

## Recommended website

### *Lingora*

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Lingora is an online language learning community for intermediate to advanced learners. People who want to improve at speaking the languages they study can receive written and audio recorded feedback about their accent, pronunciation, intonation and accuracy from native speakers.

Each week language learners add audios of themselves speaking the language(s) they learn by carrying out tasks which are sent to them by email. Below, in Figure 1, a Portuguese native speaker reads out a text in English. English native speakers subsequently listen to the text and then decide how good each individual element of speech is by using a five-star rating system. Most significantly, they give the speaker custom feedback for the student to act on in the form of comments. On a weekly basis, language learners receive reminder emails to prompt them to act on the advice they get.

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### English Challenge

The Internet is a global system of interconnected computer networks that use the standard Internet protocol suite, a set of communications protocols, to serve billions of users worldwide. The internet has reshaped and redefined most traditional communications media including telephone, music, film, and television. This has given birth to new services. Newspaper, book and other print publishing are adapting to Web site technology, or are reshaped into blogging and web feeds.

The Internet has enabled or accelerated new forms of human interactions through instant messaging, Internet forums, and social networking. Online shopping has boomed both for major retail outlets and small artisans and traders. Business-to-business and financial services on the Internet affect supply chains across entire industries.

The origins of the Internet reach back to research of the 1960s, commissioned by the United States government in collaboration with private commercial interests to build robust, fault-tolerant, and distributed computer networks. The commercialization of what was by the 1990s an international network resulted in its popularization and incorporation into virtually every aspect of modern human life. As of 2011, more than 2.1 billion people — nearly a third of Earth's population — use the services of the Internet

Source: Wikipedia



Figure 1. Audio recording produced by a language learner.

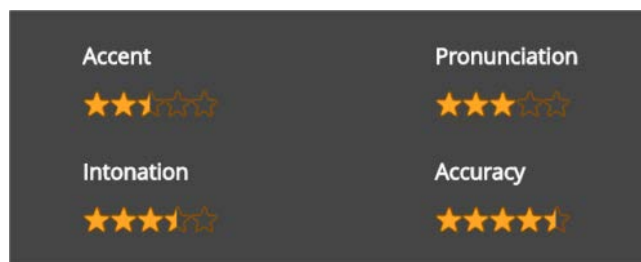


Figure 2. Five-star rating system.

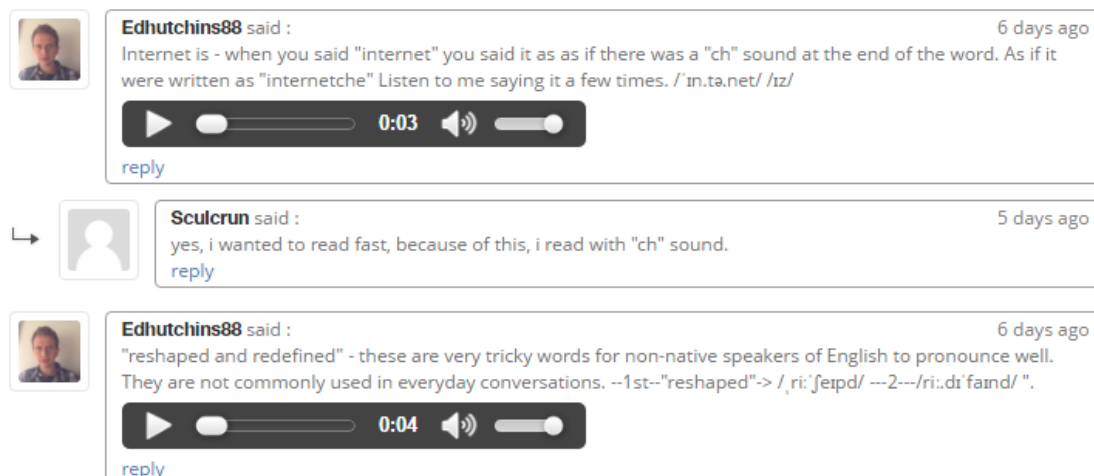


Figure 3. Rating example.

