

Heuristic Evaluation of Chatty

<p>Prototype Description: Does the problem statement make a solid attempt to holistically capture what the application seeks to achieve?</p>	✓	Good comprehensive description that covers all tasks! I wish the problem that they are addressing was identified as well.
<p>Is the list a readable and digestible report that follows the given format for listing problems? Does it avoid reporting repeat problems?</p>	✓+	Great job formatting the list! The fix vs. revised fixes were confusing to me– I wish those had just been consolidated. Didn't catch duplicates, so great job consolidating those as well!
<p>Are the descriptions of the heuristic violations detailed enough to be actionable?</p>	✓+	Great job here! Suggestions were actionable and often went into the nuances of the task at hand, especially around safety with strangers.
<p>Does the list properly cover the individual reports that were given?</p>	✓+	Good job here!
<p>Does the list give good coverage of the actual problems in the medium-fi prototype?</p>	✓+	Great diversity of problems identified– 45 is a solid number! Caught everything that I noticed and some more really specific ones, which is super helpful for the team. Severity of problems were properly identified as well– I appreciate how severity 4 problems were reserved for only a handful of violations found, and how severity 3 problems were really focused on the social experience and long term use of the app.
<p>Summary of violations: Was the provided template used to accurately sum up all of the violations?</p>	✓+	Good job here!
<p>Evaluation statistics: Was the provided template used to accurately reflect how well each of the evaluators did? Did the table identify evaluators by letters, and not names?</p>	✓+	Good job here!
<p>Summary of recommendations: Were the general recommendations made by the individual evaluators merged in a coherent manner?</p>	✓+	Great summary with clear breakdown of types of problems! Very comprehensive and thoughtful. Wonderful job!
<p>TOTAL SCORE</p>	✓+	

1. Problem/Prototype Description

Chatty is an app that helps you improve your knowledge of a language and lets users learn from each other by asking questions about a language, chatting using a traditional messenger interface, and video calling to practice speech.

2. Violations Found

1. H1 Visibility of System Status / Severity 1 / Found by: B, C

When chatting in a video call, there is an option labeled “add time” which I’m assuming would add time to a time constrained call; however, there is no way to tell what the remaining time is of the conversation or when they should add time.

REVISED: I wrote the above and then used the UI some more and noticed it was in a light gray box at the bottom of the corner. I had completely missed it because it was too small and did not draw my attention.

Fix: Add a time clock to clear up the functionality of the “add time” button and let the user know how much time is left.

REVISED FIX: Increase the size of the font and move the location of the clock so it doesn’t get mixed in with the buttons (which is what I believe happened to me)

2. H1 Visibility of System Status / Severity 1 / Found by: B, D

The “set-up” process of creating a new account is quite long and involved for the user without indication of where in the process they currently are. This could be troublesome for users who think the onboarding will take forever and give up before ever engaging with the app.

Fix: A progress bar at the top of the screen to show users how far along in the onboarding process they are.

3. H1 Visibility of System Status / Severity 2 / Found by: A, B, C

After completing a friend match and video chatting, a congratulations screen appears that says “You have now had 3 calls with _____. You and _____ are now friends,” but the user is given no indication of the necessary steps toward establishing “friendship” before receiving this information. It may not be clear to the user that it takes 3 calls to be friends unless they complete the action.

Fix: When the match first happens, have a progress bar showing that completion of 3 calls would result in friend status with this new match.

Fix: Place a button that lets you acknowledge the notification and move on from it.

4. H1 Visibility of System Status / H5 Error Prevention / Severity 3 / Found by: B, D

During the onboarding process on the “About You” page, when the user has to indicate their proficiency, the sliding bar has a range from beginner to native, but no indication of what happens in between or where they can place the slider in between those two categories.

None at all *comfortable* *academic* *native*
[-----]

Fix: It would be helpful to add tick marks underneath the sliding bar so users can see the options of where they can place their slider.

5. H1 Visibility of System Status / Severity 0 / Found by C

When I added “French” as my language, there was no “language added” or confirmation message other than the language filling in the blank.

Fix: Some confirmation other than replacing the blank field would have been nice.

