

Entertaining Language Learning: Using Language Reactor to Increase Fluency with Netflix and YouTube

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Rich, authentic input is essential for successful language learning (Mishan, 2005). However, this can be challenging, particularly for learners not immersed in the target language or lacking proficiency to engage in conversation. Moreover, distance and individual language learning requires sustained motivation and interest (Murphy, 2011). Given that there are over 278 million Netflix subscribers (Statista, 2024) and over 2.7 billion YouTube users (Global Media Insight, 2025), combining language learning with streaming services can provide fun input inside and outside the classroom. Language Reactor, formerly known as Language Learning with Netflix, is a Chrome extension that allows users to add language learning dimensions to their entertainment via dual-language subtitles in users' native and target languages. It seems most suitable for adolescents and adults across proficiency levels who want an all-in-one platform to enjoy language learning via popular media TV series, films, and music. This review provides an overview of Language Reactor and then discusses the affordances and limitations of this tool to promote listening/reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition.

Overview

Language Reactor, launched by creators David Wilkinson and Ognjen Apic in December 2018 (Tapper, 2019), offers first-rate language learning opportunities and continues to be updated with new features (e.g., a books tool). Users can register for accounts at <https://www.languagereactor.com>. Most features are free, with the Pro version (see Table 1) at a reasonable price. Language Reactor combines language learning with enjoyable activities, such as watching movies or television, reading news or other websites, and chatting online. The catalog includes entertainment from Netflix and YouTube, as well as TurtleTube and TurtleMusic, which provides videos and music according to vocabulary level. While viewing, users can highlight words to open a dictionary that provides pronunciation, definitions, translations, and sample sentences (Figures 1 and 2).

Users can also save words and phrases into personal folders and export them to another program to create flashcards. Additionally, Language Reactor offers video and text translations, an AI chatbot, and PhrasePump practice exercises aimed at improving vocabulary, listening, and grammar (Figures 3–5). Language Reactor tracks user data by collecting information about the videos watched, words looked up, and language learning progress to personalize user experience and improve its services.

Affordances

Impressively, Language Reactor provides over 50 target languages and serves more than 100 native languages. Netflix videos include numerous genres sorted by recommended, IMDB ratings, or year

