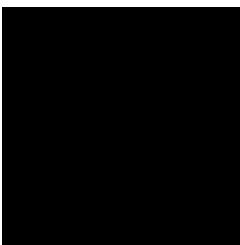


FELES CUM DENTES ADSTRINGIT

Glenn D



Brian L



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Problem Domain

Within the studio theme of learning, our specific area of focus is language learning.

Initial POV

In the first week, we met **Elise**, a university student in China majoring in English and French, and were surprised to find out that she enjoyed everyday interactions in foreign languages the most. We inferred from this viewpoint that it would be game-changing to find ways to facilitate real interactions in a foreign language.

Needfinding Results

We conducted three additional needfinding interviews this week.

We first met **Jeff**, who grew up in Canada and took Korean classes at a university for two years before moving to South Korea two months ago to work as an English teacher. He mentioned that the locals speak too quickly for him to parse sentences and that they also use many words he hasn't learned, and he feels awkward and embarrassed asking the other person to repeat the sentence and confirm the meaning. He also said that communicating through text messages is easier than conversations, because he can take time to look up unknown words using a dictionary and figure out the meaning of the sentence before constructing a response.

We met **John**, a Native American living in San Francisco. This interview did not touch on many topics related to language learning but we uncovered some pressing needs related to Native American issues.

Finally, we met **Branislav**, a Serbian native living in San Francisco and working at Apple. He learned Italian through natural exposure: when he was 9, he spent a few weeks living with a family in Italy who spoke only Italian. One interesting point about this interview is that despite sharing a native language with our group member Tamara (Serbian), after finding out that Tamara also spoke Italian, he used Italian throughout the interview as a way to practice.

Interviewee	Age (approx.)	Native language	Learning language
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Phil , director of Stanford Language Center	Early 60s	English	(<i>Domain expert</i>) Directs English for Foreign Students program at Stanford
Elise , university student in China	20	Chinese	English, French
Xiuzhi , foreign medical graduate	54	Chinese	English
Michael , former English Tutor, current Medical Student at UCSF	25	English	(<i>Domain expert</i>) Formerly tutored English to native Spanish speakers
Jeff , Canadian living in Korea	30	English	Korean
John , Native American	24	English	
Branislav , works at Apple	26	Serbian	English, Italian, Spanish

Characteristics of needfinding interviewees (grey background = last week, white background = this week)

Revised POVs

After considering all seven interviews, we decided to choose 3 POVs that would provide a diverse set of experiences. We selected **Xiuzhi**, **Jeff**, and **Branislav**.

POV 1

We met... Xiuzhi, a foreign medical graduate from China struggling to express herself with English in the United States.

We were amazed to realize... how much she wanted to take the “other person” out of the language learning equation.

It would be game-changing to... eliminate discomfort in communicating with other people or even to eliminate the other party completely.

Sample HMW statements (How might we...):

...incentivize discomfort?

...convince her that she needs people to learn?

...remove the support system and community of people who speak your native language?

...allow people to practice speaking without inconveniencing others?

...create more natural interactions that aren’t forced?

...make things more comfortable for learners?

POV 2

We met... Jeff, a Canadian living in a small town in rural South Korea and working as an English teacher.

We were amazed to realize... that his two years of Korean language classes at a university in Canada did not allow him to communicate effectively in real-life situations.

It would be game-changing to... help him unlock the foundation of Korean that he learned previously and allow him to use it to navigate Korean society.

It would also be game-changing to... bridge the gap between his current level and a self-sustaining level where he could understand daily interactions well enough to be able to learn and improve through communicating with locals.

Sample HMW statements (How might we...):

...build up conversational knowledge from academic knowledge?

...slow down the speech of native speakers?

...allow learners to speak with natives in a way that is interesting for both?

...match learners with locals who share interests?

...quickly translate particularly difficult words like slang?

...customize language learning to someone's everyday life?

POV 3

We met... Branislav, a Serbian native living in San Francisco and working at Apple.

We were amazed to realize... that he learned a significant amount of Italian in a couple of weeks living with an Italian family.

It would be game-changing if... we could connect people who need practice with languages to a dedicated group or family willing to teach or help.