When we speak other languages, we are always keen to get constructive criticism from native speakers, so we can learn exactly how we can make progress with our accent, intonation and pronunciation. The very best way to do this is to interact with them as much as we can and (if conceivable) go and live in the country where the language is spoken for as long as possible.

However, what we have found is that when language learners speak to native speakers in their language(s), native speakers do not always correct the learners' mistakes and give them detailed, documented feedback about what they need to do to improve. We believe that this is because native speakers often do not want to interrupt learners when they are speaking about something, as this could discourage them from expressing themselves.

Lingora believes that language students simply cannot just rely on speaking as much as possible with native speakers when learning a language. It is vital to ensure that native speakers are correcting learners and telling them specifically how they can improve. Take a look at the experience of one of the creators of Lingora:

Edmund

*I am a 27-year-old native English speaker and an avid language learner. When I was doing language exchanges in Spain and Uruguay, I spoke Spanish all the time and as time went by, I thought I was beginning to speak it perfectly. However, when I really pushed native speakers to give me feedback, I found numerous things I needed to improve at in terms of my pronunciation, accent, intonation and accuracy in the Spanish language. I wished that there was a community specifically for both storing and sharing these valuable feedback points and ensuring that I acted on them.*

One could argue, however, that the speech in these recorded files is not spontaneous and often involves language learners just reading out texts and that it would, therefore, be better for language learners to record live conversations they have with native speakers and then receive the necessary feedback. Although reading out a text and getting feedback from native speakers is useful to a certain extent, it is not the same as communicating live with native speakers. That is why Lingora is encouraging a new

initiative with Teentok. With Teentok, a learner can watch videos containing highly relevant role plays for everyday situations. For example, speaking to someone about what's for dinner tonight. It works as follows: The learners watch the video(s) a couple of times to familiarize themselves with the dialogue and see how much of the meaning they can guess on their own. Then they work through different versions of the dialogue which help them understand more precisely what the characters are saying. As they progress through the videos, they gain a pretty good understanding of the dialogue even if they don't understand every single word, and work on their pronunciation. By watching each of the successive versions and exercises, they end up memorizing most of the content in the dialogue.

The following step is to practice these role plays studied on Teentok with a native speaker. Using Skype, learners will practice the role play they watched on Teentok, but this time with a native speaker. The role plays are recorded and then uploaded to Lingora. Native speakers subsequently rate these audio exchanges in terms of accent, pronunciation and accuracy, and provide specific, audio recorded and written comprehensive feedback about how learners can improve when speaking their language.

Lingora ensures learners act on the feedback received so that they gain confidence when communicating and find (just after a few weeks of using the Teentok and Lingora method) that their speaking skills have improved and are producing language more clearly, fluently and confidently. At the moment, however, this feature is only available for English language learners, but over the coming months, the company hopes to make it available for many more languages.

Regarding how the platform ensures that the language learners act on the feedback, currently, they receive a weekly email to do the following:

1. Remind them of all the tips and hints native speakers have given them about what they need to do to make progress with the language(s) they learn.
2. Prompt them to log back into their Lingora account on a regular, weekly basis to review the comments.

Nevertheless, this is an area that the company aims to improve and is working on in order to provide language learners with flashcards – which contain the feedback they receive from native speakers, ensuring they remember and retain it. This will be ready within the next few months.

The process of rating language learners' audios and posting comments on them is straightforward and so is the process of adding an audio on Lingora. Providing the language learner is using Mozilla Firefox or Microsoft Edge (on Windows 10) as their web browser to use Lingora, they can use Lingora's built-in media recorder. This means that they do not have to leave the platform, when adding their audio, involving fewer clicks and fiddling around. However, if the user does not wish to use Mozilla Firefox or Microsoft Edge, they can use another program to record themselves speaking and then upload the file. This could be an alternative online voice recorder or an app on their phones. Within the next couple of months, Lingora's built-in media recorder will work well on Google Chrome. In the future, the company will also be releasing phone applications (for iOS & Android devices) which will make the process of adding audios even simpler.

