user has viewed the video clip for the lesson and begins the video quiz

Main Success Scenario:

- User accesses the Lesson 1 subcategory.
- System accesses the Lesson 1 table and displays the submenu.
- User selects the Culture menu item.
- System accesses and displays the Culture submenu.
- User selects the Multimedia menu item.
- System accesses and displays the video clip, a scene from The Americans, a television show with Russian-speaking characters.
- User plays the video.
- System records that the video has been accessed and stores user progress.
- System displays quiz.



INTERACTION DESIGN

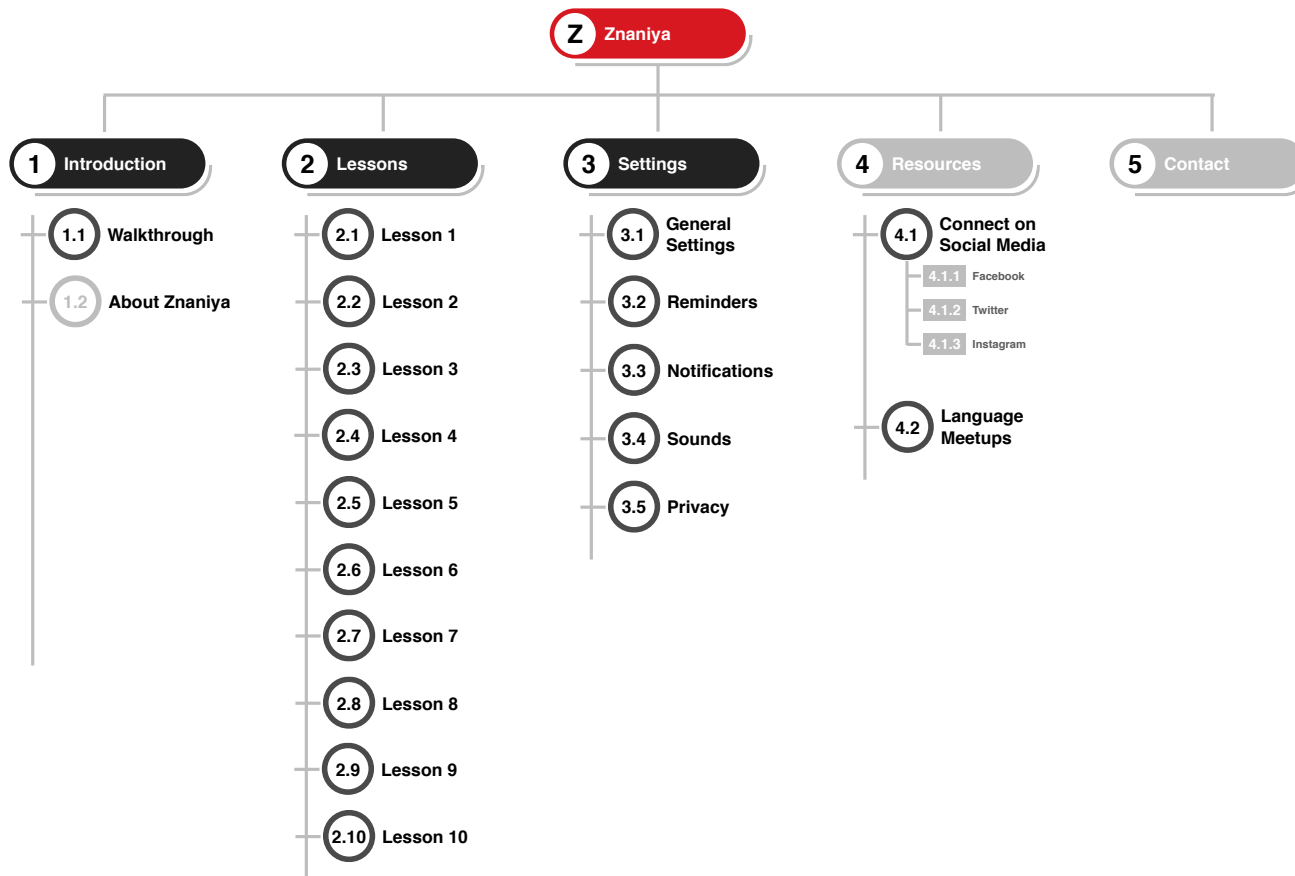
SITE MAP — OVERVIEW

SITE MAP — DETAIL

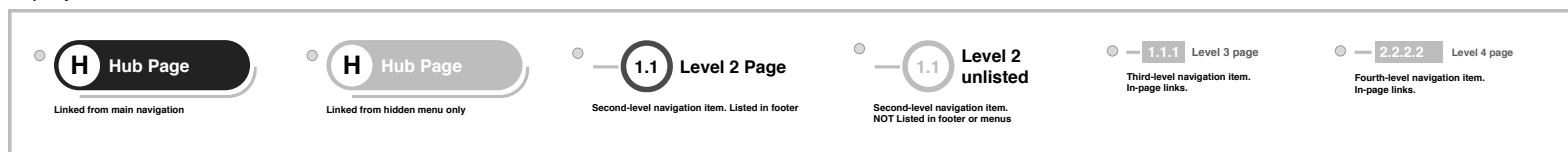
IA DIAGRAM

TASK FLOWS 1-3

TASK FLOWS 4-6



Map Key



INTERACTION DESIGN

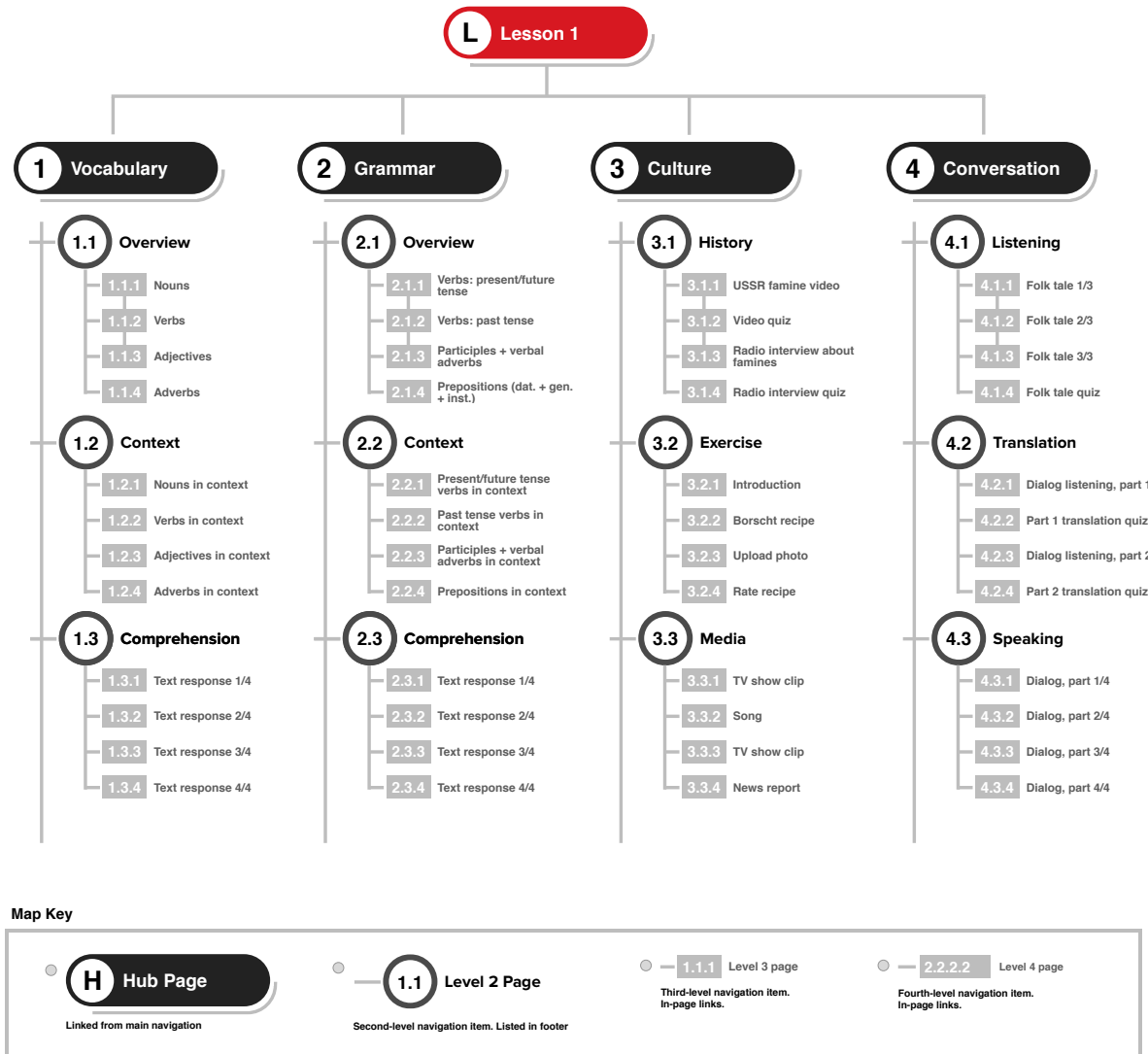
SITE MAP — OVERVIEW

SITE MAP — DETAIL

IA DIAGRAM

TASK FLOWS 1-3

TASK FLOWS 4-6



INTERACTION DESIGN

