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MAESTRIA EN PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS CON MENCIÓN EN LA ENSEÑANZA DE INGLÉS

THEME

ENHANCING FRENCH LANGUAGE GAINING: LEVERAGING AI FOR EXPANDING VOCABULARY PROFICIENCY IN INTERMEDIATE LEVEL IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Qualification work prior to obtaining the Master's degree in Education.

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The research work has been reviewed in all its parts and I consider that it meets the requirements and sufficient merits to be submitted to public presentation and evaluation by the designated Examining Board.

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DEDICATION

To my beloved husband, Horacio, for being my unconditional support and my strength.

To my parents, Ximena and Patricio, who, despite the distance, have been present every step of this path. Thank you for teaching me to fight for my dreams.

With infinite gratitude, I dedicate this achievement to you.

Patricia Constante

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UNIVERSIDAD TECNOLÓGICA INDOAMÉRICA

MAESTRIA EN PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS CON MENCIÓN EN LA ENSEÑANZA DE INGLÉS

TEMA: MEJORAR LA ADQUISICIÓN DEL IDIOMA FRANCÉS: APROVECHANDO LA IA PARA AMPLIAR EL DOMINIO DEL VOCABULARIO EN EL NIVEL INTERMEDIO EN LA EDUCACIÓN DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS

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RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

Este estudio analizó el papel de los chatbots (IA) para mejorar la adquisición de vocabulario en estudiantes de nivel intermedio de francés durante une sesión de aprendizaje autónomo. La investigación aborda un desafío persistente en la enseñanza de idiomas extranjeros: la falta de exposición al uso auténtico del idioma, la escucha o la interacción con hablantes nativos, agravado por métodos de aprendizaje ineficaces, como la memorización sin contexto ni aplicación práctica. Además, la ausencia de práctica regular dificulta la capacidad de los estudiantes para internalizar y utilizar eficazmente el nuevo vocabulario. El estudio planteó como hipótesis que el uso de chatbots como herramienta complementaria durante las sesiones de aprendizaje autónomo mejoraría significativamente la competencia en vocabulario. La metodología incluyó tres fases: une lección inicial de vocabulario alineadas con el plan de estudios, actividades guiadas para enseñar a los estudiantes a formular indicaciones para el uso de chatbots y una sesione autónoma en las que los estudiantes practicaron interactuando con los chatbots para reforzar el vocabulario aprendido. Los resultados demuestran que los chatbots basados en IA son herramientas efectivas para la adquisición de vocabulario, como lo evidencia el aumento en las puntuaciones promedio de 8.2 en el pretest a 15.88 en el postest. Los estudiantes reportaron una mejor retención y aplicación del vocabulario gracias a la interacción con los chatbots, que ofrecieron retroalimentación inmediata y escenarios de uso práctico. Las encuestas reflejaron una percepción positiva de los chatbots como recursos adaptables y atractivos para el aprendizaje autónomo. Este estudio concluye que incorporar chatbots impulsados por IA mejora la adquisición de vocabulario, fomenta la autonomía del estudiante y potencia las posibilidades pedagógicas de la IA en la enseñanza de idiomas.

Palabras clave: autónomo, chatbots, intermedio , vocabulario.

UNIVERSIDAD TECNOLÓGICA INDOAMÉRICA

FACULTY OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

MASTER IN PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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ABSTRACT

ENHANCING FRENCH LANGUAGE GAINING: LEVERAGING A2 FOR EXPANDING VOCABULARY PROFICIENCY IN INTERMEDIATE LEVEL IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

The current research explored the role of AI-based chatbots in enhancing vocabulary proficiency among intermediate-level French language learners during autonomous learning sessions. This study addresses a persistent challenge in foreign language education: the lack of exposure to authentic language or interaction with native speakers, intensified by ineffective learning methods such as basic memorization without context or practical application. The absence of regular practice further hinders learners' ability to internalize and utilize new vocabulary effectively. The study hypothesized that employing AI-driven chatbots as a supplementary tool during autonomous learning sessions would not significantly improve vocabulary proficiency. The methodology involved three phases: initial vocabulary lessons aligned with the curriculum, guided activities to teach students how to formulate chatbot prompts and autonomous work sessions where students practiced engaging with chatbots to reinforce vocabulary. The findings reveal that AI-based chatbots are effective tools for vocabulary acquisition, as demonstrated by the increase in average test scores from 8.2 in the pre-test to 15.88 in the post-test. Students reported improved retention and application of vocabulary through interactive chatbot engagement, which offered immediate feedback and practical usage scenarios. Survey responses further highlighted a positive perception of chatbots as adaptable and engaging resources for autonomous learning. This study concludes that incorporating AI-driven chatbots into foreign language education enhances vocabulary learning by addressing traditional teaching limitations and fostering student autonomy. The proposed didactic approach, combining structured guidance with innovative chatbot interactions, provides an effective framework for improving vocabulary proficiency and advancing the pedagogical potential of AI in language learning.

KEYWORDS: Keywords: autonomous work, chatbots, intermediate level, vocabulary.

INTRODUCTION

Importance

Nowadays, the utilization of artificial intelligence (AI) stands as a prominent innovation within the technological landscape of this decade. Despite the various benefits of including AI in education, several challenges can occur during the process, including privacy and dishonesty. However, when used correctly, artificial intelligence allows to create a more tailored and effective learning experience for students (Harry, 2023). Nevertheless, artificial intelligence rapid expansion has led to his uncontrolled used. Currently, ethical issues are still in a controversial debate. Students often perceive artificial intelligence solely as a tool for fraudulent purpose. Hence, reshaping the perception of artificial intelligence is a current pending task. Accordingly, it is important to emphasize that AI can serve as a valuable tool rather than an instrument for dishonesty. Considering this issue, the significance lies in educating students to perceive AI as a tool rather than a facilitator of dishonest practices (León Rodríguez & Viña Brito, 2017). Additionally, with the rise of technological tool, including A2, it is essential to determine its consequences on academic integrity (Obregón González et al., 2023).

On the other hand, given that artificial intelligence represents the primary revolution of this decade, his introduction will undoubtedly appear as a long-standing

consideration, offering substantial assistance to educators seeking to incorporate AI into their instructional methodologies (Riad, 2023). More specifically artificial intelligence can be divided in different sectors albeit robots, chatbots and according to Kohnke et al. (2023), ChatGPT is a multipurpose and valuable tool which promote engagement and adaptability for students. It permits to boost their communicative skills. AI-powered chats can provide language involvement and daily conversation practice which is the key in learning process.