6. H2 Match Between System & Real World / H5 Error Prevention / Severity 1 / Found by: B

When searching for a language, the distinction between “(simplified)” and “(traditional)” Chinese is unclear. As someone who has never studied Chinese I wouldn’t know which one to pick—my guess would be simplified but I would wonder what I would be missing had I chosen the “traditional” learning option.

Fix: Use more recognizable terms such as “Beginner” and “Advanced”.

Fix: Given the nature of the app being so speech based, this distinction would not need to be made (distinction between dialect is more helpful)

7. H2 Match Between the System and the Real World / Severity 2 / Found by: A, D

The word forum is confusing as a ‘home page’. It is not common in many apps. One should look at both the icon and the word forum and understand what it means, especially with regards to the entire app. Additionally, as you open the forum page, it seems like simply chatting, which makes the use of the word forum feel as if it doesn’t fit because all we understand is that you are chatting with them. It takes a while to understand the difference, so it would be helpful to make it’s intended usage more explicit.

Fix: Use a different word instead of forum, or make the UI of the forum page more explicitly a public space for people to reply to others' posts. It could be helpful to try and center it as a feed a little more so that this feels more appropriately a home-page.

8. H3 User Control and Freedom / Severity 4 / Found by: A, B, C

When the "Looks like you've been chatting for a while. Time to set up a video call" notification came up, the only option was to click the "schedule" action button. This could be an issue for users who want the option to not use the video chat function at all.

Fix: Add button underneath that says "No thanks" or something allowing the user to make the choice.

9. H3 User Control & Freedom / Severity 2 / Found by: A, B, C

After completing the "Friend match," the user has the option to "See prompts" or "start chatting" with their new match. If you click on "see prompts," there's no way for the user to go back to starting a discussion on their own if they read the prompts and don't like any of them.

Fix: Implement a button that directs the user to the discussion so they can skip the prompts if they don't like them.

10. H3 User Control and Freedom / Severity 4 / Found by: A, B, C, D

During the onboarding process on the "About You" page, the UI asks the user to fill out the language they "can speak," however the user is limited to one language. This may be an issue for users who are bilingual, etc. because they may want to engage with the app using multiple native languages.

Fix: Add an option to have multiple languages the user "can speak."

11. H3 User Control and Freedom / Severity 1 / Found by: A, D

While creating a profile, when you get to the 'About You' screen, there is no back button. You should be able to 'cancel' creating a profile at all times up until you've actually created it. No back button might make the user think they have successfully created a profile but that notification doesn't come until later, so they should still be able to click 'back'

Fix: Add back button to the 'About You' screen

12. H3 User Control and Freedom / Severity 3 / Found by: A, B, D

After being paired within the "friend match" option, the text box that states "you have 8 messages before video chatting" does not indicate any options for whether the user can choose

to not video after the 8 messages or if they are allowed to continue messaging. This may dissuade users from using this match function if they are forced into a video call after.

Fix: Add an opt-out option for users who either don't like who they have been messaging or add-messages option for users who want more time to message

13. H3 User Control and Freedom / Severity 0 / Found by: A, D

While creating a profile, when you are first typing information in after having clicked the email option, the back button takes you back to the very first screen. This means it took you back two screens instead of one. Users might have only intended to go back one.

Fix: Only go back 1 page when in the 'Create Your Account' page.

14. H3. User control and freedom / Severity 2 / Found by: D

In the view after commenting on Delali's post, there is no way to erase/delete a comment. It is always a good thing to allow a user to delete a comment.

In the view after posting there is no way to erase/delete the post.

Fix: Add a delete button that deletes the comment/post you just posted.

15. H3 User Control and Freedom / Severity 3 / Found by: C, D

Once I matched with someone via "Quick Match," there wasn't a clear way to back out without pressing "Cancel (3 left)" which I wasn't sure what would it do, given the number/limit? Added.

Fix: Add some clear explanation here as to what the number associated with cancel means.

Fix: Allow an unlimited number of rejections/cancellations of matches.

16. H4 Consistency and Standards / Severity 1 / Found by: B

The "chat" section of the app refers to users by their first name, while the "forum" section refers to users by their username. The inconsistency makes it confusing to know what the user will be identified by when they interact with other users on the app.

Fix: Standardize to either first name or username.