Figure 1

Netflix Dual-Language Subtitles

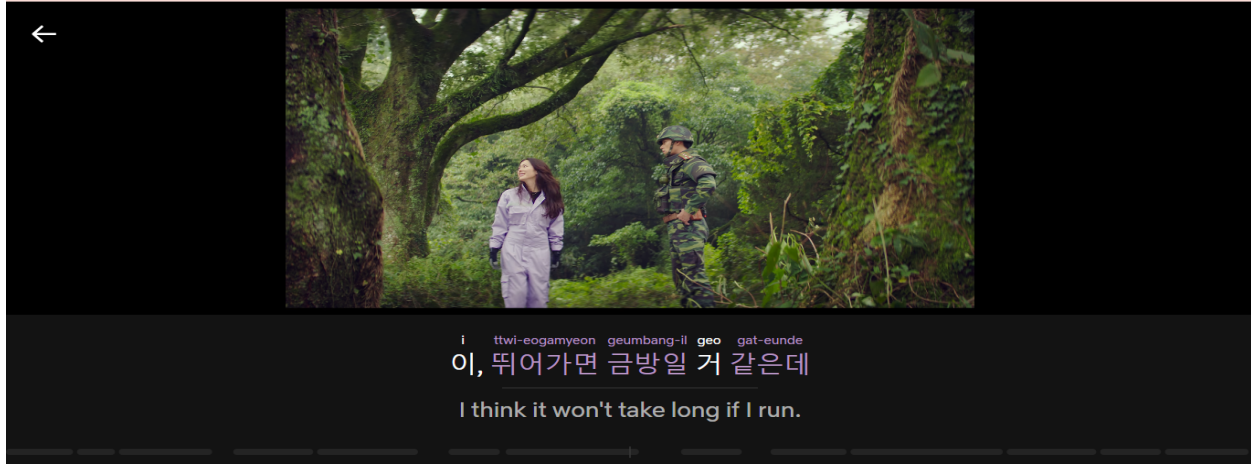
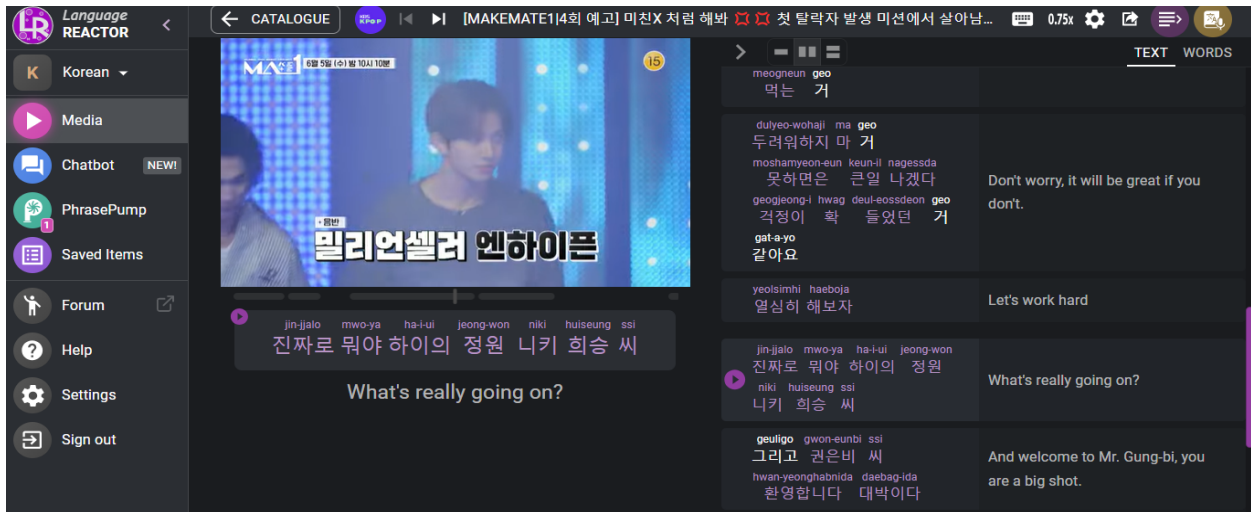


Figure 2

YouTube Dual-Language Subtitles and Full Text



released. YouTube videos are sorted by recommended, most subscriptions, or with subtitles. With Language Reactor, language learners can practice all the receptive skills of listening, viewing, and reading, and the expressive skill of writing, with the Chatbot (Rubin et al., 2022). This lowers the affective filter that inhibits learning and increases motivation, leading to greater growth in the target language (Lee et al., 2015). Engaging with media can also promote cultural learning as users view language use in various contexts with audiovisual cues to aid comprehension and language acquisition (Istanto, 2009). Moreover, users are exposed to authentic speech of diverse accents, intonation, and speed, which is important for interaction with various English speakers (Hughes & Reed, 2017). Their exposure includes fillers, hesitations, false starts, self-corrections, colloquial phrases, and slang words. Furthermore, viewing