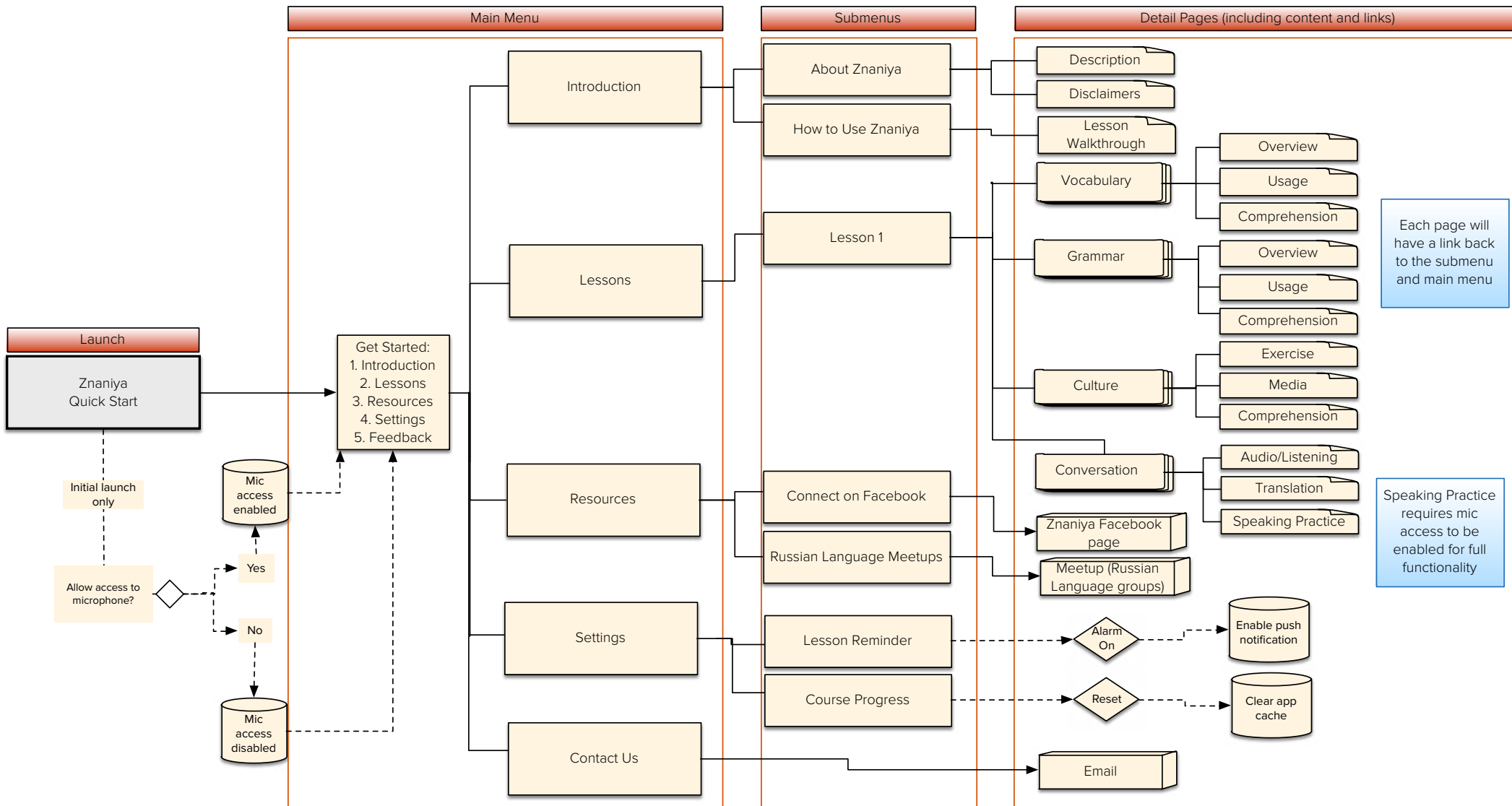
SITE MAP – OVERVIEW

SITE MAP – DETAIL

IA DIAGRAM

TASK FLOWS 1-3

TASK FLOWS 4-6



INTERACTION DESIGN

SITE MAP – OVERVIEW

SITE MAP – DETAIL

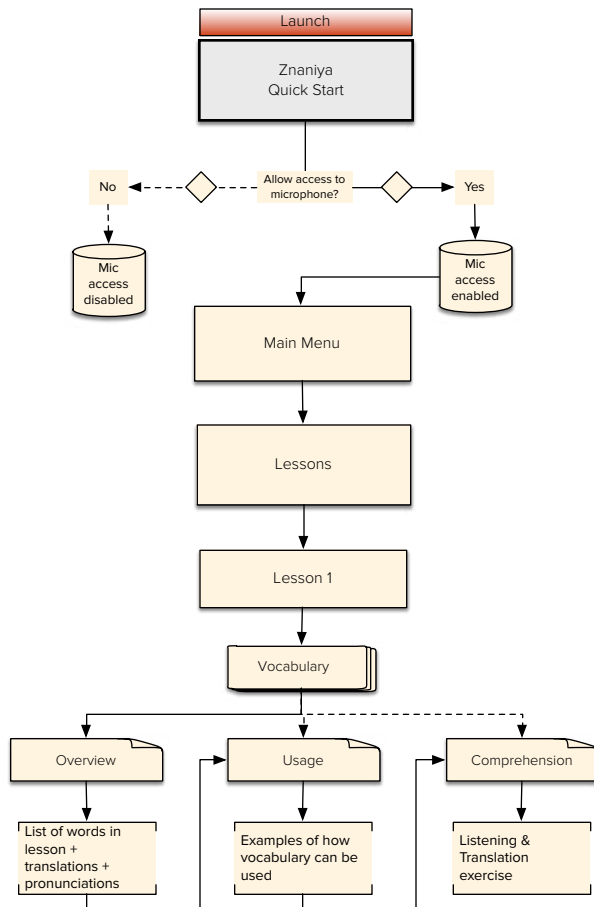
IA DIAGRAM

TASK FLOWS 1-3

TASK FLOWS 4-6

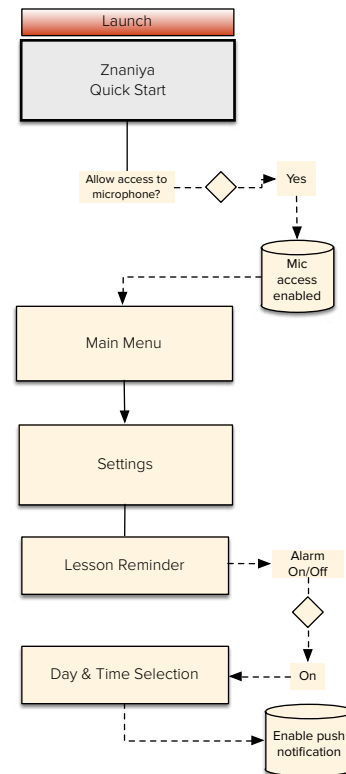
Scenario #1

Melanie Jensen has just downloaded the Znaniya app and would like to begin to work on Lesson 1 Vocabulary.



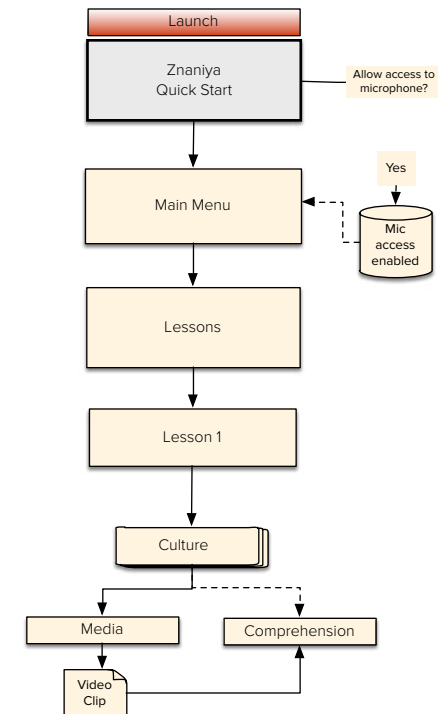
Scenario #2

David Kessel would like to set an alarm to remind him to continue his lesson progress.



Scenario #3

Liz Simenstad wants to explore the media section of Lesson 1 so she can test her comprehension skills.



INTERACTION DESIGN

SITE MAP — OVERVIEW

SITE MAP — DETAIL

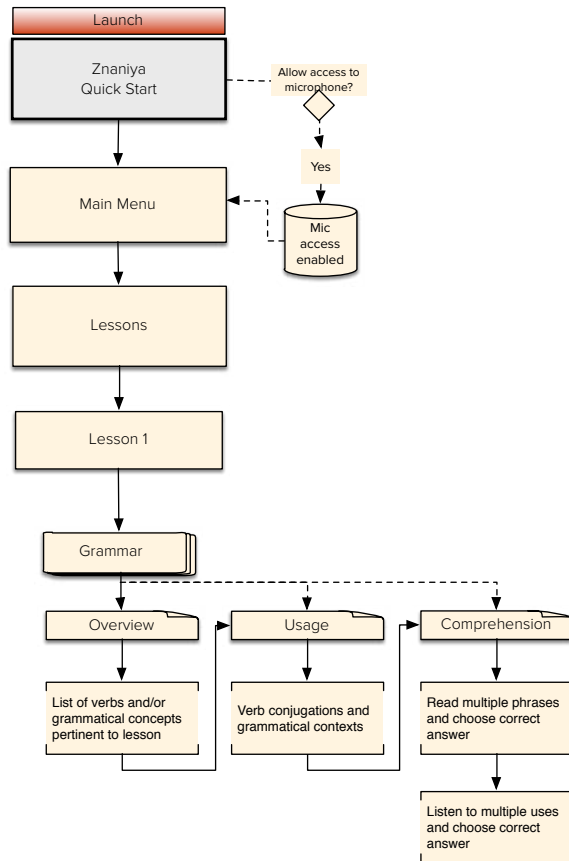
IA DIAGRAM

TASK FLOWS 1-3

TASK FLOWS 4-5

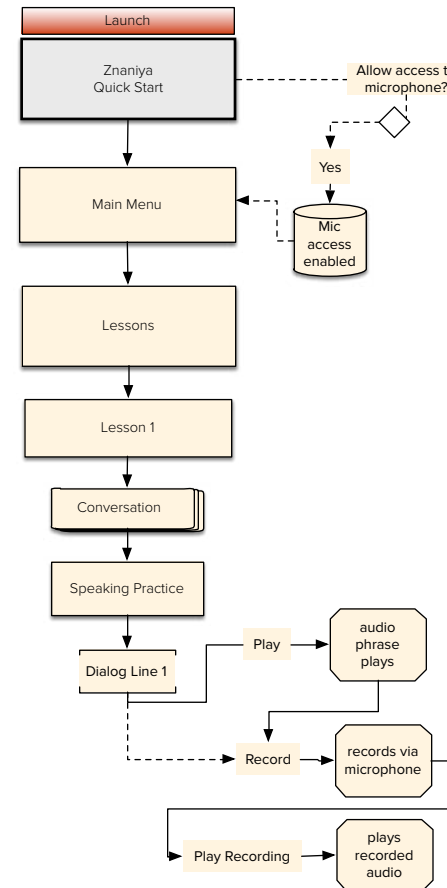
Scenario #4

David Kessel wants to review the Grammar exercises for Lesson 1.