17. H4 Consistency and Standards / Severity 1 / Found by: A

Users might wonder if chat and forum are the same thing. They seemingly do not have any differences since both present themselves to be opportunities to message users. This confusion could lead users to not know how to use the app.

Fix: make more explicit differences between chat and forum

18. H4 Consistency and Standards / Severity 3 / Found by: B, C, D

On the “Match” screen, one of the options for matching is a “Friend Match.” The name led me to believe that the user would be matched with an existing friend of theirs, so I was surprised when I read that the match was still with a stranger.

Fix: Rename the “Friend Match” to something more informative of it still being a stranger like “New Friend.”

19. H4 Consistency and Standards / Severity 3 / Found by: B, C, D

After gaining a friend from a friend match, it is unclear how this “friend” status carries beyond the match process and differs from any other conversations in the chat function. Users may be confused about the benefit or purpose of a friend status.

Fix: Implement a subsection within that chat function that is only for “friend” status conversations.

20. H4 Consistency and Standards / Severity 0 / Found by: B

After matching using the “friend match” function, the user does not have a clear button option to “send” the message but rather has to look at the keyboard and find the “send” equivalent (the indication on the keyboard function says “go”). This is inconsistent with other pages such as the “Forum” page where everything that is typed out is confirmed to be sent by the “post” button.

Fix: Implement a send button the user presses after finishing typing their message

21. H5 Error Prevention / Severity 1 / Found by: B

After matching with a new friend and selecting a prompt, the user can fill in the prompt to personalize it; however, the three little dots that indicate where the prompt is incomplete do not intuitively tell the user that they should type and what they will end up typing will replace the three dots in the prompt.

Fix: Replace the three dots with a text box so the user knows they should insert text there.

22. H5 Error Prevention / Severity 2 / Found by: B

On the “Match” page, there are two options for matches and a search bar at the top. It is unclear what the user would search for on this page because in the current implementation, it seems as though new matches would show up on the “Chat” page after getting matched. Users may be confused on which page to access their matches after they are matched.

Fix: Get rid of the search bar and make the entire page solely focused on creating new matches.

23. H6 Recognition Rather Than Recall / Severity 3 / Found by: B

After using the “friend match” function, the user is matched with someone but does not get much information about them other than their name and language proficiency levels, even though the onboarding process asks users to fill out information such as introduction and talking points.

Fix: Add the new match’s introduction or talking points to the “Congratulations your match is...” pop up.

24. H6. Recognition rather than recall / Severity 0 / Found by: D

When you are sending a prompt to a friend, it has an ellipses to fill that is a bit unclear. It seems that the App already should know what language they are learning so this should be filled around.

Fix: The prompts should already be filled in and not need any user input other than choice.

25. H6 Recognition Rather than Recall / Severity 3 / Found by: A

The option to check for the age for the user should be visible. Not just age but more info on users in general, almost like a public version of their profile that users can allow others to see. It is mentioned in your slides that safety is a value of yours and that you will match users with similar age ranges, but we do not explicitly see their age, so we cannot know if they are within our age range. In this manner, we are not sure if you are following the rule that users will be matched based on their age.

Fix: Make profile icon clickable so that we can see a small amount of info on the person we are chatting with at all times. Or in some other manner add users’ age where we can take a look at it.

26. H7 Flexibility and Efficiency of Use / Severity 0 / Found by: B

On the “More About You” page which creates a profile for the user, I was thinking through how I would fill out this information, and noticed that I felt the information I would type in “Add an introduction” box would not really differ from the “Add some talking points” box.

Fix: Either condense into one box or make it more clear how the talking points differ from an introduction.

27. H7 Flexibility and Efficiency of User / Severity 1 / Found by: A

This system does not clearly tailor to accelerated actions for more experienced users. In H7, it states that expert users should be able to accelerate through certain actions, and this is not actively being supported. One example of where there should be a faster version for experts is a

faster way to get to the video chat with someone while you are texting them. Perhaps a way to have users skip some of the messaging steps?

Fix: Allow shortcuts within your app.