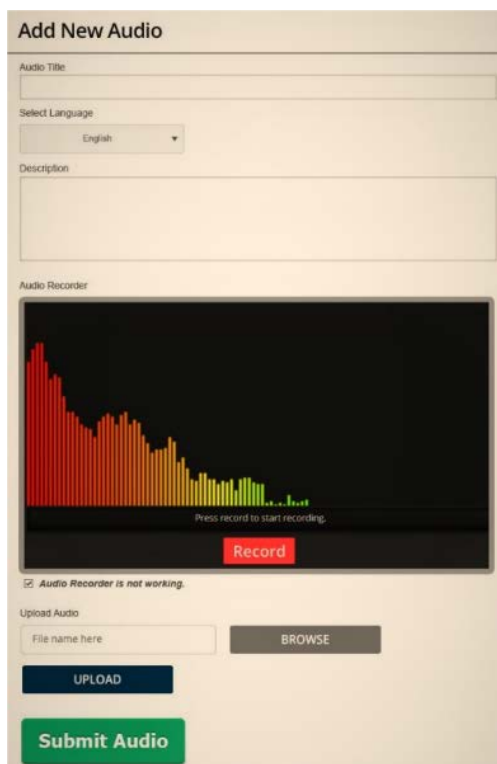


Figure 4. Adding an audio.

In terms of keeping track of their progress (i.e. how many audios they have added, how much feedback they have given to others, etc.), all users are provided with a profile page in Lingora so they can keep track of their performance and review the audios they have added, for any of the languages being learnt. The following is an example profile page:

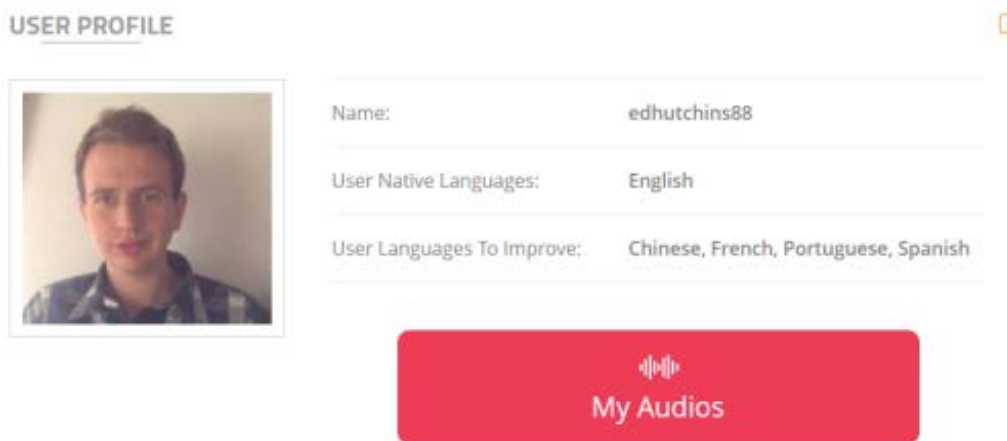


Figure 5. Sample profile page.