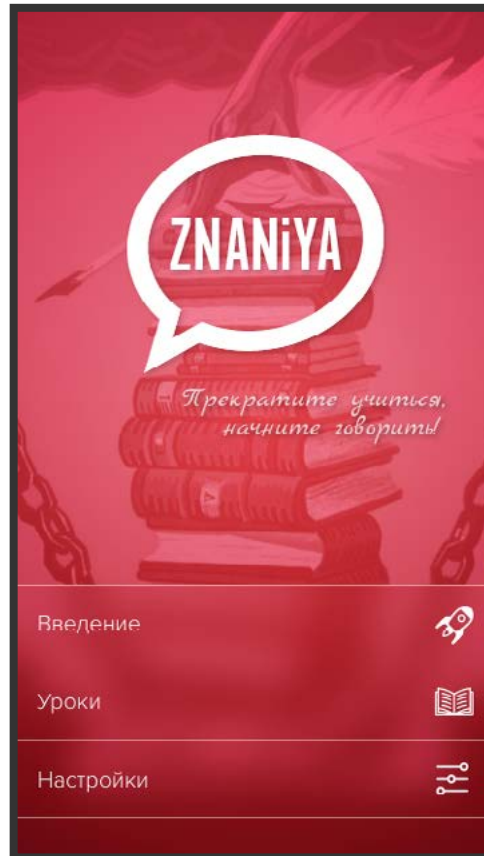
Scenario #5

Melanie Jensen would like to practice her conversational skills and make sure her accent is improving.

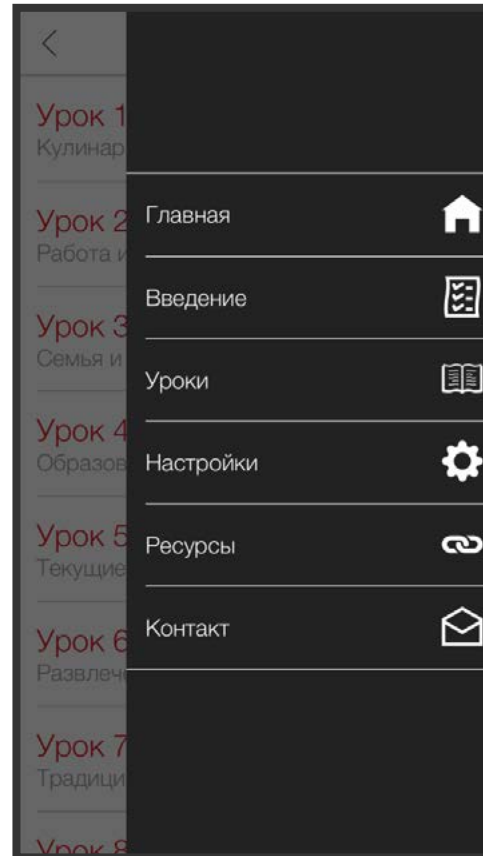


NAVIGATION

MAIN MENUS



LESSONS

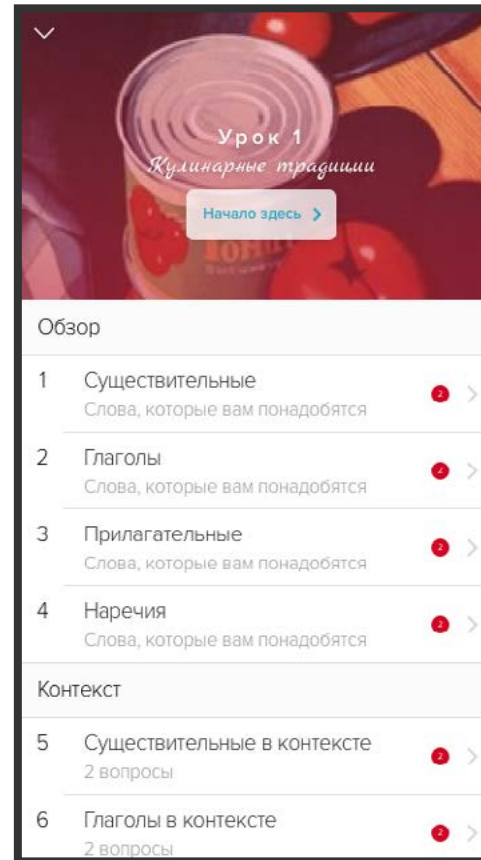
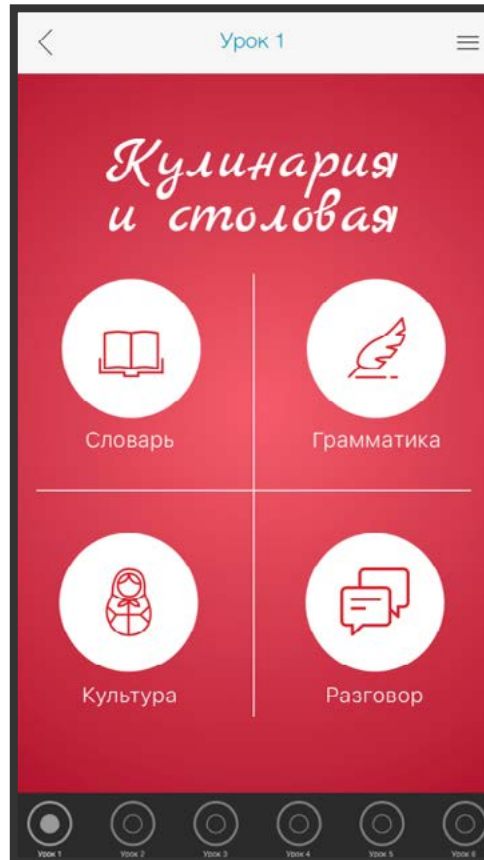
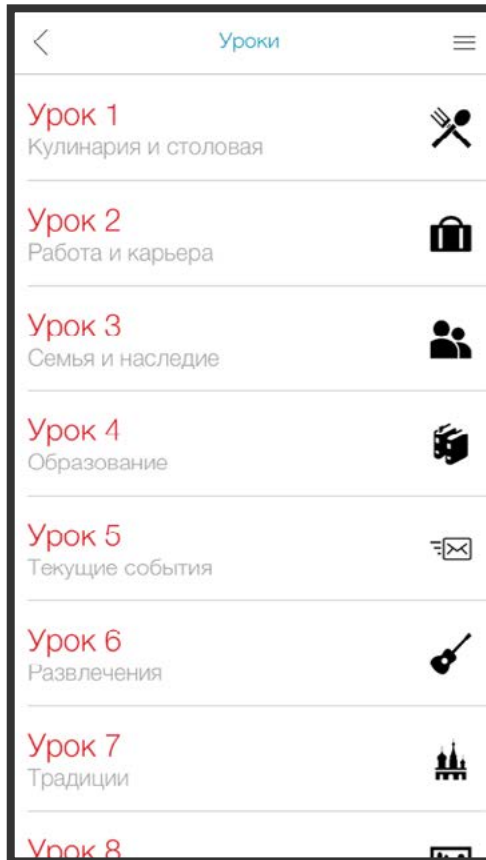


There will be two main menus on the Znaniya app: the first (left) is the Home menu, which contains links to Introduction, Lessons, and Settings. The hidden menu contains a complete list of sections: Introduction, Lessons, Resources, Settings, and Feedback. Any of the sections can be accessed by the user at any point in the user's journey, aside from within the lessons. The persistent hidden main menu will be available on all non-lesson pages.

NAVIGATION

MAIN MENUS

LESSONS



The Lessons menus and submenus will employ a linear structure, and will also make use of a progress bar (via the in-module modals) as the user progresses through the lesson and its sections. The user will be able to return to the previous menu from each of the submenu pages, and will be able to access the main lesson menu as well. The user will be able to access two modals, Lesson Progress and Settings, via the bottom toolbar within the modules (far right).

STORYBOARDS

SCENARIO #1

SCENARIO #2

SCENARIO #3



Scenario #1: Setting reminders

Persona: Melanie Jensen

Task(s): Setting reminders



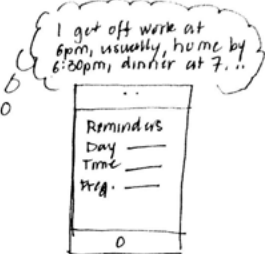



User story: “As an attorney with a busy schedule, I want to build my Russian lessons into my schedule so I can continue to practice the language consistently.”

STORYBOARDS

SCENARIO #1

SCENARIO #2

SCENARIO #3

1	 <p>Hand-drawn illustration of a woman (Melanie) standing and looking thoughtful. Two thought bubbles are above her head. The first bubble says: "Hmm... I need to spend more time on my lessons." The second bubble says: "I just need to be more disciplined and plan for them better."</p>	2	 <p>Hand-drawn illustration of a hand holding a smartphone. A thought bubble above the phone says: "I wonder if there's something on the app that will remind me...?"</p>	3	 <p>Hand-drawn illustration of a smartphone screen. Above the screen is a thought bubble that says: "I get off work at 6pm, usually, home by 6:30pm, dinner at 7...". The screen itself shows a form with the title "Reminders" and fields for "Day", "Time", and "Freq.", each followed by a blank line for input.</p>
Melanie decides she wants to be more consistent with her lessons		Melanie picks up her phone and opens the app		Melanie looks at the options and considers her schedule	
4	 <p>Hand-drawn illustration of Melanie holding her phone. A thought bubble above her head says: "I guess I could set it for 8pm?"</p>	5	 <p>Hand-drawn illustration of Melanie holding her phone. A thought bubble above her head says: "Maybe just Thursdays and Fridays."</p>	6	 <p>Hand-drawn illustration of a smartphone screen displaying the text "Reminders Set!". Below the screen is a thought bubble that says: "Great, now I have a schedule and a plan!"</p>
Melanie decides on a time that works for her		Melanie chooses the days that will suit her schedule		Melanie saves the reminder setting and has a plan for the lessons	

STORYBOARDS

SCENARIO #1

SCENARIO #2

SCENARIO #3



Scenario #2: A Practice Dialog

Persona: David Kinsey

Task(s): Practicing conversation

User story: “As a former Russian student and busy working professional who wants to travel to Russia, I want to rehearse my Russian-speaking skills so that I can converse comfortably with native Russian speakers.”