It would also be game-changing if... we could simulate the experience of living with a local family.

Sample HMW statements (How might we...):

...recreate an immersion environment at home?

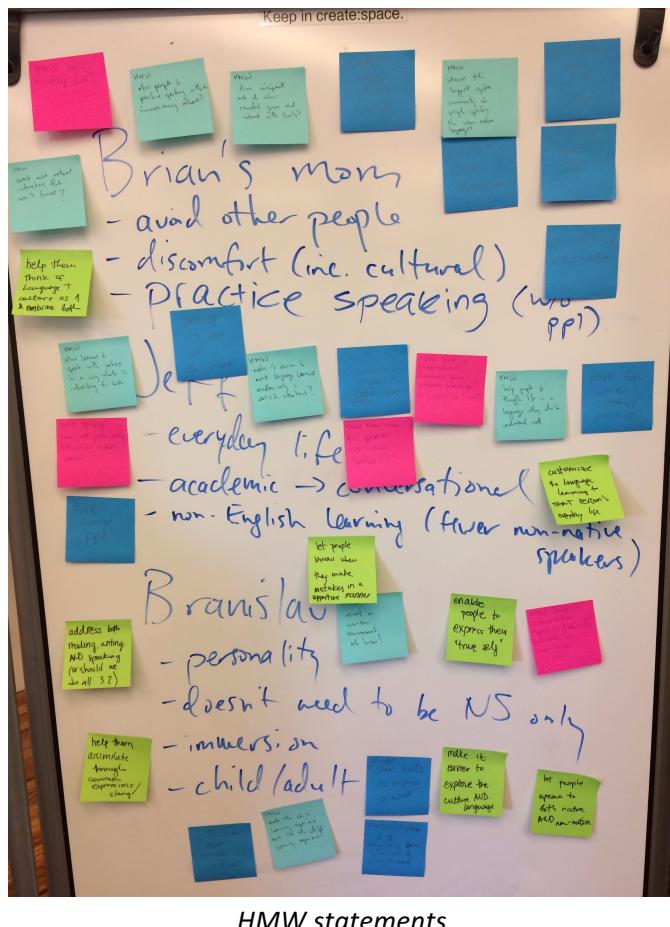
...connect learners with both native and non-native speakers?

...make it easier to explore the culture and language together?

...build lasting rapport and connect learners by interest?

...help learners assimilate through using common expressions and slang?

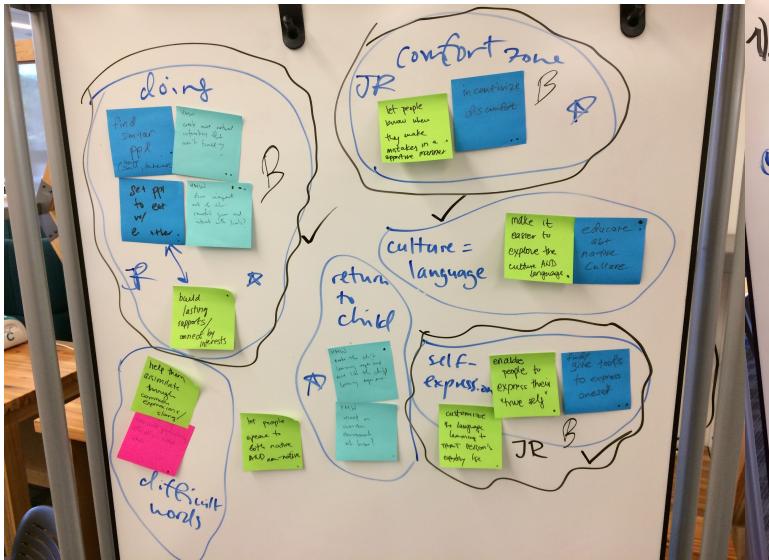
...make the adult learning experience more like the child learning experience?