As mentioned by León Rodríguez & Viña Brito (2017), the technological community faces the significant challenge of continuing in terms of AI in a beneficial way, rather than detriment for education. currently, technological education primarily focuses on teaching people how to use computers. This system is expected to progress toward a stage where computers learn from people, and vice-versa, in a mutual relationship. Effectively integrating human intelligence with that computer's intelligence, allowing them to coexist and learn from each other, will be more crucial than ever. Moreover, Yanduri & Majid (2022) clA2m that the purpose of integrating chatbots into education is not to substitute teachers but to alleviate the teacher's workload by handling repetitive and less mentally demanding tasks, ultimately enhancing their effectiveness. Within the realm of education, chatbots serve two primary purposes: those intended for educational use and those lacking educational intent. When employed with educational objectives, they function as virtual assistants or tutors, facilitating exercises and practice programs to boost efficiency. Consequently, their development aligns with socioconstructivist learning approaches, aiming to enhance productivity in education.

Problem statement

Learning a new language has many challenges to bridge independently the language learnt. In French, one of the most common is having difficulties acquiring new French vocabulary which can stem from various causes, leading to several consequences. According to (Rahmatian, 2005),the lack of exposure to the language through reading, listening, or interacting with native speakers can impede vocabulary acquisition. Ineffective Learning Methods are also the root of this issue, as relying solely on memorization without contextual understanding or practical application might hinder progress. Furthermore, the lack of practice leads to not applying the learned vocabulary regularly in conversation or writing and result in not fully grasping the words' meanings. Finally, Individual learning styles vary, and certain methods might not suit everyone. Some may struggle with traditional methods like flashcards or rote memorization. The combination of all these causes strive to the problem encountered and lead to considerable consequences: Limited Communication Skills, difficulty in comprehension and stagnation in learning. Insufficient vocabulary might restrict one's ability to communicate effectively, leading to misunderstandings, incomplete expression and demotivation.

Therefore, the introduction of AI, most specifically chatbots can figure out the solution to the vocabulary issue. For instance, as mentioned by Lesia Viktorivna et al., 2022), Chatbots can provide contextual examples of how words are used in sentences or phrases, aiding comprehension and proper usage of the vocabulary. Additionally,

the allowable use of AI in classes would change student's perception, which is to consider it as cheating tool.

Considering all these aspects, the topic of this research is enhancing French Language Gaining: Leveraging AI for expanding vocabulary proficiency in intermediate level in Foreign Language Education.

There for the interrogative for this research will be: How can AI tools enhance vocabulary proficiency for intermediate learners of French in foreign language education? How learners would use it during their autonomous work time? What are the perceptions of intermediate French learners toward the use of AI tools in their language learning process? To what extent does integrating AI tools into the curriculum impact the motivation and engagement of intermediate French learners?

Hypothesis or Research idea

Ho: Employ AI-driven chatbots as a supplementary tool during autonomous learning sessions will not significantly improve vocabulary proficiency among intermediate-level French language students.

H1: Employ AI-driven chatbots as a supplementary tool during autonomous learning sessions will significantly improve vocabulary proficiency among intermediate-level French language students.

Beneficiaries

Several groups could benefit from research focused on enhancing French language learning through AI-powered chatbots:

The primary beneficiaries would be the intermediate-level French language students who are directly engaging with the chatbots. The study group will include students enrolled in third and fourth levels of the French program at the Language Center of Catholic University, in Ambato. This level corresponds to the A2 proficiency level, corresponding to the second level within the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). At this stage, students show the ability to construct simple sentences and engage in basic daily conversations in French. The student group comprises about 25 individuals aged between 16 and 25 years. On most of cases, their enrollment in the program follows prior accomplishment of an English language curriculum, demonstrating a high level of motivation and commitment to language learning endeavors.

Moreover, teachers and language instructors can benefit from insights gained through this research to refine their teaching methodologies. Understanding the effectiveness of AI chatbots in vocabulary gaining could lead to more tailored and effective teaching strategies.

Objectives

General:

- ✓ To assess the effectiveness of leveraging AI-based chatbots in enhancing vocabulary proficiency in intermediate-level French language learners during autonomous learning sessions.

Specifics:

- ✓ Determine the extent to which the use of AI chatbots during autonomous learning sessions contributes to the development of the students' French vocabulary by comparing pre- and post-application.
- ✓ Design a didactic proposal to guide students in the use of chatbots to boost vocabulary gaining.
- ✓ Evaluate learners opinion towards autonomous learning facilitated by chatbot interactions through surveys.

CHAPTER 1
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Undoubtably, the use of artificial intelligence in foreign language classes is experimenting an exponential boom. However, it is important to identify what is the current situation in Ecuador in the education area. Despite the lack of research, some of the latest studies will be presenting. Additionally, the use of chatbots will be emphasized and examples of applications in French learning classes.

State of Art

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) involves regulations and standards to ensure effective instruction of non-native English speakers. TEFL certifications, often requiring a minimum of 120 hours of coursework, prepare instructors for various teaching environments worldwide. Similarly, the Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française (DELF) is an official certification awarded by the French Ministry of Education to validate French language proficiency among non-native speakers. The DELF is divided into four levels: A1, A2, B1, and B2, in alignment with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). To be considered at the A2 level in French, learners must demonstrate basic communication skills in everyday situations, encompassing understanding sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of immediate relevance such as personal information,

shopping, local geography, and employment. They should be able to communicate in simple, routine tasks requiring a direct exchange of information and describe aspects of their background, immediate environment, and matters of immediate need.

The situation of AI In Ecuadorian education

In Ecuador, according to León Rodríguez & Viña Brito (2017), Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been playing a pivotal role in the last years, in various fields albeit manufacture, industries, finances, medicine and, even though, education. The transformation of the learning-teaching process has focuses on a student-centered process where innovation is mandator and AI could play an important role. Rodriguez and Viña's study presents the main advances in the introduction of AI in education, in Ecuador highlighting the current situation and perspectives. Moreover, they focused on ethic issues and considerable values that have to be taken in account when introducing AI in education.

Furthermore, in their article "The impact of artificial intelligence in the educational field" published in Ecuador as a bibliographic research, Obregón González et al. (2023) clA2m that Artificial intelligence (AI) has appeared as a powerful instrument in education field. AI allows considerable benefits with relevant and shifting impact. Additionally, they concur that the use of AI offers a more tailored educative process with a high level of students' engagement, a more efficient acquisition of knowledge, a premature detection of learning problems which can lead to an early intervention. More specifically, the use chatbots, among other tools, can provide students with instantaneous responses, enhancing autonomous initiative. They affirm

that AI nurture learning-teaching process providing interactive and active resources which boost students commitment.