STORYBOARDS

SCENARIO #1

SCENARIO #2

SCENARIO #3

1



Having lunch with a coworker, David considers his pending trip to Russia.

2



He describes how he's been using the app to get better at Russian

3



David wants to show his coworker how the speaking section works

4



David listens to the first part of the dialog for his prompt

5



David verbally responds to the prompt, and the app validates it

6



David continues to show how the app works

STORYBOARDS

SCENARIO #1

SCENARIO #2

SCENARIO #3



Scenario #3: Making borscht

Persona: Elizabeth Smolnyak

Task(s): Following a recipe

User story: “As a former Russian student who learns best kinesthetically, I want to be able to practice my language skills by achieving a tangible goal so that I can have a practical understanding of the language.”

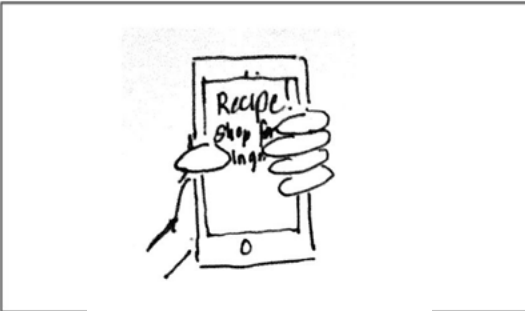
STORYBOARDS

SCENARIO #1

SCENARIO #2

SCENARIO #3

1



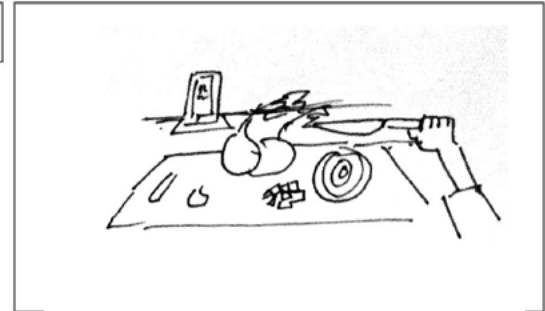
Liz opens the recipe exercise and reads the description

2



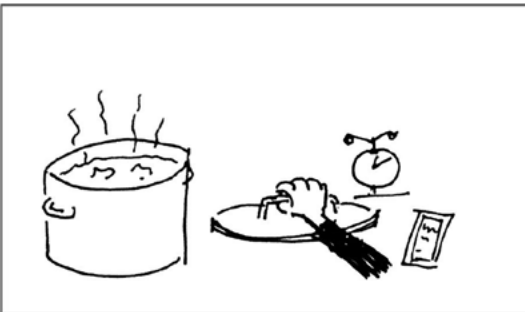
Liz shops for the recipe ingredients and returns home to prepare them

3



Liz prepares the ingredients according to the recipe

4



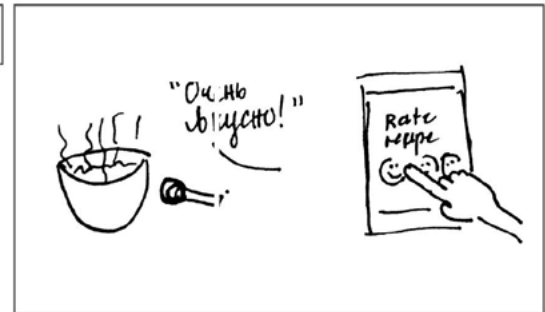
Liz follows the recipe

5



Once the food is done cooking, Liz takes a picture of it, per the app's instructions

6



Liz eats the borscht and enjoys it, so she rates the recipe as "great!" on the app

USER INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

PARTICIPANT #1

PARTICIPANT #2

PARTICIPANT #3

PARTICIPANT #4

Note: When screening for interview subjects, I established a baseline for language proficiency (over 3 years of Russian courses or previous near-fluency) and also established that the testers all own iPhones and use iOS regularly.

Q1: Have you ever used (or attempted to use) a mobile app for language learning? If so, which language(s) and which apps?

Q2: How many mobile apps would you say you use on a daily basis?

Q3: Which mobile apps are you most accustomed to/ feel the most comfortable using?

Q4: Do you know your personality type (Myers Briggs, enneagram, etc.), and if so, what is it? If not, are you an introvert or an extrovert?

Q5: How would you describe your learning style: visual, auditory, reading/writing, or kinesthetic (hands-on)?

USER INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

PARTICIPANT #1

PARTICIPANT #2

PARTICIPANT #3

PARTICIPANT #4



Participant #1: Alex Z.

Age: 39

Occupation: UI/UX Designer

Status: Married

Location: Sacramento, CA

Device(s): MacBook Pro, iPhone

Russian level: Native speaker, limited proficiency

Alex was born and raised in Iran, son of a Russian mother and Persian father. He has lived in the United States since the mid-1990s and speaks some Russian, although not fluently (his mother is a native speaker, and his sister is fluent). He speaks Farsi and English fluently, however, and speaks some French and Spanish as well.

He uses a few apps regularly, and he's designed mobile apps, so he's very familiar with typical iOS interfaces. He and his wife have been using Duolingo to learn Italian. Alex often presents as an extrovert and has an exuberant personality, but is actually an introvert and doesn't like speaking Russian with other native speakers because he's out of practice and feels self-conscious about it. He also describes himself as preferring both visual and auditory learning, but slightly more inclined to visual learning.

USER INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

PARTICIPANT #1

PARTICIPANT #2

PARTICIPANT #3

PARTICIPANT #4



Participant #2: Christy L.

Age: 32

Occupation: Sr. Planner

Status: Single

Location: Seattle, WA

Device(s): PC (Windows OS), iPhone

Russian level: 4 years college-level, reading/
writing proficient, limited spoken

Christy was born and raised in Salem, Oregon, and attended University of Washington in Seattle, where she minored in Russian language. She is currently working as a Senior Planner for Puget Sound Regional Council in Seattle. She enjoys travel and travels extensively, but has yet to go to Russia; due to the current political climate, she has no imminent plans to travel there, but has set it as a future goal.

She uses Instagram and Snapchat regularly, and occasionally Facebook as well. She has tried Duolingo for brushing up on Spanish and bought Rosetta Stone for Russian, but has never used it. Christy describes herself as an introvert (she has taken the Myers-Briggs test and got INFP as a result). She prefers learning via reading/writing, which is why she's had trouble keeping up with her Russian skills.

USER INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

PARTICIPANT #1

PARTICIPANT #2

PARTICIPANT #3

PARTICIPANT #4



Participant #3: Zuzanna P.

Age: 42

Occupation: SVP Marketing

Status: Married

Location: Los Angeles, CA

Device(s): MacBook Air, iPhone

Russian level: Native speaker (2nd language),
speaking proficient, some reading/writing

Zuzanna (Suz) was born and raised outside Kraków, Poland. She has two Master's degrees, one in sociology and one in marketing, and works as an SVP of Marketing for a startup called Datasift in the Bay Area. She and her husband, Campbell, currently live in Marina del Rey. Russian is her third language (English is her second language), and she learned it while working in Russia after obtaining her MA in sociology in Poland (she received her MSci in London).

Suz uses the Instagram, Facebook, and Meetup apps regularly. She's never stuck with a language-learning app. Her personality type is ESFJ, according to a recent test. She prefers learning by doing (kinesthetic) and describes herself as an overachiever and very ambitious, but she works long hours, remotely, and has to deliberately make time for things like taking courses.

USER INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

PARTICIPANT #1

PARTICIPANT #2

PARTICIPANT #3

PARTICIPANT #4



Participant #4: Anastasia S.

Age: 31

Occupation: English Teacher

Status: Married

Location: St. Petersburg, Russia

Device(s): MacBook Air, iPhone

Russian level: Reading/writing proficient, speaking semi-proficient

Staci was born and raised in Florida and, despite her very Russian-sounding name, is not ethnically Russian. She has a Bachelor's degree in graphic design from Parsons and a Master's degree in art history from European University in St. Petersburg. She's been living in St. Petersburg for five years; she met and married her husband, Gennady, in 2016; he was one of her English students. Despite having lived in Russia for as long as she has, she still feels uncomfortable speaking Russian and is self-conscious about it. She wants to take courses, but can't find many options in St. Petersburg.

Staci is (as she puts it) relatively low-tech. She only recently started using an iPhone after switching from an Android device, but, since she's interested in photography, she mostly uses Instagram and Flickr. She's familiar with Facebook and Reddit but uses both infrequently. Her personality type is INFJ. The app appeals to her because she learns kinesthetically, and she's never used another app for language-learning.

USER TESTING: ROUND 1

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

PRE-TEST

POST-TEST

RESULTS

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

Task 1: Open the app for the first time and complete the setup.

Inputs/Assumptions:

- iPhone
- Znaniya app for iPhone

Steps:

1. Open Znaniya app on iPhone
2. Set lesson reminder for Mondays at 6:00pm

Instructions for user:

You've just downloaded the Znaniya app! Now you can open the app for the first time and complete the setup process.

Notes:

To test with this prototype, the user will not actually be able to change the day/time on the Settings, as the prototype is static.

Task 2: Learn how to use the vocabulary from Lesson 1 in a sentence.