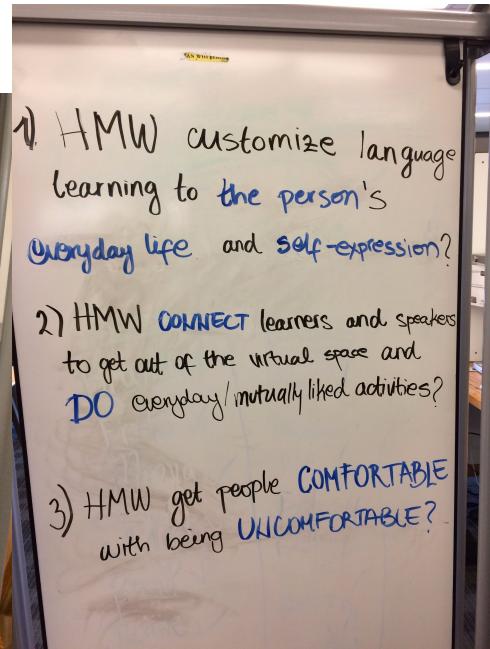
HMW statements

From this pool of over 30 HMW statements, we each voted for statements we particularly liked, then grouped them according to theme. We ultimately decided to focus on the themes of **doing activities**, **expanding the comfort zone**, and **allowing for self-expression**. From these themes we then created 3 new HMW statements to encompass each theme as a whole.

1. How might we customize language learning to **the person's everyday life** and **self-expression**?
2. How might we **connect** learners and speakers to get out of the virtual space and **do** everyday/mutually liked activities?
3. How might we get people **comfortable** with being **uncomfortable**?



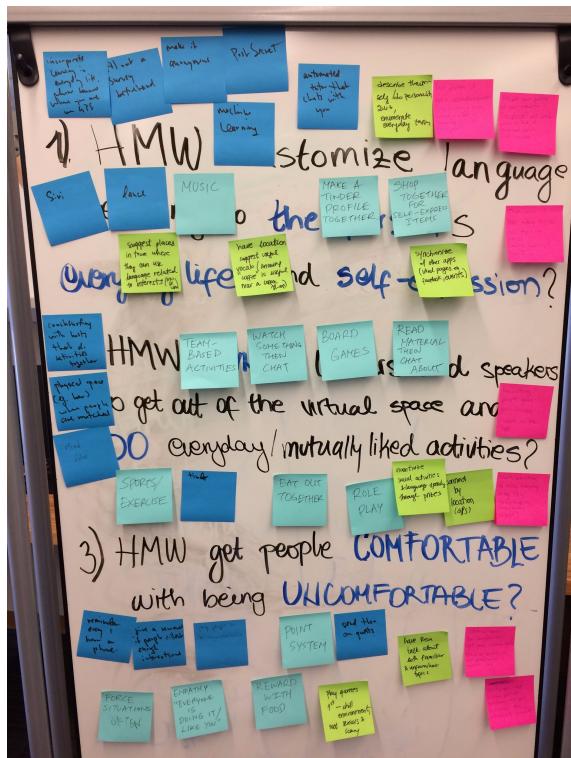
Favorite HMW statements grouped by theme