Figure 3

Virtual Conversation Partner Aria

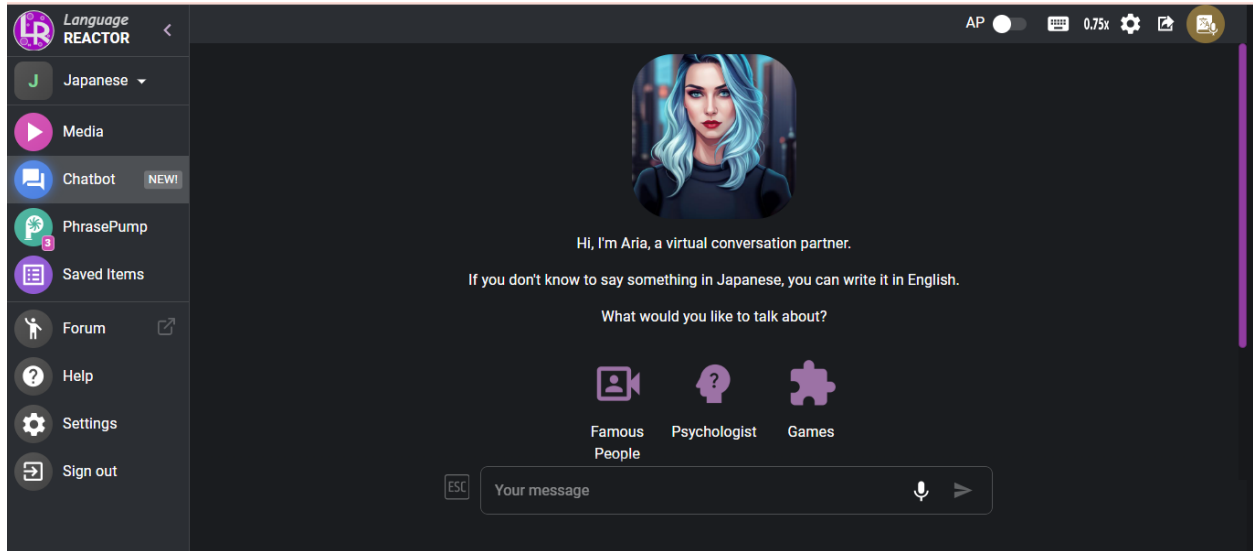
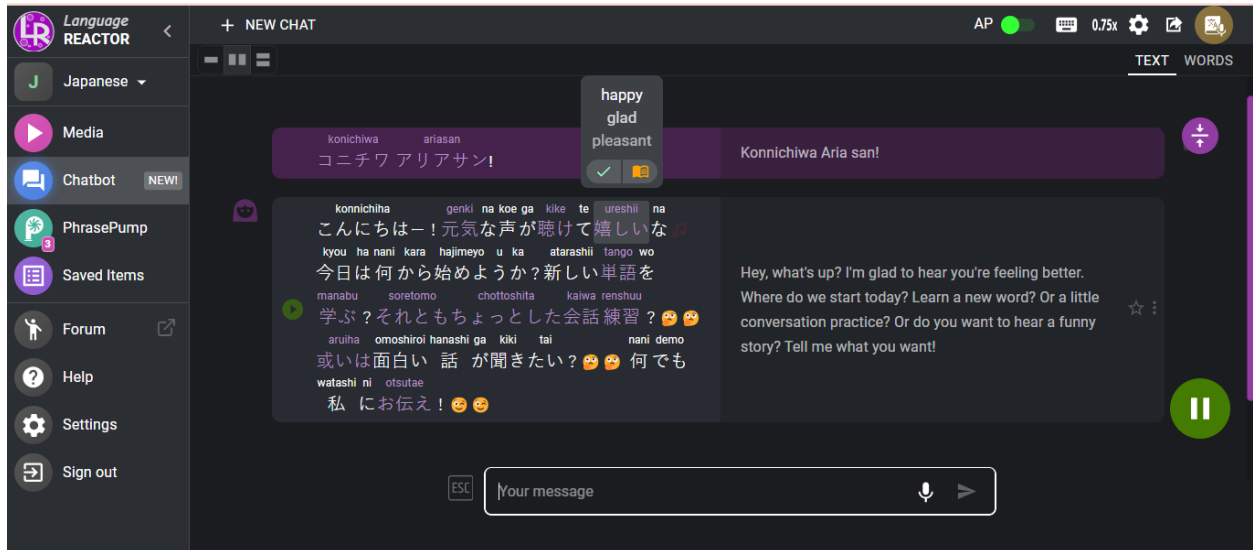