Inputs/Assumptions:

- iPhone
- Znaniya app for iPhone
- Znaniya app has been used previously
- User has completed Lesson 1 > Vocabulary > Overview

Steps:

1. Open the Znaniya app on iPhone
2. Open the Lessons menu.
3. Find Lesson 1's Vocabulary, and look for Context.
4. Listen to the audio sample.
5. Choose the most appropriate translation.

Instructions for user:

Review how to use Lesson 1's vocabulary in a sentence.

Notes:

This test includes the featured audio, but the audio is embedded in MP3 format and will appear overlaying the prototype's graphics.

Task 3: Watch Культура (culture) video to learn about Урок 1 (lesson 1)

Inputs/Assumptions:

- iPhone
- Znaniya app for iPhone
- Znaniya app has been used previously
- User has completed Lesson 1 Vocabulary, Lesson 1 Grammar, and Lesson 1 Multimedia > Exercise.

Steps:

1. Open the Znaniya app on iPhone
2. Open Lessons.
3. Find the Culture section of Lesson 1 and look for multimedia.
4. Watch the video clip.
5. Answer the first review question.

Instructions for the user:

You would like to watch the Lesson 1 video clip.

Notes:

The video clip is not functional in this prototype. The correct answer to the first review question is "Резидент учил Нину, как приготовить чай," which means, "Rezident [the character's title] taught Nina how to prepare tea."

USER TESTING: ROUND 1

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

PRE-TEST

POST-TEST

RESULTS

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

Task 4: Test your Russian-speaking skills

Inputs/Assumptions:

- iPhone
- Znaniya app for iPhone
- Znaniya app has been used previously
- User has completed all of Lesson 1 through Conversation > Translation.

Steps:

1. Open the Znaniya app on iPhone
2. Go to Lessons.
3. Find the Lesson 1 Conversations, and locate the Speaking exercise.
4. Listen to Dialog 1.
5. Based on the context and Dialog 1, record Dialog 2.
6. Play back Dialog 2 and determine whether it sounds correct.
7. Submit the answer.

Instructions for the user:

You have completed most of Lesson 1 and would like to test your speaking skills.

Notes:

The prototype does not have recording capabilities, but does have a pre-recorded Dialog 1 and pre-recorded Dialog 2. The prototype also assumes a correct answer once the dialog “recording” has been submitted.

USER TESTING: ROUND 1

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

PRE-TEST

POST-TEST

RESULTS

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

Note: Test subjects were chosen based on language proficiency (advanced Russian) and on the basis of having at least some college-level Russian language skills and background. Test users fell into either the Primary or Secondary target audience groups.

What is your current age?

- Three (3) subjects were 25-29 years old
- Four (4) subjects were 30-34 years old
- Two (2) subjects were 35-39 years old
- One (1) subject was 40-44 years old

What is your highest level of education?

- Seven (7) subjects had BA/BS degrees
- Two (2) subjects had MA/MS degrees
- One (1) subject had a JD degree

What is your current occupation?

- Five (5) subjects worked in technology in some capacity
- Three (3) subjects work in administrative or other office roles
- One (1) subject is an attorney
- One (1) subject works in international public health

Where do you currently reside?

- Five (5) subjects reside in the San Francisco Bay Area

- Three (3) subjects reside in the Seattle/ Puget Sound area
- One (1) subject resides in Washington, DC
- One (1) subject resides in Boston
- One (1) subject resides in Kampala, Uganda

How long did you study Russian language at a college (or higher) level?

- Six (6) subjects took 3-4 years of college-level Russian
- Two (2) subjects took 2-3 years of college-level Russian
- Two (2) subjects took 4+ years of college-level and higher Russian

In what capacity have you spoken or used Russian language outside of your studies (i.e., at home with family or at work)?

- Two (2) subjects have spoken Russian at home/with family (native speakers)
- One (1) subject has spoken/used Russian at work

- Seven (7) subjects have seldom or never used Russian outside of their studies

If any, what kind of mobile phone(s) do you use on a regular basis (at least once a day)?

- Nine (9) subjects used an iPhone
- One (1) subject used Android phone

How comfortable are you with mobile applications and technology?

- Seven (7) subjects were very comfortable with mobile apps and technology
- Three (3) subjects had average comfort level with mobile apps and technology

Have you ever used any language-learning software (for any language)?

- Three (3) had used Rosetta Stone
- Two (2) had used mobile apps
- Five (5) had not used any language-learning software or could not recall

USER TESTING: ROUND 1

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

PRE-TEST

POST-TEST

RESULTS

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

What were your overall impressions of the application?

Overall feedback was positive. Test subjects were able to easily complete each task. The most common suggestions involved increasing the user feedback within the app and further clarifying the conversation exercise screen (Task 4).

How easy or difficult were the tasks to complete?

This was measured on a scale with five options: “very easy,” “easy,” “moderate,” “slightly difficult,” and “very difficult.” Six (6) subjects found the tasks “very easy” to complete. Four (4) subjects found the tasks “easy.”

What about the app appealed to you?

Eight (8) of the responses commented favorably on the incorporation of the multimedia; two of the responses cited a similar course component in either a Russian language class or a Russian study abroad class. Six (6) subjects responded favorably to the Vocabulary exercise’s use of the audio

recording and written test question. Two (2) subjects commented favorably on the lesson reminder.

What suggestions, if any, do you have for improving the app?

Nine (9) of the users indicated that app needs to give feedback for Tasks 2 and 3 (“add правильно for results other than ‘conversation.’”). Eight (8) of the users commented that the dialog needs to have a clearer hint if there is only one possible answer; one response suggested a written prompt in English rather than a picture.

USER TESTING: ROUND 1

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

PRE-TEST

POST-TEST

RESULTS

SUCCESSES & CHALLENGES

Task 1

Task 1 was completed with ease; upon startup, the app walked the user through the setup and ended at the main menu. Two (2) subjects hesitated after choosing the day on the lesson reminder, but clicked on “time” after a beat.

Task 2

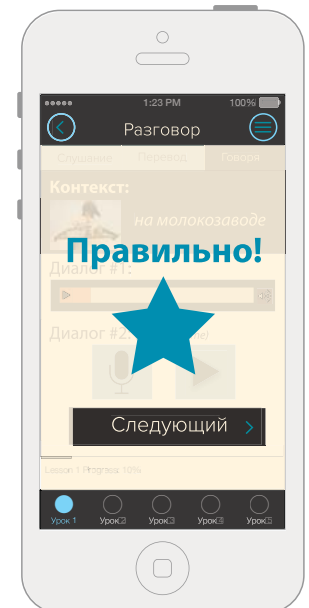
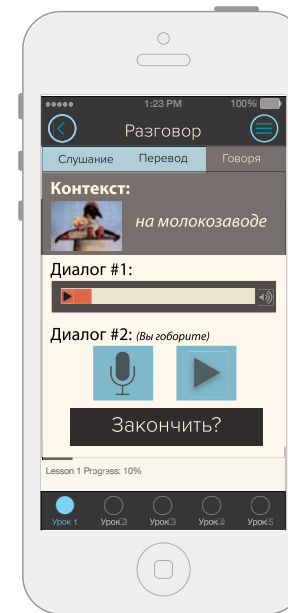
Task 2 was also completed with ease; users navigated to Lesson 1 from the Lessons menu, then to Vocabulary (Словарь), then to Контекст. Most of the comments indicated that it was slightly confusing when clicking on the Подавать button resulted in jumping back to the launch screen and suggested adding a feedback screen of some sort to acknowledge a correct/incorrect answer (as in Task 4). Also noted that all buttons should be hyperlinked.

Task 3

Task 3 was completed with ease; users navigated to Lesson 1 from the Lessons menu, then to Culture (Культура), then to Мультимедиа. Most users reacted favorably to the post-video question. Feedback was the same in Task 3 as in Task 2 regarding the lack of feedback screen, as well as lack of hyperlinks on the buttons.

Task 4

Task 4 was completed with relative ease, but there was some confusion regarding the dialog: most users commented that they would not have known the exact phrase to use without the pre-recorded Dialog 2. One user suggested adding prompt text in English to further clarify Dialog 2. One user suggested a clearer picture of the interaction’s context.



USER TESTING: ROUND 1

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

PRE-TEST

POST-TEST

RESULTS

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

The first round of user testing was largely successful. Users found the app to be easy to navigate and use, and enjoyed its premise as well.

I have made a few changes based on user testing feedback. The overall theme of the comments indicated that there was insufficient feedback given to the user after completing each task; specifically, the Vocabulary and Culture exercises, as well as the Time and Frequency settings. The settings now include checkmarks for the items that have been completed, and the Vocabulary and Culture quizzes/exercises now have Правильно/Неправильно (Correct/Incorrect) screens that pop up based on user input, just like the Conversation exercise.

A major change that has yet to be made is a modification to the Speaking exercise which would make it clearer what the context of the conversation is. I will most likely use a prompt in English so the user is given more direction for the dialog, as it is easiest to understand and implement if there is only one correct answer.

USER TESTING: ROUND 2

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

PRE-TEST

POST-TEST

RESULTS

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

Task 1: Open the app for the first time and complete the setup.

Inputs/Assumptions:

- iPhone
- Znaniya app for iPhone

Steps:

1. Open Znaniya app on iPhone
2. Set lesson reminder for Mondays at 6:00pm

Instructions for user:

You've just downloaded the Znaniya app! Now you can open the app for the first time and complete the setup process.

Notes:

To test with this prototype, the user will not actually be able to change the day/time on the Settings, as the prototype is static.

Task 2: Learn how to use the vocabulary from Lesson 1 in a sentence.

Inputs/Assumptions:

- iPhone
- Znaniya app for iPhone
- Znaniya app has been used previously
- User has completed Lesson 1 > Vocabulary > Overview

Steps:

1. Open the Znaniya app on iPhone
2. Open the Lessons menu.
3. Find Lesson 1's Vocabulary, and look for Context.
4. Listen to the audio sample.
5. Choose the most appropriate translation.

Instructions for user:

Review how to use Lesson 1's vocabulary in a sentence.