28. H7. Flexibility and efficiency of use / Severity 2 / Found by: D

When opening the chat view, we have the ability to click on a chat and see the previous messages. From this view, it seems natural to want to video chat with this person. But, to do this, we have to click on the match section to chat with them. This is inefficient for well versed users of the app. Perhaps for beginners it is important to highlight the importance of the match aspect but others might be bothered with the constant need to switch between these two views.

Fix: Add a button with a phone icon that allows the user to call the other person they are messaging within the chat messaging view.

29. H8 Aesthetic and Minimalist Design / H11 Accessible / Severity 3 / Found by: B

On the “About You” page, the intro text at the top of the page (beginning with “Welcome, Jane!”) is difficult to read. The text is currently a small font (and x-size) for use on a mobile interface and the color of the text (it looks like a light purple) is challenging to read on the yellow background.

EDIT: I noticed this same issue beyond just the “About You” page and the above sentiment applies to all the pages where this format (small light purple text on light yellow background) is being used.

Fix: Increase font size/choose font with higher x-height and change the color or use bolded text.

30. H8 Aesthetic and Minimalist Design / Severity 1 / Found by: B, D

After clicking on a question in the forum, we can see the native language of the user as well as the language they are asking about. Underneath these we see the loading bars for how well they have mastered those languages. The loading bars are very small and hard to make out, making the text feel cluttered. They also provide users with information that may not be extremely relevant to them on that page.

Fix: Take out the loading bars from this screen.

31. H8 Aesthetic and Minimalist Design / Severity 0 / Found by: B

On the “New Question” page of the forum section, the pre-selected questions are segregated by “Ask About Language,” “Ask About Speaking,” and “Ask About Culture.” The first two words feel redundant since the user already knows they will be asking a question and make it less clear as to what the categories are at first glance.

Fix: Change to “Language,” “Speaking,” and “Culture” for clarity.

32. H8 Aesthetic and Minimalist Design / Severity 0 / Found by: A, B, D

When typing out a “New Question” in the forum section, there is a small “?” below the text box. At first it looked like a mistake, and it took me a while to figure out that it was a continuation of the user’s input and would most likely end up as a part of the final displayed question.

Fix: Take out the question mark and let the user put it in themselves.

Fix: Have the question mark appear after an ellipses and have the text box below.

What should I say when ... ?

[text box here]

33. H8 Aesthetic and Minimalist Design / Severity 0 / Found by: B

After clicking on the “quick match” or “friend match” buttons, we are led to a screen that has a lot of white space with small text in block writing taking up only half of the screen. The structure of this page makes it hard to read and feels like a waste of the space you have available to you.

Fix: Increase the text size and weight and possible add images to make it more readable

34. H8 Aesthetic and Minimalist Design / Severity 2 / Found by: C

The forum appears to contain questions and answers across multiple languages, not just the one that I signed up to learn. This seems a little overwhelming for someone trying to just learn one language.

Fix: Might want to default to the user’s native and/or learning language with the option to see forum across all languages.

35. H10 Help and Documentation / H5 Error Prevention / Severity 1 / Found by: B

On the “Forum” screen we can see two flags with a double arrow between them which I’m assuming is the language each person is attempting to learn in. It’s unclear which flag belongs to who, which may be an issue for users learning multiple languages and trying to remember which language they were using for each conversation.

REVISED: After clicking on the user I realized the flags were portraying the native language of the user and the language they were learning in, but it was still unclear which was which and how to distinguish between them.

Fix: Put the flags in a more distinguishable location (such as next to the user name) to help the user identify the language.

REVISED FIX: Only display the flag of the language the user has a question about on the forum screen (again possibly next to their name). This would prevent any confusion about what language the user is asking for help in.

36. H10 Help and Documentation / Severity 1 / Found by: A

When you get matched with a friend and click on 'see prompts', users might not easily understand what they are supposed to do with the prompts as it is not clear that it is clickable. As was mentioned in lecture, well designed objects have affordances so the intention for how it should be used should be inherent in it's design, and the text isn't obviously a clickable item as is.

Fix: Make each prompt a button so we know to click on them

37. H10 Help and Documentation / Severity 1 / Found by: A, D

For something like a forum, there should be help on knowing what it means. When you first open the app after logging in, there are already messages, which is understandable for the sake of the demo, however, perhaps some sort of explanation when you first open it and they are just getting started could be great. As long as the user is being prompted to know that this is a space specifically to ask language questions. This will help ease confusions surrounding the forum page.