New HMW statements

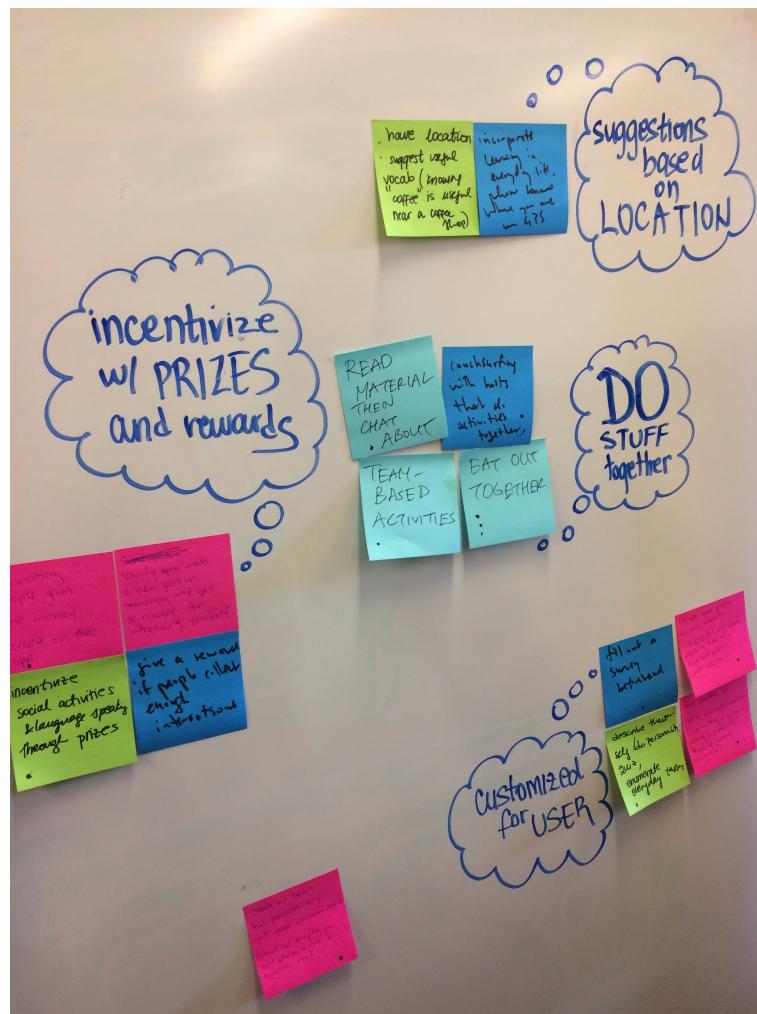
Experience Prototypes

We then brainstormed to generate possible solutions to each of these 3 HMW statements.



Possible solutions

From these solutions, we again voted on ideas that we liked and grouped them together based on similar themes (picture below). Our solutions mostly fit into four themes: **incentives**, **location**, **mutual activities**, and **personalization**.



Favorite solutions grouped by theme

We realized that **incentives** could be incorporated into solutions focused on each of the other three themes, and so designed experience prototypes to focus on **location**, **mutual activities**, and **personalization**. We tested all of our prototypes by approaching random people at Tressider for short discussions, showing them the prototypes and asking them to imagine their needs as a language learner. We asked open-ended questions about how each person felt when they imagined using the prototype, and what was good and bad about each prototype.

Prototype 1: Location

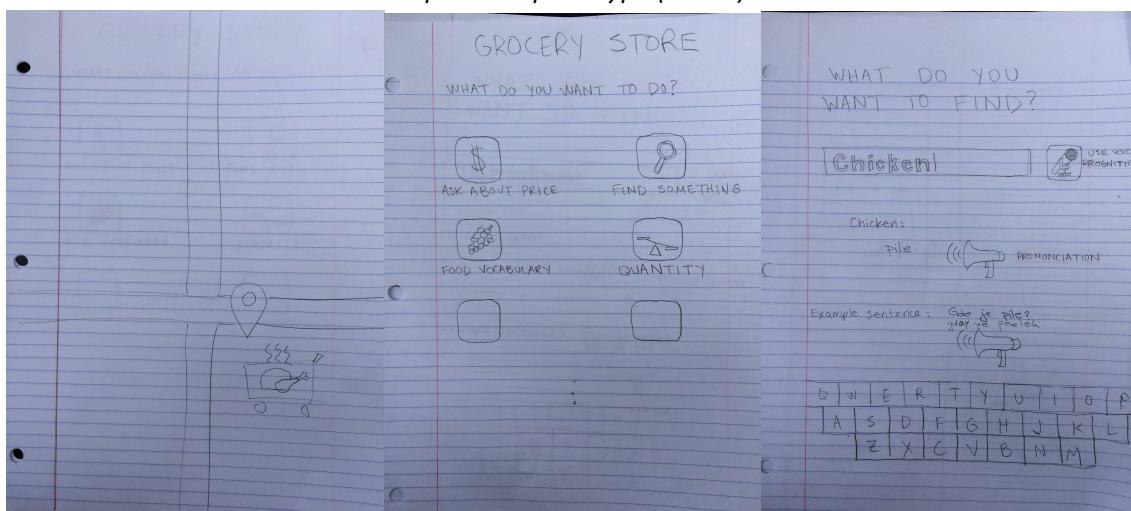
Assumption: Learners need access to different words and phrases depending on the location.