Notes:

This test includes the featured audio, but the audio is embedded in MP3 format and will appear overlaying the prototype's graphics.

Task 3: Watch Культура (culture) video to learn about Урок 1 (lesson 1)

Inputs/Assumptions:

- iPhone
- Znaniya app for iPhone
- Znaniya app has been used previously
- User has completed Lesson 1 Vocabulary, Lesson 1 Grammar, and Lesson 1 Multimedia > Exercise.

Steps:

1. Open the Znaniya app on iPhone
2. Open Lessons.
3. Find the Culture section of Lesson 1 and look for multimedia.
4. Watch the video clip.
5. Answer the first review question.

Instructions for the user:

You would like to watch the Lesson 1 video clip.

Notes:

The video clip is not functional in this prototype. The correct answer to the first review question is "Резидент учил Нину, как приготовить чай," which means, "Rezident [the character's title] taught Nina how to prepare tea."

USER TESTING: ROUND 2

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

PRE-TEST

POST-TEST

RESULTS

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

Task 4: Test your Russian-speaking skills

Inputs/Assumptions:

- iPhone
- Znaniya app for iPhone
- Znaniya app has been used previously
- User has completed all of Lesson 1 through Conversation > Translation.

Steps:

1. Open the Znaniya app on iPhone
2. Go to Lessons.
3. Find the Lesson 1 Conversations, and locate the Speaking exercise.
4. Listen to Dialog 1.
5. Based on the context and Dialog 1, record Dialog 2.
6. Play back Dialog 2 and determine whether it sounds correct.
7. Submit the answer.

Instructions for the user:

You have completed most of Lesson 1 and would like to test your speaking skills.

Notes:

The prototype does not have recording capabilities, but does have a pre-recorded Dialog 1 and pre-recorded Dialog 2. The prototype also assumes a correct answer once the dialog “recording” has been submitted.

USER TESTING: ROUND 2

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

PRE-TEST

POST-TEST

RESULTS

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

Note: Test subjects were chosen based on language proficiency (advanced Russian) and on the basis of having at least some college-level Russian language skills and background. Test users fell into either the Primary or Secondary target audience groups.

What is your current age?

- Five (5) subjects were 25-29 years old
- Three (3) subjects were 30-34 years old
- One (1) subject were 35-39 years old
- One (1) subject was 40-44 years old

What is your highest level of education?

- Five (5) subjects had BA/BS degrees
- Two (2) subjects had MA/MS degrees
- One (1) subject had a Ph.D
- One (1) subject had a JD

What is your current occupation?

- Six (6) subjects work in technology
- One (1) subject works in an administrative capacity
- One (1) subject works in higher education
- One (1) subject is an attorney
- One (1) subject works in international public health

Where do you currently reside?

- Six (6) subjects reside in the San Francisco Bay Area

- Three (3) subjects reside in the Seattle/ Puget Sound area
- One (1) subject resides in Arequipa, Peru

How long did you study Russian language at a college (or higher) level?

- Five (5) subjects took 3-4 years of college-level Russian
- Four (4) subjects took 2-3 years of college-level Russian
- One (1) subjects took 4+ years of college-level and higher Russian

In what capacity have you spoken or used Russian language outside of your studies (i.e., at home with family or at work)?

- Three (3) subjects have spoken Russian at home/with family (native speakers)
- One (1) subject has spoken/used Russian at work
- Six (6) subjects have seldom or never used Russian outside of their studies

If any, what kind of mobile phone(s) do you use on a regular basis (at least once a day)?

- Ten (10) subjects used an iPhone

How comfortable are you with mobile applications and technology?

- Nine (9) subjects were very comfortable with mobile apps and technology
- One (1) subject had average comfort level with mobile apps and technology

Have you ever used any language-learning software (for any language)?

- Three (3) had used Rosetta Stone
- Three (3) had used mobile apps
- Four (4) had not used any language-learning software or could not recall

USER TESTING: ROUND 2

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

PRE-TEST

POST-TEST

RESULTS

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

What were your overall impressions of the application?

Overall feedback was positive. Test subjects were able to easily complete each task.

How easy or difficult were the tasks to complete?

This was measured on a scale with five options: “very easy,” “easy,” “moderate,” “slightly difficult,” and “very difficult.” Eight (8) subjects found the tasks “very easy” to complete. Two (2) subjects found the tasks “easy.”

What about the app appealed to you?

All ten (10) of the respondents commented positively on the incorporation of the multimedia (video). Six (6) of the respondents commented positively on the simulated conversation feature.

What suggestions, if any, do you have for improving the app?

Five (5) of the users indicated that some of the buttons could be a bit bigger, particularly the tab buttons.

USER TESTING: ROUND 2

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

PRE-TEST

POST-TEST

RESULTS

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

Task 1

Task 1 was completed with ease; each user was able to navigate from the main menu directly to settings, choosing the day and time for the lesson reminder and saving the reminder setting successfully.

Task 2

Task 2 was also completed with ease; each user quickly navigated to Vocabulary > Context based on the task instructions, then answered the first question. Three users selected the wrong answer and were able to tap the screen to close the overlay and select the correct answer.

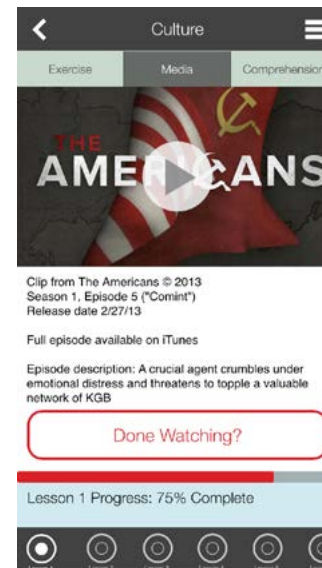
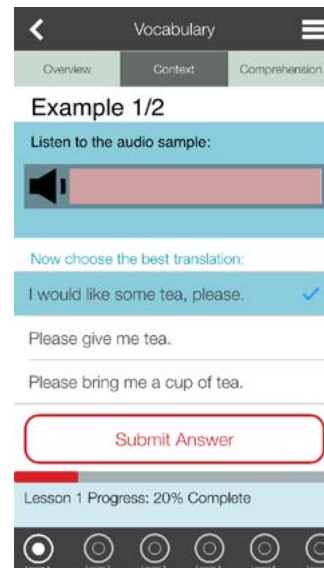
Task 3

Task 3 was completed with ease; each user was able to locate the video by navigating to Culture > Media. Four users commented favorably on the dialog selected for the exercise.

Task 4

Task 4 was completed with relative ease and users seemed less confused by the dialog than in the first round of testing. The question in the dialog (which the users had to answer)

resulted in varying responses, which I was able to record in writing and will incorporate into the next version of the prototype and the voice recognition. Since this was a simulated recording, the playback of the recording was not based on user input, which did cause some confusion for a few of the testers; however, this will not be a factor in the next prototype or in the live version.



USER TESTING: ROUND 2

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

PRE-TEST

POST-TEST

RESULTS

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

The second round of user testing was largely successful. Users found the app to be easy to navigate and use, and enjoyed its premise as well.

I have made a few changes based on user testing feedback. The overall theme of the comments indicated that there was insufficient feedback given to the user after completing each task; specifically, the Vocabulary and Culture exercises, as well as the Time and Frequency settings. The settings now include checkmarks for the items that have been completed, and the Vocabulary and Culture quizzes/exercises now have Правильно/Неправильно (Correct/Incorrect) screens that pop up based on user input, just like the Conversation exercise.

A major change that has yet to be made is a modification to the Speaking exercise which would make it clearer what the context of the conversation is. I will most likely use a prompt in English so the user is given more direction for the dialog, as it is easiest to understand and implement if there is only one correct answer.

USER TESTING: ROUND 3

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

PRE-TEST

POST-TEST

RESULTS

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

Task 1: Learn how to use the vocabulary from Lesson 1 in a sentence.

Inputs/Assumptions:

- iPhone
- Znaniya app for iPhone
- Znaniya app has been used previously
- User has completed Lesson 1 > Vocabulary > Overview

Steps:

1. Open the Znaniya app on iPhone
2. Open the Lessons menu.
3. Find Lesson 1's Vocabulary, and look for Context.
4. Listen to the audio sample.
5. Choose the most appropriate translation.

Instructions for user:

Review how to use Lesson 1's vocabulary in a sentence.

Task 2: Watch Культура (culture) video to learn about Урок 1 (lesson 1)

Inputs/Assumptions:

- iPhone

- Znaniya app for iPhone
- Znaniya app has been used previously
- User has completed Lesson 1 Vocabulary, Lesson 1 Grammar, and Lesson 1 Multimedia > Exercise.

Steps:

1. Open the Znaniya app on iPhone
2. Open Lessons.
3. Find the Culture section of Lesson 1 and look for multimedia.
4. Watch the video clip.
5. Answer the first review question.

Instructions for the user:

You would like to watch the Lesson 1 video clip.

Notes:

The video clip is functional in this prototype. The correct answer to the first review question is "The Resident taught Nina how to make tea."

Task 3: Test your Russian-speaking skills

Inputs/Assumptions:

- iPhone
- Znaniya app for iPhone
- Znaniya app has been used previously

- User has completed all of Lesson 1 through Conversation > Translation.

Steps:

1. Open the Znaniya app on iPhone
2. Go to Lessons.
3. Find the Lesson 1 Conversations, and locate the Speaking exercise.
4. Listen to Dialog 1.
5. Based on the context and Dialog 1, record Dialog 2.
6. Play back Dialog 2 and determine whether it sounds correct.
7. Submit the answer.

Instructions for the user:

You have completed most of Lesson 1 and would like to test your speaking skills.

Notes:

The prototype does not have recording capabilities, but does have a pre-recorded Dialog 1 and pre-recorded Dialog 2. The prototype also assumes a correct answer once the dialog "recording" has been submitted. In this script, Dialog 1 is, "Жарко! Хочешь ты мороженого?" and Dialog 2 is, "Да, давайте есть мороженое."