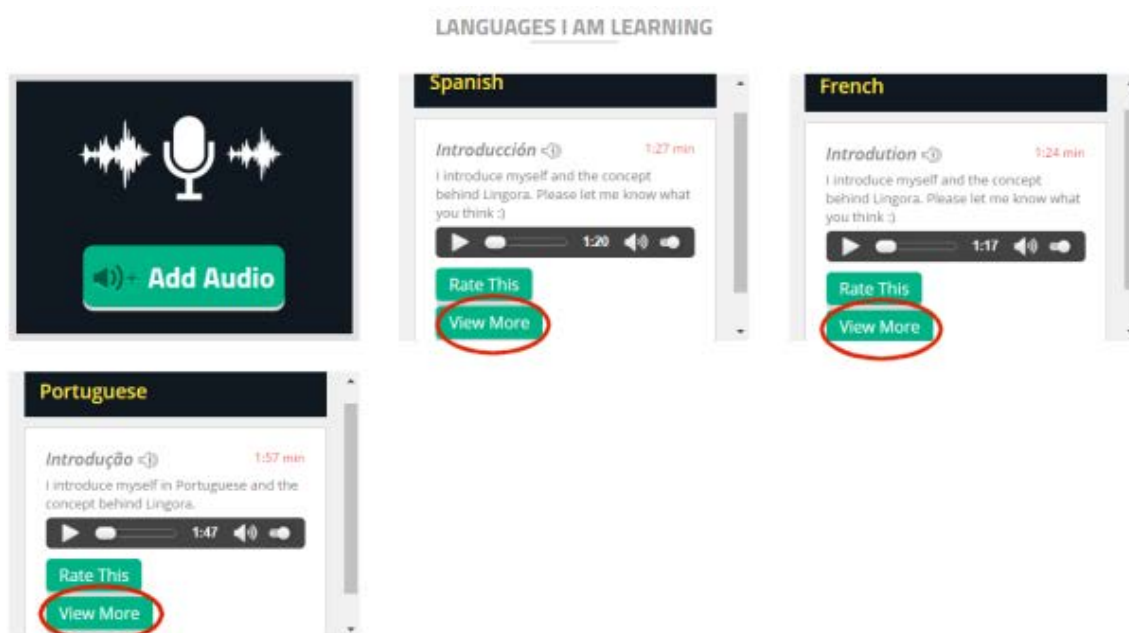


Figure 6. Display of uploaded audio files for a given language.

Once a user clicks the “view more” button on a language they are learning, they are able to see all the audios they have added in that language.

## French language audios By edhutchins88

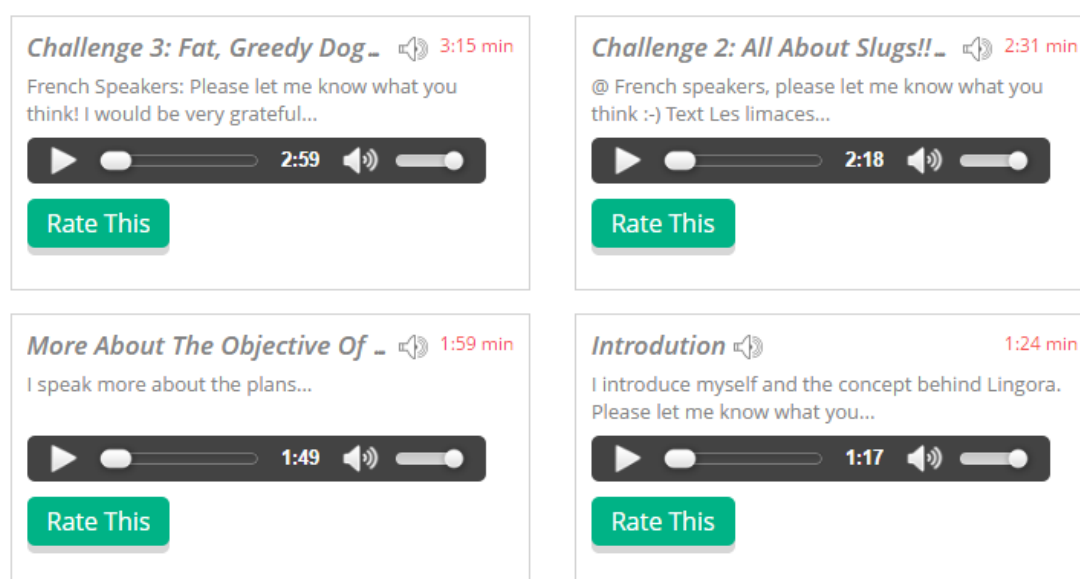


Figure 7. Example of "view more audios".

Lingora will be free forever for the students that use it, regardless of the number of new features that are added. Having said that, because many language learners like to spend time having a lesson with a qualified teacher with unique, custom methods to help them make progress (owing to the fact that they may need more detailed, immediate help with their writing and grammar, before an important exam, for example), in the future, language tutors will be able to advertise their services on Lingora for a (monthly or annual) fee. One thing all of the members of the Lingora community have in common is the desire to improve at the languages they learn, so this ensures language tutors have the right target audience to promote their services to.

Lingora was built using [Drupal](#), an open source, content management system. Like Lingora, Drupal is built on principles like collaboration, globalism and innovation. It is distributed under the terms of the GNU General Public License (GPL).

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