Experience: Your location (café, grocery store, restaurant, library, etc.) is automatically detected and a list of useful phrases is provided. You can input any required words (e.g., Where is the

bread?) and are provided with a full sentence in both text and spoken form. You can practice speaking the sentence and receive feedback.



Storyboard (above)
Experience prototype (below)



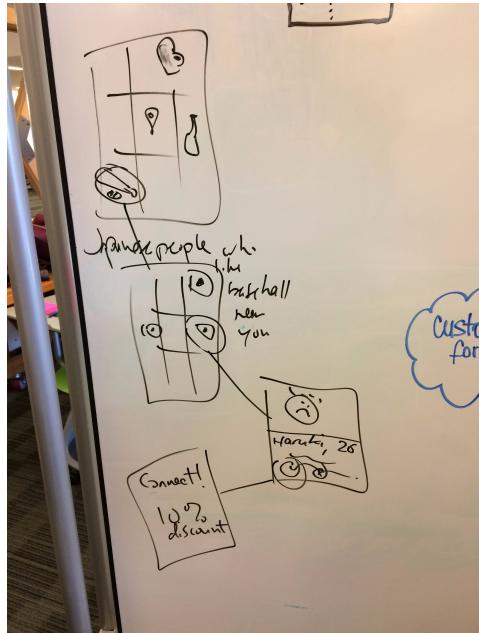
User feedback: It might be better to immediately jump to the third screen and bypass the first two. More interested in receiving immediate and spontaneous phrase suggestions than having to search through a dictionary-like interface. Not much difference between our original idea and a traditional dictionary app.

Results: Our assumption that learners need access to different words depending on context was confirmed. Our assumption that learners would want to navigate through menus to find specific phrases was not confirmed, and we learned that it may be more useful to provide suggestions without prompting.

Prototype 2: Mutual activities

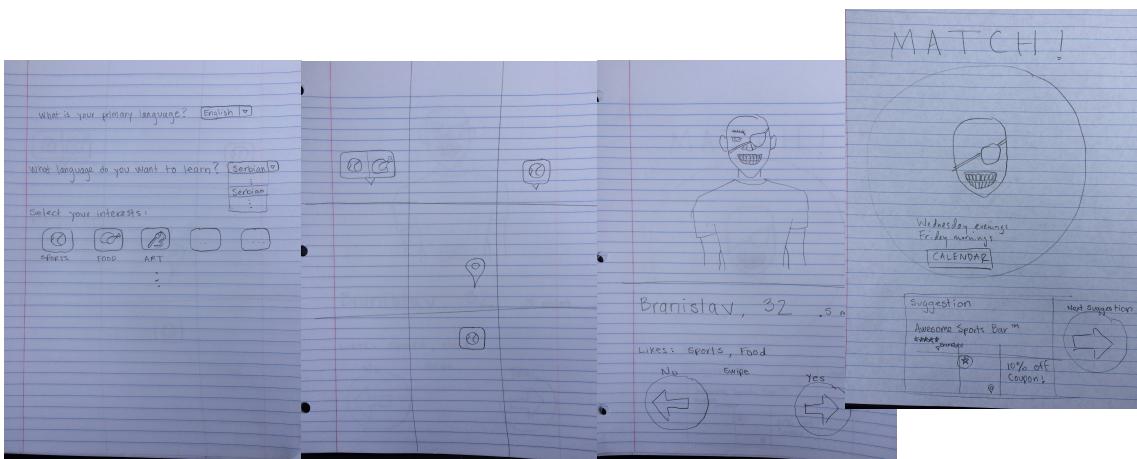
Assumption: Learners want to have meaningful conversations and build relationships through activities that they enjoy, rather than being matched up for artificial “language exchanges”.

Experience: Select some activities that you enjoy, your native language, and the language you are learning. You are then matched with people nearby who fit your profile but with the opposite language preferences, and you can coordinate an activity together.



Storyboard (above)

Experience prototype (below)



User feedback (first user): Some difficulty in understanding the general concept of the app, but recognized the Tinder-like interface for suggesting matches. Calendar was confusing and distracting. Users may not want to deal with the hassle of coordinating schedules for a casual encounter.