USER TESTING: ROUND 3

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

PRE-TEST

POST-TEST

RESULTS

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

Note: Test subjects were chosen based on language proficiency (any advanced foreign language) and on the basis of having at least some college-level foreign language skills and background. Test users fell into groups equivalent to Primary and Secondary.

What is your current age?

- One (1) subjects was 25-29 years old
- Three (3) subjects were 30-34 years old
- One (1) subject were 35-39 years old

What is your highest level of education?

- Two (2) subjects had BA/BS degrees
- Two (2) subjects had MA/MS degrees
- One (1) subject had a Ph.D

What is your current occupation?

- Four (4) subjects work in technology
- One (1) subject is a teacher

Where do you currently reside?

- Five (5) subjects reside in the San Francisco Bay Area

How long did you study a foreign language at a college (or higher) level?

- Three (3) subjects took 3-4 years of college-level foreign language courses
- Two (2) subjects took 2-3 years of college-level foreign language courses

In what capacity have you spoken or used your chosen foreign language outside of your studies (i.e., at home with family or at work)?

- One (1) subject has spoken his foreign language at home/with family (native speakers)
- One (1) subject has spoken/used her foreign language at work
- Three (3) subjects have seldom or never used their respective foreign languages outside of their studies

If any, what kind of mobile phone(s) do you use on a regular basis (at least once a day)?

- Five (5) subjects used an iPhone

How comfortable are you with mobile applications and technology?

- Four (4) subjects were very comfortable with mobile apps and technology
- One (1) subject had average comfort level with mobile apps and technology

Have you ever used any language-learning software (for any language)?

- Three (3) had used Rosetta Stone
- Two (2) had not used any language-learning software or could not recall

USER TESTING: ROUND 3

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

PRE-TEST

POST-TEST

RESULTS

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

What were your overall impressions of the application?

Overall feedback was positive. Test subjects were able to complete each task.

How easy or difficult were the tasks to complete?

This was measured on a scale with five options: “very easy,” “easy,” “moderate,” “slightly difficult,” and “very difficult.” Four (4) subjects found the tasks “very easy” to complete. One (1) subject found the tasks “easy.”

What about the app appealed to you?

Two (2) of the users commented that they liked the app’s UI (this was verbatim from one user who works in tech). Two (2) users commented that the video was a great idea (one of these users recognized the scene used and is a fan of the show “The Americans”).

What suggestions, if any, do you have for improving the app?

Five (5) of the users indicated that some of

the buttons could be a bit bigger, particularly the tab buttons.

Do you have any other comments or questions about the app?

Two (2) users commented that they liked the app’s UI.

USER TESTING: ROUND 3

TASK LIST & SCRIPT		PRE-TEST	POST-TEST	RESULTS	SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES
#	Content Item		Severity	Recommendations	
1	User hesitated when trying to find the “submit” button on the Media quiz		Med	Make the button more prominent; i.e., use red fill rather than outline, possibly mute the progress bar color (which is below it and red); perhaps make instructions clearer in lieu of changing the button color	
2	User confused after quiz question submission; expected more questions, did not expect to return to main menu		Med	Additional quiz questions to be added in next prototype version; will continue to next portion of the lesson rather than the main menu	
3	User went to Lesson 1 > Vocabulary > Overview to get to Context and noted that there was no “Next” button to get to Context (but was able to find it using the tabbed navigation)		Med	Add the button to the Overview page so user can go to Context	
4	User was not immediately aware of what to do in Lesson 1 > Vocabulary > Context. Commented that it was not clear that she needed to play the audio; thought she needed to select the answer but didn’t know what it was.		High	Make the Step 1/Step 2 text more prominent; add instructions.	
5	User accidentally went to Lesson 1 > Grammar rather than Lesson 1 > Vocabulary. Was unable to back out of Grammar section to return to the Lesson 1 menu.		High	Add “back” button functionality in unused sections of prototype (this will not be an issue in fully functional prototype, but should be fixed in this version); will check remainder of prototype for similar issue.	
6	Audio (and the audio on the video) is not playing in the proto.io app version (on mobile)		Low	This is not what the final prototype will be built on, and the audio is working on the desktop and regular mobile (browser) versions. Issue will be corrected when the prototype is no longer via proto.io.	
7	Some of the tab navigation is not functional, which confused some users.		Med	This will not be an issue with the full prototype, but I will add links on the affected tabs to limit confusion.	
8	User did not immediately know what to do on the Media page.		High	Add a prompt (i.e., “Step 1: Watch the video”)	

USER TESTING: ROUND 3

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

PRE-TEST

POST-TEST

RESULTS

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

The third round of user testing focused on users who had a slightly different background than my target groups, in order to maximize the amount and quality of feedback I've received. Because it covered a broader range of foreign languages, I was able to receive more useful feedback that may not have been available had I kept the testing field narrow. My next round of testing will go back to a Russian-speaking audience.

The most serious challenges stemmed from a lack of user prompts on some pages; for instance, the Vocabulary > Context screen lacks prompts that tell the user what to do prior to answering the quiz question, which baffled a few users. In order to alleviate this confusion, I have added more prominent prompts that include "Step 1" and "Step 2" (similar to Dialog 1 and Dialog 2, which one of the same users commented was very easy to follow). The same was true on the Media page, and I have added a prompt that reads, "Step 1: Watch the video," and the button is now, "Step 2: Take the quiz."

There were a few oddities related to the prototype being built on Proto.io, such as

some difficulty with the audio playing on the Proto.io app (this was not a formal part of the test, and users were able to complete the test on desktop/mobile without the app). Because the prototype does not have all sections built at this point, there were some sections that caused trouble if the users accidentally tapped into them (i.e., the user who inadvertently tapped "Grammar" rather than "Vocabulary"). These issues will be minimized and hopefully eliminated once the prototype is built independently of Proto.io.

USER TESTING: ROUND 4

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

RESULTS

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

Notes:

These tasks were performed using a “paper prototype,” which was displayed as a PDF document for testers.

Task 1: Open the app, locate the module where the user left off, and follow the prompts to go through the recipe for the Culture exercise. Once done, go back to the Culture menu.

Inputs/Assumptions:

- Znaniya app has been used previously
- User has completed all sections leading up to the culture exercise.

Steps:

1. Open the Znaniya app on iPhone
2. Open the Lessons menu.
3. Find Lesson 1's Culture menu, and look for Exercise.
4. Follow the prompts to go through the recipe (user will not be cooking).
5. Emulate taking a photo of the completed recipe's finished product.
6. Rate the outcome of the recipe.

Instructions for user:

Open the app, locate the module where you left off, and follow the prompts to go through

the recipe for the Culture exercise. Once done, go back to the Culture menu.

Task 2: User left off having completed the Culture exercise and is going to continue to walk through the Culture module.

Inputs/Assumptions:

- Znaniya app has been used previously
- User has just completed the culture exercise.

Steps:

1. Find the Culture section of Lesson 1 and look for multimedia.
2. Read the description of the scene.
3. Watch the video clip.
4. Answer the review questions.

Instructions for the user:

You would like to watch the first video clip of Lesson 1.

Task 3: The user has completed the entirety of Lesson 1, with the exception of the last module: Speaking. The user will now complete the final module.

Inputs/Assumptions:

- Znaniya app has been used previously
- User has completed all of lesson 1 except the speaking exercise.

Steps:

1. Open the Znaniya app on iPhone
2. Go to Lessons.
3. Find the Lesson 1 Conversations, and locate the Speaking module.
4. Listen to Dialog 1.
5. Based on the context and Dialog 1, record Dialog 2.
6. Play back Dialog 2 and determine whether it sounds correct.
7. Submit the answer.

Instructions for the user:

You have completed most of Lesson 1 and would like to test your speaking skills.

USER TESTING: ROUND 4

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

RESULTS

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

Note: Test subjects were chosen based on Russian language proficiency and on the basis of having at least some college-level or equivalent Russian language skills and background. Test users fell into the Primary user group.

What is your current age?

- Two (2) subjects were 30-34 years old
- One (1) subject was 40-44 years old

What is your highest level of education?

- Two (2) subjects had BA/BS degrees
- One (1) subject had a Ph.D

What is your current occupation?

- Two (2) subjects work in technology
- One (1) subject is a small business owner

Where do you currently reside?

- Two (2) subjects reside in the San Francisco Bay Area
- One (1) subject resides in Boston

How long did you study a foreign language at a college (or higher) level?

- Three (3) subjects took 3-4 years of college-level Russian courses

In what capacity have you spoken or used your chosen foreign language outside of your studies (i.e., at home with family or at work)?

- Three (3) subjects have seldom or never used their respective foreign languages outside of their studies

If any, what kind of mobile phone(s) do you use on a regular basis (at least once a day)?

- Three (3) subjects used an iPhone

How comfortable are you with mobile applications and technology?

- Two (2) subjects were very comfortable with mobile apps and technology
- One (1) subject had average comfort level with mobile apps and technology

Have you ever used any language-learning software (for any language)?

- One (1) had used Duolingo
- Two (2) had not used any language-learning software or could not recall

USER TESTING: ROUND 4

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

RESULTS

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

#	Content Item	Severity	Recommendations
1	Task #1, Step 8/19: The user didn't immediately know where to go (she didn't know where she had left off and there were no prompts to help her).	Med	Modify the CTA on the Culture menu and correct the alerts on the wireframes so she knows her location.
2	Task #1, Steps 17/19 and 19/19: The user was confused by the lack of prompts on the feedback screen.	Med	Add a "tap to close" prompt.
3	Task #2, Step 4/11: The user didn't immediately know where to go, and had to search for the menu item.	Med	Modify the CTA on the Culture menu and correct the alerts on the wireframes so she knows her location.
4	Task #2, Step 6/11: User hesitated before tapping on the "next" button, clarifying that she wasn't sure where it would lead.	Low	Add descriptive text next to the "next" button to clarify that it leads to the quiz.
5	Task #2, Steps 8/11 and 10/11: User unsure how to exit feedback overlay.	Med	Add a "tap to close" prompt on the feedback screen.
6	Task #3, Step 8/10 After stop button pressed, no prompt to move to next step.	Low	Add prompt.
7	Task #3, Step 10/10: User wondered out loud which button to press at the bottom to submit; suggested finding some way to more obviously differentiate the buttons.	Low	Darken "submit" button (will be a more saturated color in the mockups) to increase visual weight.