Ayala-Pazmiño & Alvarado-Lucas (2023) agree that Artificial Intelligence (AI) could boost language learning results by tailored learning experiences, enhancing communicative skills, and thriving students motivation. Nevertheless, in Ecuador, the incorporation of AI into Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) faces enormous challenges, albeit poor infrastructure, weak training of teachers, and the frail protection of data privacy and security. Ayala & Alvarado explores the possible advantages and obstacles of integrating AI into EFL education in Ecuador, using a qualitative approach. Therefore, five English teachers from recognized schools in Quito were interviewed using semi- structured questions. As a result, they conclude that an appropriate infrastructure and teacher instructions are essential for an effective integration of AI. Despite the benefits mentioned, two possible negative impacts were highlighted: the lack of human interaction and emotional support for students.

Theoretical development of the object and field

The Use of Chatbots in TEFL

Considering that Artificial Intelligence is a generic term, it is necessary to focus on a more restrictive aspect, in this case, the use of chatbots.

Kohnke et al. (2023) conducted a review where they explore the benefits of AI-controlled chats, in this case ChatGPT, for language teaching and learning. They also present discussions and weaknesses of this tool. At the end, they present the digital skills necessary to obtain an effective support in language learning process. More

pointedly, their study provides some opening thoughts on how ChatGPT is able to sustain language education. Their review offers some tasks examples tasks which can be proposed to non-experimented teachers and learners. They contend that AI-driven tools are a long-term concern and, therefore learners and teachers have to adapt to trend. They claim that ChatGPT is a multipurpose and valued tool. For that reason, they encourage teachers to explore the educational possibilities of the integration of chatbots in order to nurture education.

Yanduri & Majid (2022) explored the use of AI-based chatbots. They conclude that Chatbots can be considered in the performance of various educative tasks such designing of textbooks, distributing content, creating questionnaires, instantaneous discussions, and tutoring sessions. The teacher's creativity and the skills are the sole limitation. However, the authors affirm that the lack of research about the impact of use of chatbots in education do not allow us to clearly identify the positive consequences. Consequently, there is a massive necessity to explore more in this area.

According to (Gupta et al., 2020), artificial intelligence tools can be divided in according to different criterion and it is important for this study to highlight the most relevant for language learning, reported below:

Chart 1. AI tools for Language Learning

AI TOOL	USE	PRO	CONS
DUOLINGO	Offers gamified lessons in multiple languages, using AI to adapt exercises to user performance.	Fun, engaging format; personalized lesson adjustments; large language variety; free version available.	Limited advanced content; repetitive for experienced learners; ads in the free version.
BABBEL	Provides structured lessons with AI-driven review sessions to reinforce learning based on user progress and mistakes.	Emphasis on conversational language; real-life dialogues; clear grammar explanations; suitable for beginners.	Limited language options; subscription-based; less gamification than competitors.
HELLO TALK	Connects users with native speakers for language exchange, with AI features for translation and pronunciation help.	Real conversations with native speakers; language exchange format; built-in translation and pronunciation guides.	Conversations depend on partner availability; occasional language barriers; ads and limited features in the free version.
ROSETTA STONE	Uses immersive AI-driven learning to teach languages through context without translation, focusing on natural learning.	Proven immersion method; extensive language options; voice recognition for pronunciation; adaptable difficulty.	High subscription cost; slower pace; may lack cultural context and explanations for complex grammar.
CHATGPT	Offers flexible, conversational practice in multiple languages, with AI capable of context-based responses.	Personalized and contextual responses; great for practicing conversational skills; available 24/7; supports numerous languages.	Limited to text-based interaction; no structured curriculum; may occasionally lack cultural or context-specific nuances.

Elaborated by: Patricia Constante
Source: Gupta et al., 2020.

Mageira et al. (2022) offer a more practical case in their study. They suggest that the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in learning spaces is one of the newest challenges for teachers. AI-based tools offer considerable opportunities in order to innovate and transform the traditional methodologies, particularly the use of AI-driven chatbots. Their report conveys, along field experiment chatbot and delivers visions its influence to Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). They present a practical case of an educational AI chatbot, named AsasaraBot. This tool was designed

to teach high school students cultural content in English or French. As a result, the use of this AI chatbot is suitable for a CLIL cultural program. The AsasaraBot AI chatbot has been created and implemented as a master's degree.

On the other hand, Asif & Bibi (2023) conducted a survey of Students' Perceptions about the Role of Chatbots in English Language Learning at Graduation Level. According to them, learning a new language is a challenge where chatbots can offer a solution. They are defined as a platform which provided human-like conversation. Learners can use it anytime and anywhere they want, in total autonomy. The study objective is to determine students' perceptions about the use of chatbots in EFL classes. A quantitative approach with the descriptive analysis method were applied over 60 students of the department of English, Ghazi University Dera Ghazi Khan. A questionnA2re allowed to analyze the learners' responses. The results showed that the learners were interested on the use of chatbots for English language learning. Based on the results, Asif and Bibi concluded that chatbots play a crucial role in learning English since it proposes an innovative learning process.

Lesia Viktorivna et al., (2022) focuses on analyzing the function of Artificial Intelligence in English language learning, its effectiveness, and the methods for its application. AI has the possibility to change the operational educative system, boost institutions competitiveness and thrive teachers and students in different ways. When applied in instructions and assessments, artificial intelligence permit to point out learners' needs. This review argues the reasons of fear of AI in language learning**.** The survey was conducted in 2021 for 418 English language students in two Ukrainian

universities. The results show that most of samplers are afraid to suffer cyber-attacks with the risk of losing personal information. Moreover, the fear of losing a natural environment with speakers and their real emotions is an essential point. Furthermore, the study estimates that the learners' freedom and creativity decrease when using AI. The report recommends the wisdom use of AI in English language learning guided by a human perception.

The use of AI in Teaching French as a Foreign Language (FFL)

The application of AI in TFFL is still in primitive path. It is still considerably problematic to find relevant research in that domain. However, Mavropoulou & Arvanitis (2023) offer a deep insight about the topic. They affirm that instructors function is essential in increasing AI effectively to encourage holistic development and reach conclusive learning results. This paper analyze the affordance of artificial intelligence in French language teaching and the effectiveness of artificial intelligence in improving language skills. This paper is a review of the benefits and challenges of using artificial intelligence for foreign language teaching, through a case study of a complete unit of a French A2-course. First, AI is used as a tool to create didactic materials, then collected and organized according to the course needs. This material is exanimated and studied. As results, AI appears to produce a suitable answer quality and to provide a valuable assistance to foreign language instructors through the tailoring of their learning materials. Hence, this study objective is to propose a tool which satisfy the needs of teachers of the 21st century immersed in a digital society.

