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Fast Language Learning: Being Able to Manage Projects in a Foreign Language within Two Months

Companies operating on a global scale need a flexible and well-educated workforce. In regard of flexibility foreign language skills are crucial and thus especially fast and efficient language training is desired. Together with Magna International, we addressed the challenge of being able to send staff into foreign countries for managing technical projects in the foreign language on short notice. To address this challenge, fast and efficient two-month language training was needed. Hence, we developed a concept considering ICT for fast language learning.



Language Learning in the Age of Digitisation

In times of globalization, also workforce needs to be able to go global. This holds true especially for technical experts holding an exclusive expertise. Together with Magna International, we addressed the challenge of training employees in the foreign language, so that they can manage technical projects in the foreign language. The challenge in this project was the time frame of two month, which requires a fast language learning concept.

To keep a good balance between cost, benefits and flexibility we selected a technology enhanced approach. The development of technology enhanced learning has transformed the way in which people learn; thus this includes also language learning. Appropriate language learning technologies (e.g. Duolingo), including virtual reality and digital game technologies, are nowadays everywhere easily accessible (e.g. tablets, smartphones). These technologies provide not only language learning tasks but also social activities to connect with colleagues or gamification approaches for raising the learning motivation. This motivation is key for learning a new

language. Nevertheless, learning on regular or daily bases is inevitable to achieve effective and successful results. Therefore, coaching sessions with language teachers is of crucial relevance for learning a new language.

By combining the status quo of language learning technologies with pedagogical approaches including virtual coaching sessions, we developed a suitable concept for fast language learning acquisition. In our use case, we developed this concept for Spanish native speakers learning English.



Language Learning Concept

The developed concept consists of two phases, the “Ramp-up phase” and the “Intensive Conversation phase”. In the “Ramp-up phase”, learners should acquire basic language skills (vocabulary, grammar, listening), start with pronunciation and small conversations. In the “Intensive Conversation phase”, the focus is put on the conversation and communication – with coaches as well as native speakers. The combination of both phases complements each other

perfectly to not only learn vocabulary and grammar but to start talking right from the beginning.

The key success factor of the resulting concept is not only the smart combination of modern learning technologies (Duolingo) with conventional pedagogical aspects (virtual language learning coaching session) but also the location and time independent (except for the coaching sessions) learning, that leaves room for learner to decide when and where to learn.

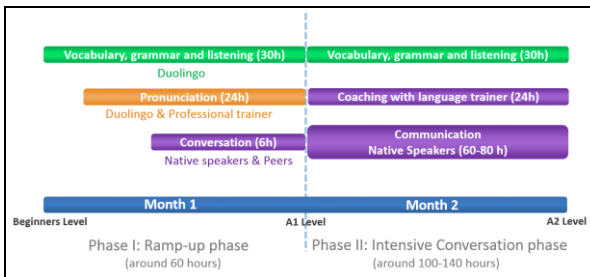


Fig. 1: Schematic representation of the language learning concept

Impact and effects

First, our evaluation clearly showed that our concept for fast language learning speeds up language learning and that the participants can achieve the desired language level within the timeframe. Thus, the desired flexibility of the workforce could be achieved. Further, by using learning technology, the flexibility for the employees could be increased. This not only increased the employee’s satisfaction with the language learning but also increased their work productivity doing the training phase. Further, by using learning technology the contact hours with trainers and especially the traveling costs could be reduced. Both save money and make the language training more affordable.

Contact and information

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