USER TESTING: ROUND 4

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

Round 4 was the first round of testing I conducted on the newly updated visual design for Znaniya. Unlike the previous round of testing, which was conducted on an English prototype, this round of testing was conducted on a Russian paper prototype. Two of the tests were conducted in person, and one was conducted using a remote tester via Skype.

Znaniya's paper prototype testing was largely successful, and I received helpful (and relatively consistent) feedback from my test users. The most consistent feedback I received was related to the menus; more specifically, the users consistently had trouble determining where they were supposed to go within the module menus (Culture and Conversation, in this case). The original plan (not fully implemented on the wireframes, but implemented in the interactive prototype) had been simply to hide the alerts for sections that had been completed, but I have since decided to change the CTA atop the menu to more clearly reflect the user's location.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

The feedback overlays were another point of confusion, which can be easily solved by adding "tap to close." Additionally, the "submit" button on Task 3 (to submit the audio) needs to be better differentiated from the "record again" button, since it is intended to be the primary action.

RESULTS

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

USER TESTING: ROUND 5

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

RESULTS

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

Notes:

These tasks were performed using a simplified proof of concept, which was displayed as a wireframed digital prototype.

Task 1: Open the app, locate the module where the user left off, and follow the prompts to go through the recipe for the Culture exercise. Once done, go back to the Culture menu.

Inputs/Assumptions:

- Znaniya app has been used previously
- User has completed all sections leading up to the culture exercise.

Steps:

1. Open the Znaniya app on iPhone
2. Open the Lessons menu.
3. Find Lesson 1's Culture menu, and look for Exercise.
4. Follow the prompts to go through the recipe (user will not be cooking).
5. Emulate taking a photo of the completed recipe's finished product.
6. Rate the outcome of the recipe.

Instructions for user:

Open the app, locate the module where you left off, and follow the prompts to go through the recipe for the Culture exercise. Once done, go back to the Culture menu.

Task 2: User left off having completed the Culture exercise and is going to continue to walk through the Culture module.

Inputs/Assumptions:

- Znaniya app has been used previously
- User has just completed the culture exercise.

Steps:

1. Find the Culture section of Lesson 1 and look for multimedia.
2. Read the description of the scene.
3. Watch the video clip.
4. Answer the review questions.

Instructions for the user:

You would like to watch the first video clip of Lesson 1.

Task 3: The user has completed the entirety of Lesson 1, with the exception of the

last module: Speaking. The user will now complete the final module.

Inputs/Assumptions:

- Znaniya app has been used previously
- User has completed all of lesson 1 except the speaking exercise.

Steps:

1. Open the Znaniya app on iPhone
2. Go to Lessons.
3. Find the Lesson 1 Conversations, and locate the Speaking module.
4. Listen to Dialog 1.
5. Based on the context and Dialog 1, record Dialog 2.
6. Play back Dialog 2 and determine whether it sounds correct.
7. Submit the answer.

Instructions for the user:

You have completed most of Lesson 1 and would like to test your speaking skills.

USER TESTING: ROUND 5

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

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Note: Test subjects were chosen based on Russian language proficiency and on the basis of having at least some college-level or equivalent Russian language skills and background. Test users fell into groups equivalent to Primary and Secondary.

What is your current age?

- Two (2) subjects were 30-34 years old
- One (1) subject was 40-44 years old

What is your highest level of education?

- Three (3) subjects had BA/BS degrees

What is your current occupation?

- Two (2) subjects work in technology
- One (1) subject works in HR

Where do you currently reside?

- One (1) subject resides in the San Francisco Bay Area
- One (1) subject resides in Sacramento
- One (1) subject resides in Houston

How long did you study Russian at a college (or higher) level?

- Two (2) subjects took 3-4 years of college-level Russian courses
- One (1) subject is a native speaker/did not study the language in school

In what capacity have you spoken or used Russian outside of your studies (i.e., at home with family or at work)?

- One (1) subject had seldom or never used Russian outside of her studies
- One (1) subject has spoken Russian with certain groups of friends
- One (1) subject almost exclusively spoke Russian with some members of his family

If any, what kind of mobile phone(s) do you use on a regular basis (at least once a day)?

- Three (3) subjects used an iPhone

How comfortable are you with mobile applications and technology?

- Three (3) subjects were very comfortable with mobile apps and technology

Have you ever used any language-learning software (for any language)?

- Two (2) had used Duolingo
- One (1) had used Rosetta Stone

USER TESTING: ROUND 5

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

RESULTS

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

#	Content Item	Severity	Recommendations
1	Task #1, Step 13/19: User was unsure whether the camera icon was a button.	Med	Either add a caption/prompt, change the icon, or add a separate button. This may also be resolved in the higher fidelity prototype.
2	Task #1, Steps 10/19 + 11/19: User remarked that play/pause buttons next to phrases/instructions may be too small to be useful.	Med	Replace with default “play” button, which changes to “pause” button on play.
3	Task #1, Step 19/19: User commented that “отлично” doesn’t make sense in this context; should be “спасибо” (“wonderful!” vs. “thank you”).	Low	Change the feedback for the rating feedback screen to “спасибо.”
4	Task #2, Step 7/11: Users tapped the “down” button before answering and submitting the quiz question (did not duplicate this attempt on 9/11).	High	Either gray out/disable the “down” buttons or remove them entirely so the user is forced to answer the questions before proceeding.
5	Task #3, Step 6/10: User was unsure where to begin on this screen; the only action button is “record.”	Med	Will adjust so the record button doesn’t appear until after the first part of the dialog has finished playing (this will require more detail to be added to the interactive prototype).
6	Task #3, Step 8/10: User discarded the playback portion and tried to go straight to the next screen.	Med	Will adjust so the re-record/next buttons doesn’t appear until after the first part of the dialog has finished playing (this will require more detail to be added to the interactive prototype).
7	Task #3, Step 9/10: User experienced some confusion and hesitated when playing back/reviewing both dialogs.	Low	Darken “submit” button (will be a more saturated color in the mockups) to increase visual weight.

USER TESTING: ROUND 5

TASK LIST & SCRIPT

Znaniya's second round of paper prototype testing was largely successful, and I received more helpful feedback from my test users. For this round of testing, I was able to use a digital prototype, created using the wireframes and InVision; this helped to gauge more detailed interaction issues and additional potential points of confusion for my users. The issue with the lack of alerts on the menus seems to have been solved by adding alerts and making the calls to action updated to match the user's lesson progress.

There were a few UI-related issues to correct. One is to make the camera icon a clearer prompt/button; one user was initially confused (but did figure out that it was a button). Task #3 could use some additional work as well, since users seemed to be drawn to the record or submit buttons rather than first trying to play the audio—one solution would be to have the buttons appear after playback has occurred.

The "down" button on the quiz pages also seemed to confuse users, two of whom tried to scroll down without submitting their

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

answers. My proposed solution is to either gray out or delete the down arrow for the quizzes, and disable scrolling for these views.

Additional feedback I received—unrelated to specific tasks—was that there should be a shorter way to get to the user's location. Since the app is meant to be navigated sequentially—similar to a real course—it makes sense to include a shortcut on the home screen to allow the user to navigate directly to the next portion of the lesson. This is a difficult addition, since the full prototype would require adding more logic than it may be able to handle, but long-term development plans will include this task.

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Analysis & Conclusions

ANALYSIS & CONCLUSIONS

Russian is a difficult language to learn, and is especially difficult to retain for those who have already managed to learn it. The goal of Znaniya was initially to create a language learning app to suit more advanced Russian speakers, but during the course of this project, I have learned more about the nuances of my target audience, and just as importantly, gotten to the root of the problem that non-native Russian speakers seem to face: the Russian community is insular, and tends to be unfriendly to those it perceives to be outsiders. This attitude is not especially conducive to practicing the language with native speakers, particularly for people who are easily intimidated.

As I continued to research, test, and iterate on my designs, I realized that not only did I want to create an app that was conversational in nature—not an unusual concept, by any means—I wanted to create an app that allowed users to learn in myriad ways, by utilizing different skillsets and creating that kind of variety within the app itself. In emulating what I recalled from my own Russian courses and the study abroad courses I took while in St. Petersburg, I hoped to recreate those immersive

experiences—in which the students spoke little, if any, English—in a more portable, practical form.

I passed my midpoint review during the summer of 2014. Since then, I have had extensive work experience developing mobile and desktop applications; I've had the opportunity to work with diverse teams of developers, product owners, and other designers. As a result of the progress I've made in my career, I gradually refocused my project to concentrate on user experience and user interaction design—the two areas that interest me most, and that encapsulate my work experience most accurately. That being said, despite my initially broad focus—which included visual and UX design, as well as development—I managed not to deviate much, if at all, from the goals initially stated during my midpoint. As planned, I designed and developed the first lesson of the course, including its content.

I went through several iterations of the design during my development process, spurned by both user testing and continuous competitive evaluation. The most recent UI design was a drastic change from the

last iteration, inspired by then-recent iOS updates, a Soviet nostalgia poster I'd rediscovered, and the well-defined lesson structure of a Udemy course I had begun taking.

Informal conversations with potential users have, by far, been the most informative in the development of this app; without that information, I may have missed knowing some of the challenges users face with competing apps, or I may have discounted other important details. The user interviews documented in this book and in my directed study journal represent more formalized versions of many impromptu and post-test conversations I'd had with users. All of the interactions with users helped me to shape Znaniya into what it has become. If I could name only one takeaway from the process of developing this project, it would be that user feedback is absolutely invaluable, from exploration to ideation to development.



Portfolio

PORTFOLIO LINK



[View Portfolio](#)



Final Project

FINAL PROJECT

The following link will take you to a landing page with instructions on how to install the app on mobile or view it on desktop. It also includes a link to the English version of the prototype for review, as well as screencap and concept videos.

ZnaniyaApp.com





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