On the other hand, Safitri's et al. (2021) study debates the use of Chatbots, specifically ChatJours, used as a media to support learning in French through telegram media. A quantitative method was used and data were collected using a survey holding questions about the usability system. This study aims to observe how useful this Chatbot is as a educational support. The results present that 76% of the participants indicate that the Chatbot is appropriate as a supporting medium for learning French grammar.

Considering all the previously mentioned aspects, the relevance of this study is clearly justified. In a shifting digital era, it is essential for teachers to constantly search for innovative ways to engage students motivation and adapt to new trends. In that sense, the application of chatbots during autonomous work sessions can be a useful tool considering the difficulty to be exposed to French vocabulary.

CHAPTER 2:
METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

Research approach and design

This research is based on a mixed approach: qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative will focus on the collection of experiences and perceptions. According to (Ugwu & Val, 2023), qualitative research focuses on emotional state, ideas, or personal experiences. The data collection purpose is to find perceptions that allow to formulate verifiable hypotheses. For educators, the investigative phase will allow them to identify patterns and new perspectives. This methodology is used to retrieve a variety of insights rather than numerical data, with a less structured approach.

The use of qualitative research is optimal to meet the objectives of this study, considering that significantly improve vocabulary proficiency among intermediate-level French language students and change their perception of AI require the collection of different insights.

Meanwhile, Dimitrov et al. (2003) claimed that quantitative method involves collecting numerical data before and after an intervention or treatment, which allows for statistical analysis to measure the effect of the intervention. By comparing the pre-test and post-test results, you can quantitatively assess changes in the variables of interest, making it a robust method for evaluating outcomes and drawing conclusions based on empirical evidence.

Description of the sample and the context of the research

For this research, we had the participation of the third and fourth level of French program, from the Language Center of the Catholic University, campus of Ambato. According to the designed program of the Center, both levels correspond to A2 level, which is the second level in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The number of students varied depending on the enrolment of students on each semester. For this study, the participants were 25 students between 16 and 40 years old. This program was selected due to students commitment, as the enrolment in the French program is more a personal choice rather than a requirement to obtain the bachelor degree.

Data collection process

Chart 2. Variable operationalization chart

Variable	Conceptual definition	Dimension	Indicators	Technique and instruments	Items
The Relevance of this study	" Relevance is not a relation between two arbitrary propositions, but rather, more narrowly, is a relation between a proposition and a weak conditional" (Delgrande & Pelletier, 1998)			Questionnaire	Develop a questionnaire with multiple-choice questions. Students will have to answer based on their opinion. Data will be collected and analyzed.
The development of the students' French vocabulary	"Vocabulary then is the list of words (compiled in alphabetical order, in the case of a	Active	• Use of a wide range of vocabulary when speaking or writing • Use accurately a set of words	Pre and post vocabulary tests	Develop a test, taken after the vocabulary lesson and then, after the autonomous

	dictionary) available to a user. They are the words known to a user. In other words, a person's vocabulary is the list of words known or available and used by that individual." (Amadi & Ogu, 2019)	Passive	• Understand words as they are stored unconsciously but hardly applied into use. • Words that are not often manifested in our day to day communication or writing.		work session. The test will evaluate a complete list of vocabulary.
Learners opinion towards autonomous learning facilitated by chatbot interactions	"the point of view or perception of Artificial intelligence use in daily life situations." (Hick & Ziefle, 2022)			Survey	Students will be asked to fulfill a survey on google form, based on Likert scale, at the end of the process.

Elaborated by: Patricia Constante
Source: Developed by the author

Techniques and Data collection instruments

The first instrument applied was a relevance questionnaire. The purpose of this survey is to assess the interest and perceived value among students in using AI chatbots as a tool for practicing French during autonomous work hours. The survey aims to identify current challenges students face in language practice, gauge their openness to integrating AI technology into their learning routine, and determine the potential effectiveness of AI chatbots in enhancing language fluency and conversational skills. In this research, this instrument allows to evaluate learners' opinion towards autonomous learning facilitated by chatbot interactions through surveys. This questionnaire is reported in the Annex section.

This questionnaire was validated by three experts in the area of teaching and researching and was designed to gather information regarding your evaluation and evidence about your knowledge and support your status as a specialist in the research topic. The results obtained for each expert are reported in the chart below, where the level of expertise is obtained with the formula $L = \frac{\Sigma\ grades\ per\ question}{number\ of\ questions}$:

Chart 3. Level of expertise

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Level
E1	10	10	10	10	10	10
E2	8	9	8	8	7	8
E3	10	10	10	10	10	10

Elaborated by: Patricia Constante
Source: Poveda Morales (2017)

After evaluating the expertise of the professionals, they were invited to assess the relevance of the questionnaire. All participants unanimously agreed that the questions were appropriate and aligned with the intended objectives.

The survey results reveal diverse student preferences and attitudes toward the use of chatbots for autonomous language learning, particularly for improving vocabulary in French. Notably, 36% of students currently utilize linguistic applications, while 56% engage with traditional exercises to practice French. Additionally, 36% expressed a strong desire to improve conversational skills but reported difficulty finding conversation partners. When asked about feedback, 36% responded that instant feedback would benefit them significantly, and 52% believed it would benefit them

quite a bit. Furthermore, 56% of students emphasized the importance of an app that adapts to their individual pace, underscoring the value of personalized learning. Regarding chatbots, 52% found them “very interesting” for conversational practice, and 40% deemed them “interesting.” A significant majority, 96%, indicated openness to using chatbots, with 32% believing they would benefit somewhat and 56% thinking they would benefit greatly from chatbot use. Finally, 72% stated they would use a chatbot for practice if given the opportunity. These findings suggest a strong receptiveness to integrating chatbots in autonomous French language learning, highlighting a clear interest in accessible, adaptable, and interactive practice tools.

The second instrument applied to collect information is a pre and posttest of vocabulary. (Dimitrov et al., 2003) claim that Pretest-posttest are mainly applied in behavioral research, aiming to compare groups or to determine the evolution resulting from an experimental change. This instrument allows to determine the extent to which the use of AI chatbots during autonomous learning sessions contributes to the development of the students' French vocabulary by comparing pre- and post-application.

Finally, the last instrument applied is the observation. (Smit & Onwuegbuzie, 2018) explain that observation in qualitative research is essential in qualitative approach. This allows the collection of data using ones perceptions in an organized and structured way. This instrument aims to measure the students' ability to formulate constructed sentences in French after using AI chatbots by analyzing accuracy, and diversity comparing to a control group.

CHAPTER 3
THE PRODUCT

Name of the proposal

Mon ami-bot: AI as Virtual French Language Partner

Type of product

A didactic unit aimed at French Language Learning Enhancement through Chatbot Interaction for intermediate-level French language students.