(For our second test, we erased the calendar function from our prototype and framed it as an immediate matching service.)

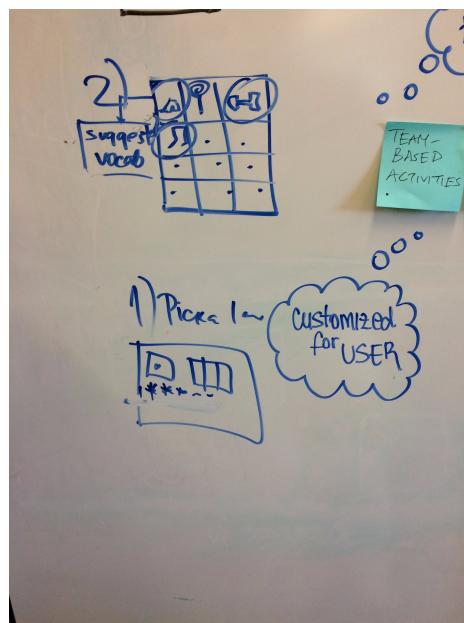
User feedback (second user): Uncomfortable with the idea of immediately meeting someone in person just based on matching broad interests, and would prefer to exchange messages before agreeing to meet. Differences in using the app in his home city, where he might focus on the long-term language learning process, or using the app while traveling, where he might just want to meet people to hang out together.

Results: Our assumption that people would want to do activities with others who have the opposite language profile was confirmed, but our assumption that people would be comfortable with meeting others immediately without exchanging messages first was not confirmed.

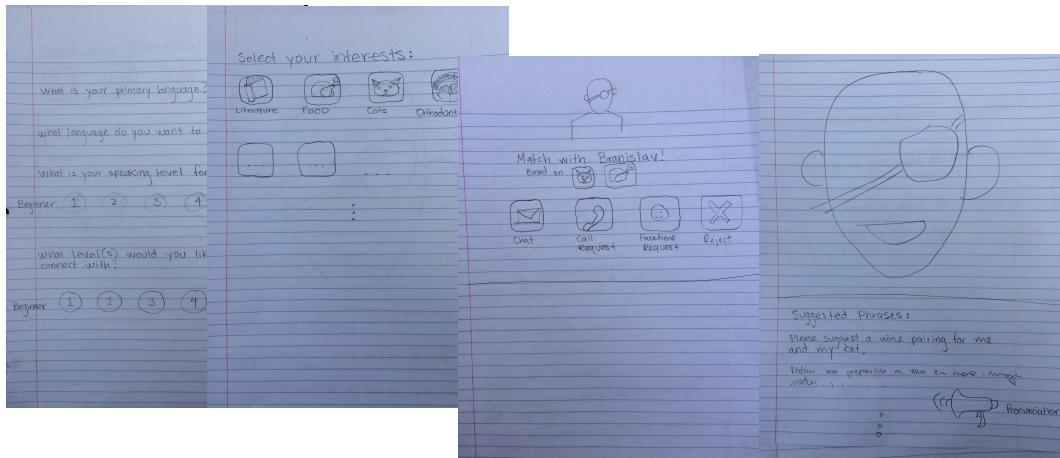
Prototype 3: Personalization

Assumption: Learners want to express their true selves, talk about their own interests, and feel comfortable while doing so.

Experience: Select your native language and the language you are learning, as well as your confidence level in communicating in that language. Choose some topics that you are interested in, and you will be provided with words and phrases that relate to that topic. Search for users who have the opposite or the same language profile as you and have conversations about the topics you are both interested in.



Storyboard (above)
Experience prototype (below)



User feedback: Good idea because he could meet new people. It would be better if you could also meet people who were close by in real life.

Results: The user's suggestion converged on prototype 2, which aimed at bringing people together in real life.

Summary

Our prototypes were generally well-received by the users, and we received some useful feedback for improving them. Prototypes 2 and 3 could be combined into one app, as the users for each independently suggested changes that led to convergence. This new idea would include both text messaging and meeting in person and would achieve the desired solution of facilitating real-life interactions for doing activities as well as more language-learning focused text/audio/video interactions.