Fix: Add documentation for the forum when a profile is first created, almost like a tutorial.

38. H10 Help and Documentation / Severity 1 / Found by: B, C

During the onboarding process on the "About You" page, when someone selects the dialect of their native language (example from med-fi being English), it's confusing what dialects like Hong Kong English or Singaporean English are because I originally had thought this meant one had learned English in these locations until I googled it.

Fix: Possibly eliminate the dialect option for languages that have little differences in their dialects

39. H10 Help and Documentation / Severity 0 / Found by: C

On the signup page there is a field for age range that is just a text field. White the prototype filled it in for me, I don't think I would've understood exactly which format it was looking for.

Fix: Add some explanation for age range and standardize the age range format.

40. H10 Help and Documentation / Severity 2 / Found by: C

On the video chat, I didn't understand what the "Add Time" function did. Some explanation would be helpful, as the call could be ended whenever and you could add as much time as you like.

Fix: Remove the time feature altogether or add some clear explanation and acceptance from the other user.

41. H12 Fairness and Inclusion / Severity 3 / Found by: A, C

Since this is a video platform, it is inherently inaccessible in some ways and that will simply be hard. Users who are deaf/blind or with other disabilities that make video calls hard will feel this app is not made for them since there is such a large focus on video calls. Instead, since texting could be more accessible for some, the option to simply text with users could be helpful.

Fix: Allow users to use this as a chat only platform if they would like to, instead of placing such a large emphasis on video calls

42. H12. Fairness and inclusion / Severity 3 / Found by: D

When matching with people via Quick vs Friend Match, you are only given the option to video chat with them **or cancel the call**. There might be a handful of users who do not feel comfortable talking via video with a stranger or might want to keep the match for a later time when they can speak with them. Additionally, some users might need to only practice via text. It would be amazing if there was an ability for matches to be added for later or if there was an option to **chat** with them in addition to video.

Fix: Add a chat option/cancel when matching with others in addition to video calling for those who don't feel comfortable video chatting.

43. H13 Value Alignment / Severity 2 / Found by: B

On the "Forum" page, the user's progress bars are displayed for all users to see. This may be uncomfortable for some users that are nervous to post questions on the forum because their proficiency is low. It may be helpful to consider whether other users need to see the proficiency levels of strangers on the "Forum"—seeing proficiency between friends may be different and fun to see how your friends are doing!

Fix: Possibly eliminate the proficiency bar on the "Forum" page

44. H13 Value Alignment / Severity 3 / Found by: A

It doesn't seem to align with values to have a limit on the number of times someone can cancel, as is suggested by the 'cancel (3 left today)' button that appears when they say they'd like to start chatting with someone. Being able to cancel at all times would be a great safety feature.

Fix: Leave unlimited cancels

45. H13 Value Alignment / Severity 4 / Found by: A

Users should be able to block anyone on an app like this, since this is a way to reach people. For the safety of users, as is a value, it would be extremely helpful for users to be able to block other users when they no longer want to hear from them.

Fix: Add a block option

Fix: Add report functionality

3. Summary of Violations

Category	# Viol. (sev 0)	# Viol. (sev 1)	# Viol. (sev 2)	# Viol. (sev 3)	# Viol. (sev 4)	# Viol. (total)
H1: Visibility of Status	1	2	1	1	0	5
H2: Match Sys & World	0	1	1	0	0	2
H3: User Control	1	1	2	2	2	8
H4: Consistency & Standards	1	2	0	2	0	5
H5: Error Prevention	0	3	1	1	0	5
H6: Recognition not Recall	1	0	0	2	0	3
H7: Efficiency of Use	1	1	1	0	0	3
H8: Minimalist Design	3	1	1	1	0	6
H9: Help Users with Errors	0	0	0	0	0	0
H10: Help & Documentation	1	4	1	0	0	6
H11: Accessible	0	0	0	1	0	1
H12: Fairness & Inclusion	0	0	0	2	0	2
H13: Value Alignment	0	0	1	1	1	3
Total Violations by Severity	9	15	9	13	3	49