According to Mora (2013), a didactic unit is a detailed plan designed to outline the instructional activities and resources they will use to teach a specific topic. It serves as a guide for delivering effective and structured education, ensuring that the teaching approach is aligned with the desired learning outcomes.

Moreover, Garafalo & Chemes, (2016) mention that a didactic unit is typically used to inform and direct the teaching process, ensuring that all necessary elements for effective learning are considered and integrated.

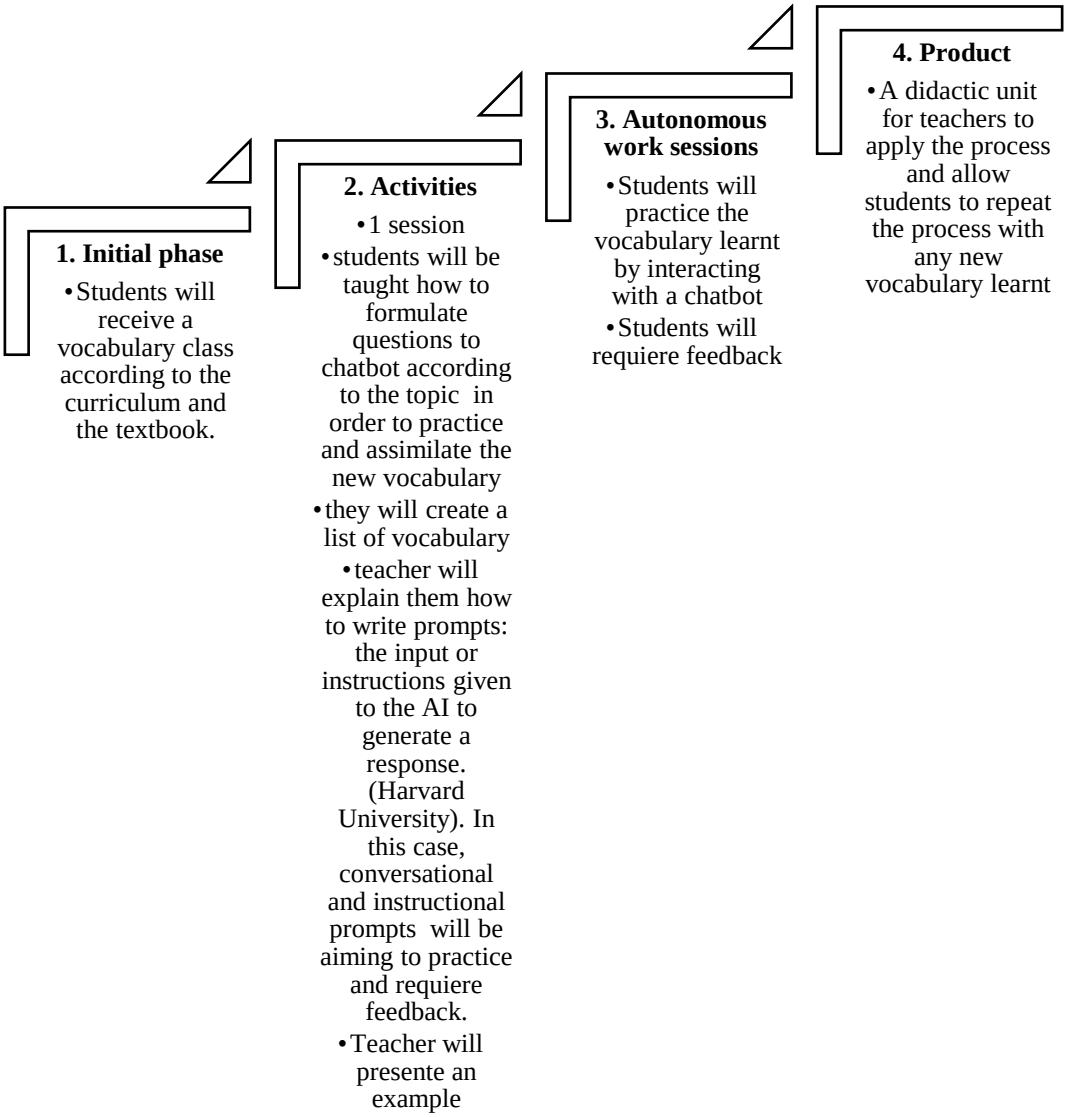
Objectives

- ✓ To use AI chatbots during autonomous learning sessions to contributes to the development of the students' French vocabulary by interaction with AI.

- ✓ To design a didactic unit for teachers to guide students in the use of chatbots to boost vocabulary gaining.

Proposal structure

Figure 1. Proposal structure



Elaborated by: Patricia Constante
Source: Developed by the author

1. **The initial phase**

It involves Students attending a vocabulary lesson in line with the curriculum and the textbook.

2. **Activities**

This include one session where students will learn to formulate questions for a chatbot related to the topic to practice and internalize new vocabulary. They will compile a vocabulary list, and the teacher will guide them on how to write prompts—inputs or instructions given to the AI to generate responses (Harvard University). These prompts, both conversational and instructional, will be designed to encourage practice and require feedback. Teacher will present an example.

