

Designing “Chatie”: A voice-based companion for practicing conversations in new languages

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Introduction

1.5 bn people were learning English worldwide in 2014

73% of survey respondents claimed “practicing real-world conversations” to be the most difficult part of learning a new language

Say hello to Chatie!

A smart speaker and friend that helps language learners practice conversations and improve vocabulary.

Chatie helps language learners by

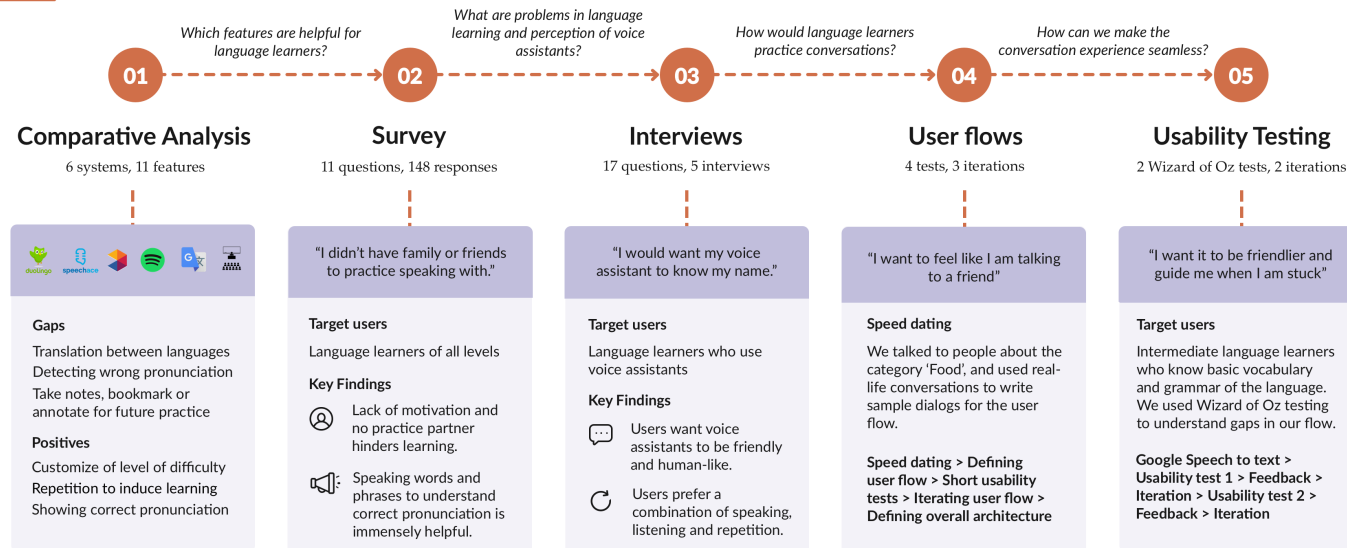
Providing context-based topic cues to guide conversations

Providing assistance by offering sample answers in conversations

Improving vocabulary through meanings, pronunciation and usage of new words

Allowing them to mark sentences and words to practice later

Process



Future Work

1. A text based interface to complement Chatie in language learning features such as viewing spelling of the word, understanding sentence structure and revising text-based notes.
2. Features to identify incorrect or partially incorrect word pronunciations, help learners by repeated practice, similar sounding words and to identify incorrect sentence structure and grammar.

References

1. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Report 2014
2. Designing Voice User Interfaces, Cathy Pearl
3. Conversation design, Actions on Google



User wants a language buddy to practice practical, real-world conversations

FINDING

Chatie gets users on board as an encouraging, knowledgeable, always-available friend.

SOLUTION

Hi! I am Chatie - I am here to help you practice {English}. What is your name?

SCRIPT

Nice to meet you {username}. Let's get talking. We can talk about travel, food, transportation or anything else you like. What would you like to talk about?



User has trouble exploring features offered by voice assistants

FINDING

Chatie introduces features for users upfront and uses **Tailored Welcome** for frequent users.

SOLUTION

Excellent choice. I will ask you some questions about your food related experiences. You can request a **sample answer** or any **word meaning**. You can also ask me to **mark something** for you to practice later. Shall we begin?

SCRIPT



User may have difficulty forming sentences in a conversation

FINDING

Chatie provides clues based on user's proficiency.

SOLUTION

What food do you like to eat for breakfast?

SCRIPT

That sounds yummy! I would like to know more about this food, how it is cooked, or where you usually have it. Can you tell me more about the food you like?



User wants to learn new words to use in specific conversation scenarios

FINDING

Chatie explains the word meaning, gives an example sentence, and offers to mark difficult words or sentences for later review.

SOLUTION

Cutlery means knives, forks, and spoons used for eating or serving food. "The cutlery used to eat soup is spoon." Do you want to add it to your word list for later practice?

SCRIPT



User may have difficulty in pronouncing a new word

FINDING

Chatie can identify the difficult word in the sentence, or repeat the sentence when asked.

SOLUTION

Would you like to know a sample sentence or hear the meaning of the word cutlery?

SCRIPT

The word is cutlery. C-u-t-l-e-r-y. Repeat after me. Cutlery