Note: check your answer for the green box by making sure the sum of the last column is equal to the sum of the last row (not including the green box)

4. Evaluation Statistics

Severity / Evaluator	Evaluator A	Evaluator B	Evaluator C	Evaluator D
Sev. 0	22%	55%	22%	33%
Sev. 1	38%	46%	7.7%	23%
Sev. 2	33%	44%	44%	33%
Sev. 3	36%	54%	36%	54%
Sev. 4	100%	67%	67%	33%
Total (sevs. 3 & 4)	50%	57%	42.86%	50%
Total (all severity levels)	37.78%	51%	28.89%	35.56%

*Note that the bottom rows are *not* calculated by adding the numbers above it.

5. Summary Recommendations

The major heuristic we believe Chatty should focus on is H3 User Control and Freedom. While we really appreciated many of the cool features of the app such as the video chat function and the ability to learn a language by connecting to strangers, there were many aspects that limited the interactions in the user's experience. Some changes we recommend are adding functionality for users who speak multiple languages, giving users the option to decline video chats altogether, and giving users the ability to delete or report comments or posts on the Forum page.

Another heuristic that raised many violations was H10 Help and Documentation. We found many areas of confusion within the interface and many of the fundamental concepts behind the functionality. Some areas we recommend changing is the name of the "Forum" screen as it is confusing as to why this is the main screen of all the tabs—ie. the first one the user is brought to upon signing in—and the name of it does not describe the purpose of the page very well. As an alternative to changing the name, your team could also implement more documentation, such as pop-ups, that give first time users more information about the functionality of the page.

In terms of big picture items, two heuristics that could use more focus are H13 Value Alignment and H11 Accessibility. When reading through the slides, we noticed that a value outlined by Chatty is safety for users—especially when interacting with the video chat feature—yet a lot of the video chat functions don't have options for declining calls or reporting and blocking users if a user does not feel safe interacting with someone. The accessibility issues revolved around the text design and color as many screens used small, light colored text that was hard to read, even when there was extra white space available. We recommend using a text color and weight that is easier to read as well as using some of the white space to increase the font size.

Overall, Chatty did a great job at creating their medium-fi prototype and we are excited to see the final product!

Severity Ratings

- 0 - not a usability problem
- 1 - cosmetic problem
- 2 - minor usability problem
- 3 - major usability problem; important to fix
- 4 - usability catastrophe; imperative to fix

Heuristics

H1: Visibility of System Status

- Keep users informed about what is going on

H2: Match Between System & Real World

- Speak the users' language
- Follow real world conventions

H3: User Control & Freedom

- "Exits" for mistaken choices, undo, redo
- Don't force down fixed paths

H4: Consistency & Standards

- Words, actions, and UI elements should be consistent across the entire platform
- Follow platform and industry conventions

H5: Error Prevention

- Minimize error-prone conditions
- Remove memory burdens, support undoing, and warn your users when necessary

H6: Recognition Rather Than Recall

- Make objects, actions, options, & directions visible or easily retrievable

H7: Flexibility & Efficiency of Use

- Accelerators for experts (e.g., gestures, keyboard shortcuts)
- Allow users to tailor frequent actions (e.g., macros)

H8: Aesthetic & Minimalist Design

- No irrelevant information. Focus on the essentials.

H9: Help Users Recognize, Diagnose, & Recover from Errors

- Error messages in plain language
- Precisely indicate the problem
- Constructively suggest a solution

H10: Help & Documentation

- Easy to search
- Focused on the user's task
- List concrete steps to carry out
- Not too large

H11: Accessible

- Users can interact with the system using alternative input methods.
- Content is legible with distinguishable contrast and text size.
- Key information is upfront and not nested for screen readers.

- Purely visual or auditory content has text-based alternatives for users with low vision and low hearing.

H12: Fairness and Inclusion

- Users shouldn't feel that the design is not made for them.
- The design should meet all users' needs equally and prevent the reproduction of pre-existing inequities.
- It should not create additional burdens for members of disadvantaged populations.

H13: Value Alignment

- The design should encode values that users can understand and relate to.
- Conflicting collateral values should not emerge when the user interacts with the product.
- Encoded values should match users' values in a broad set of use-contexts.