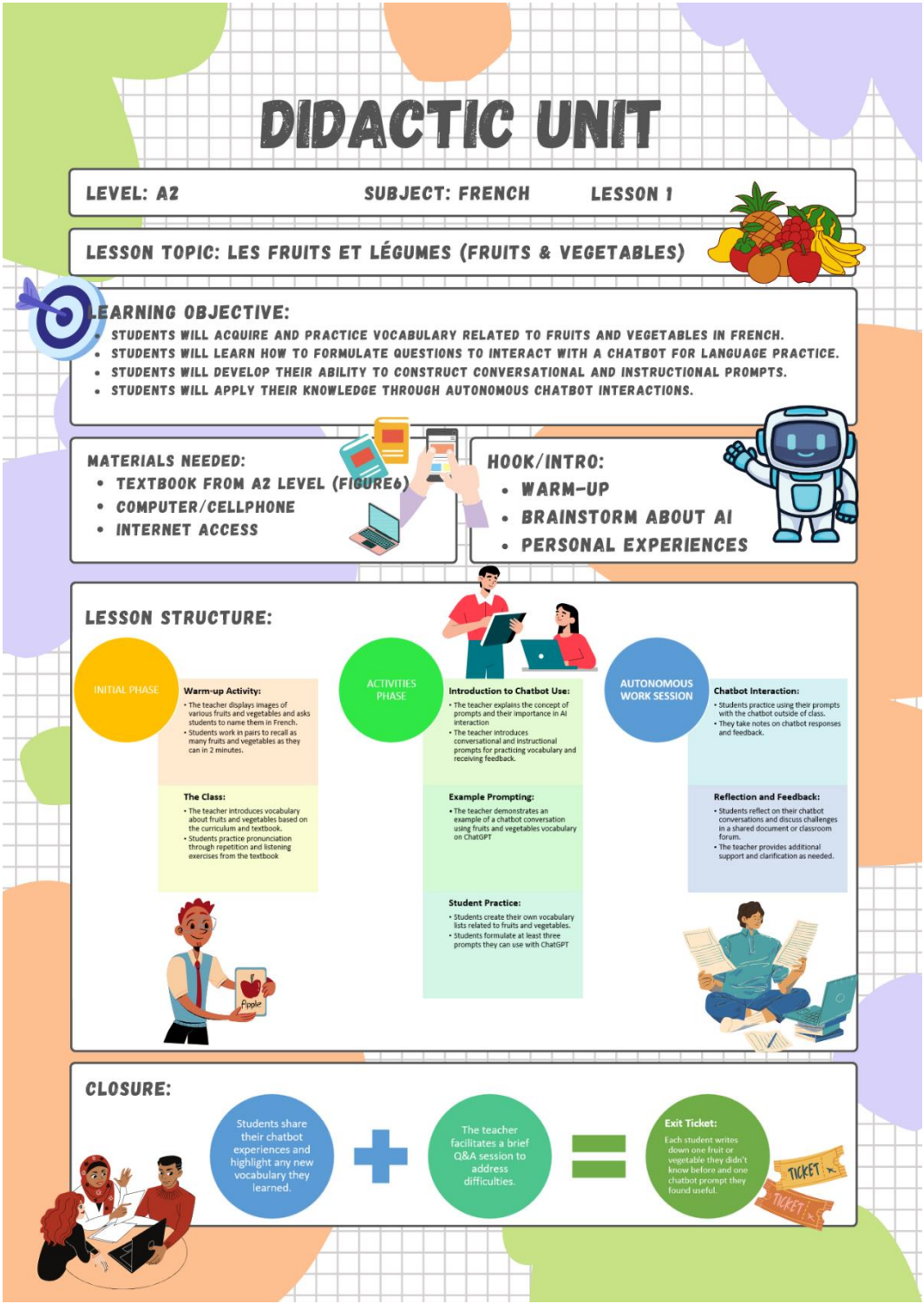
3. **Autonomous work sessions**

During the autonomous work sessions, students will reinforce the vocabulary they have learned by engaging with a chatbot and will require feedback.

4. **Product**

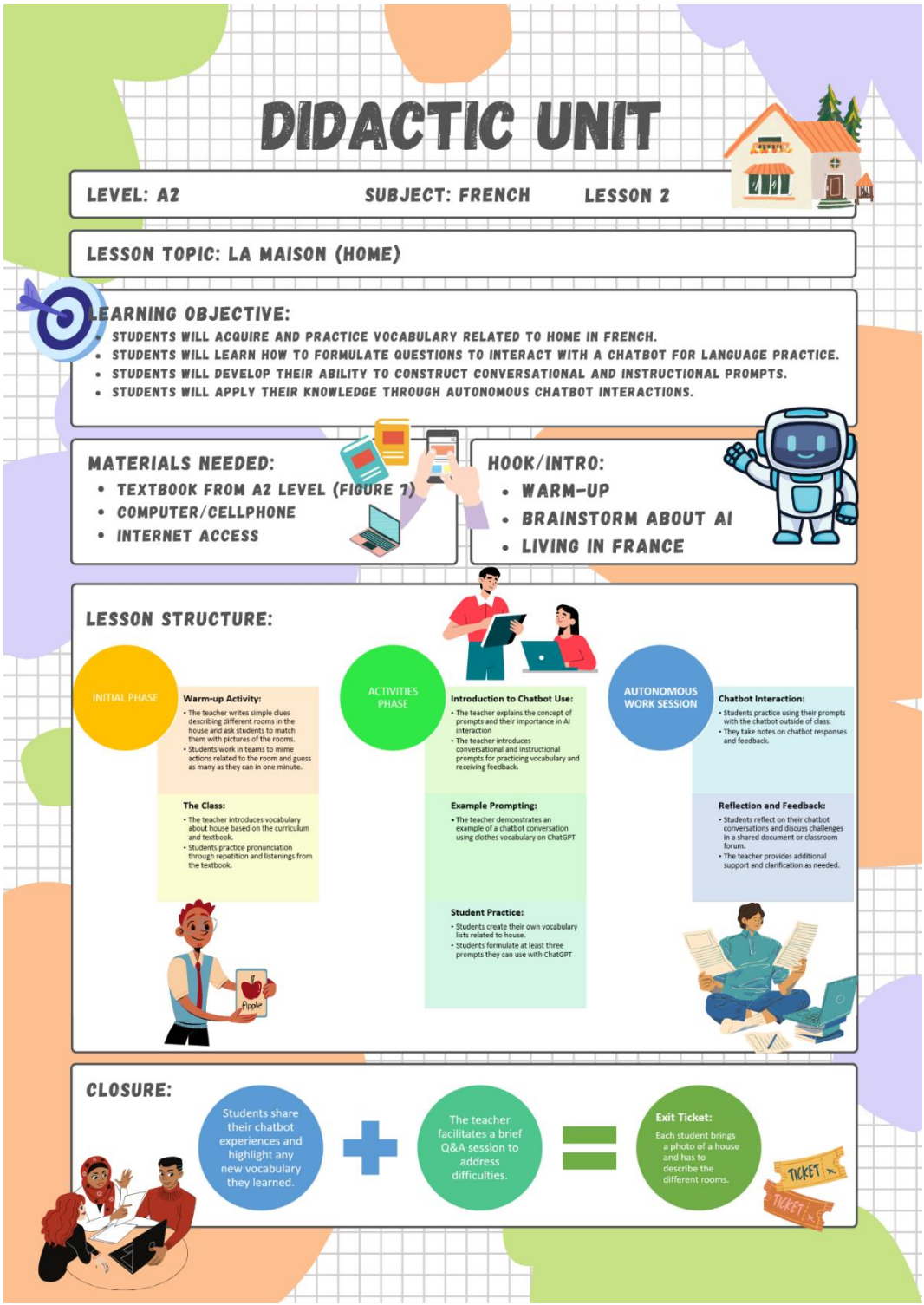
A didactic unit for educators could be used to implement the process, enabling teachers to apply it.