Figure 4

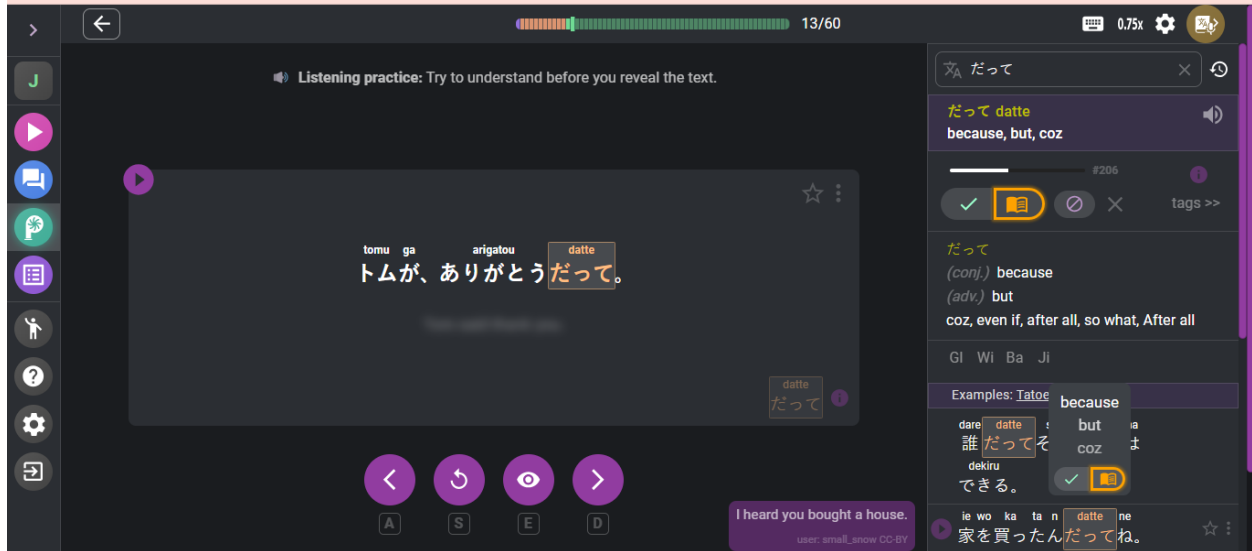
Chat Sample Highlighting Definitions and Pronunciation



paralinguistic communication in the videos provides contextual clues that help language learners decipher meaning (Harris, 2003). If the speech is too fast, Language Reactor gives the option to slow it down at various speeds.

Figure 5

Practice Exercises with PhrasePump



Limitations

Aside from the Netflix and YouTube translation capabilities, other features are still under development, and the extension currently works only with the Chrome browser. A YouTube subscription is unnecessary, but users must already have paid Netflix subscriptions, and different languages are available in different countries, with the number of movies also varying depending on the language. The platform does not yet work on Disney+, Amazon Prime, or other streaming services. Although the free platform can be used extensively, saving words and phrases requires the Pro subscription, costing US\$5.95 per month, \$13.95 for three months, and \$39.95 for an annual subscription (Table 1).

Table 1

Comparison of Free and Paid Versions

Version	Price	Features
Free	\$0	Netflix, YouTube, TurtleTube, Chatbot, Upload, PhrasePump
Pro (Paid)	US\$5.95/month OR \$13.95/3 months OR \$39.95/12 months Free two-week trial	All the above plus the ability to save words and phrases

The original features of Language Reactor, YouTube and Netflix, are quite intuitive and easy to learn, possibly because these may already be familiar to users. However, as additional features are frequently added to the site (e.g., Chatbot, PhrasePump, and various types of media), this could complicate navigating it and require more time and effort to make effective use of them.

Conclusion

Overall, Language Reactor is impressively designed, intuitively multimodal, and creatively versatile. It is an innovative tool that promotes listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and cultural learning through media and entertainment, particularly Netflix and YouTube. Language educators can integrate it into their classroom instruction by watching video clips together and then doing various activities, such as generating vocabulary lists, creating comprehension and discussion questions, choosing sample dialogue to create role plays, muting the audio to pay close attention to non-verbal communication, and guessing next scenes or changing endings through prediction tasks. Language educators can also assign extensive viewing activities for students to watch and respond to videos by journalling, critiquing, and then discussing and/or presenting them in class. Lastly, this learning platform can be recommended to students to increase rich, authentic input and motivation for self-directed language learning outside the classroom.

The Reviewers

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