Figure 2. Product lesson 1 in English



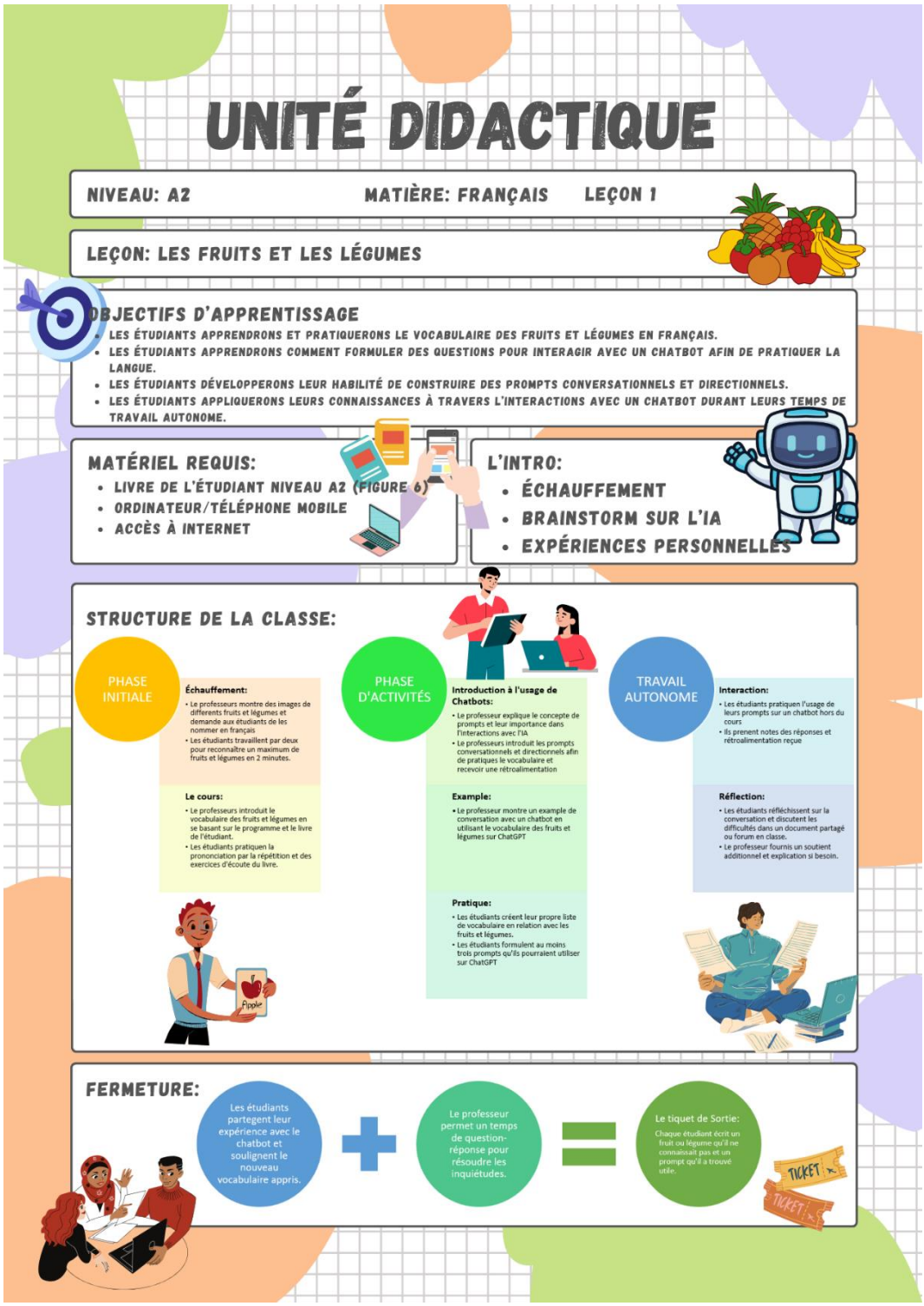
Elaborated by: Patricia Constante
Source: Developed by the author

Figure 3. Product lesson 2 in English



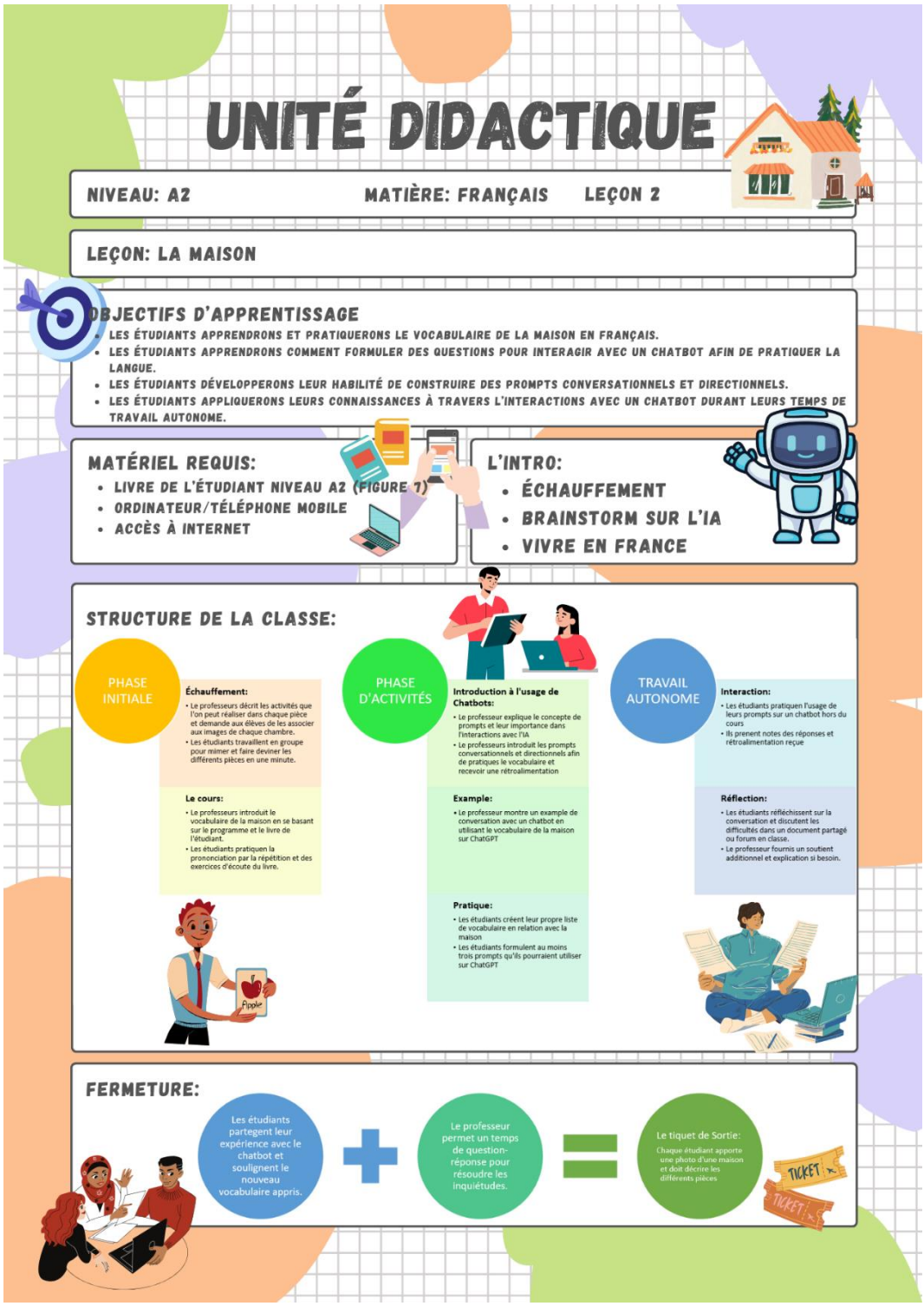
Elaborated by: Patricia Constante
Source: Developed by the author

Figure 4. Product lesson 1 in French



Elaborated by: Patricia Constante
Source: Developed by the author

Figure 5. Product lesson 2 in French



Elaborated by: Patricia Constante
Source: Developed by the author

The topics selected where chosen according to the curriculum and based on the content of the textbook assigned for the program, as shown below:

Figure 6. Textbook used for A2 learners lesson 1

Elaborated by: LeBougne & Lopes (2020)
Source: Inspire A2: Livre de l'élève

Figure 7. Textbook used for A2 learners lesson 2

LEÇON 30

Se loger

COMPRENDRE

DOC. 1

https://www.seloger.com

SeLoger • Acheter **Louer** • Appartement • Meublé Budget Surface Pièces

Appartement Lyon 1er arrondissement
T3, 60 m² • 3 pièces • 2 chambres
1 270 € par mois

Dans immeuble ancien, très bel appartement T3, 60 m², au 6e et dernier étage avec ascenseur, situé quai de la Pêcherie. L'appartement se compose d'une cuisine, d'un séjour, de 2 chambres, d'une entrée, de toilettes séparées et d'une salle de bain avec baignoire. Trois grands placards. Possibilité de dressing ou bureau. Grandes fenêtres, très lumineux. CHAUFFAGE COLLECTIF. 1 270 € par mois.
Quartier calme. Métro Hôtel de ville – Louis Pradel

Appartement Lyon 8e arrondissement
T2, 57 m² • 2 pièces • 1 chambre
950 € par mois

Rue Pierre Delore, bel appartement composé d'un séjour confortable et très clair avec un balcon, une cuisine américaine équipée (un four, un lave-vaisselle, un lave-linge, un réfrigérateur), deux chambres, une salle d'eau avec WC. Immeuble moderne. Une cave de 4 m². Une place de parking. CHAUFFAGE INDIVIDUEL ÉLECTRIQUE. Loyer 950 € par mois.
3e étage. Exposition sud-est.

DOC. 2

1 **Observez (Doc. 1). Répondez.**
a. Qu'est-ce que c'est ? b. Pour quoi faire ?

2 **Lisez (Doc. 1).**
a. Identifiez :
1. le nom du site.
2. le type de logement.
3. la surface.
4. l'étage.
5. le logement avec ascenseur.
6. la ville.
7. le prix par mois.

b. Notez les mots pour caractériser :
1. les immeubles. 2. les pièces. 3. les appartements.
Ex. : 1. ancien

c. À deux Relisez (Doc. 1). Regardez le plan (Doc. 2). Répondez.
À quelle annonce correspond le plan ?

3 **À deux Placez ces meubles et ces appareils dans les pièces du plan (Doc. 2).**

104 cent quatre

Elaborated by: LeBougne & Lopes (2020)
Source: Inspire A2: Livre de l'élève

On the other hand, according to Poola (2023), ChatGPT is an AI-powered conversational agent developed by OpenAI, based on the GPT (Generative Pretrained Transformer) architecture. It's designed to understand and generate human-like text based on the input it receives. Essentially, it can engage in conversations, provide information, answer questions, and even assist with tasks like writing, brainstorming, or learning.

For students of French who want to practice vocabulary acquired in class, ChatGPT can be highly beneficial in several ways:

Interactive Conversations: Students can engage in live, dynamic conversations with ChatGPT in French. This helps reinforce vocabulary and grammar in a practical context, making learning more immersive.

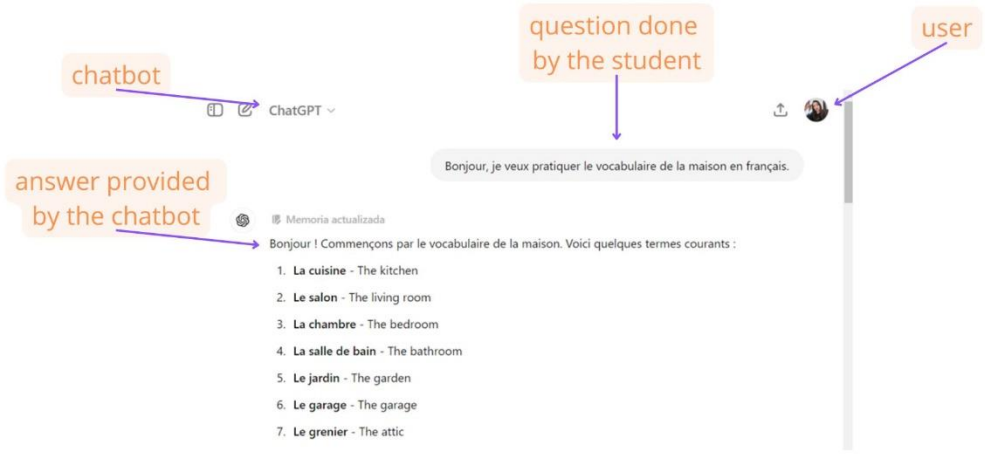
Customized Feedback: ChatGPT can provide feedback on word usage, sentence structure, and grammar. If a student uses a word incorrectly, the model can offer corrections or suggestions, helping them learn from mistakes.

Practice at Any Time: Unlike scheduled classes or study groups, ChatGPT is available 24/7, allowing students to practice whenever they want. This flexibility can lead to more consistent learning and better retention of vocabulary.

For French language students, practicing with ChatGPT can make language learning more engaging and effective, supporting their overall progress in acquiring and mastering the language.

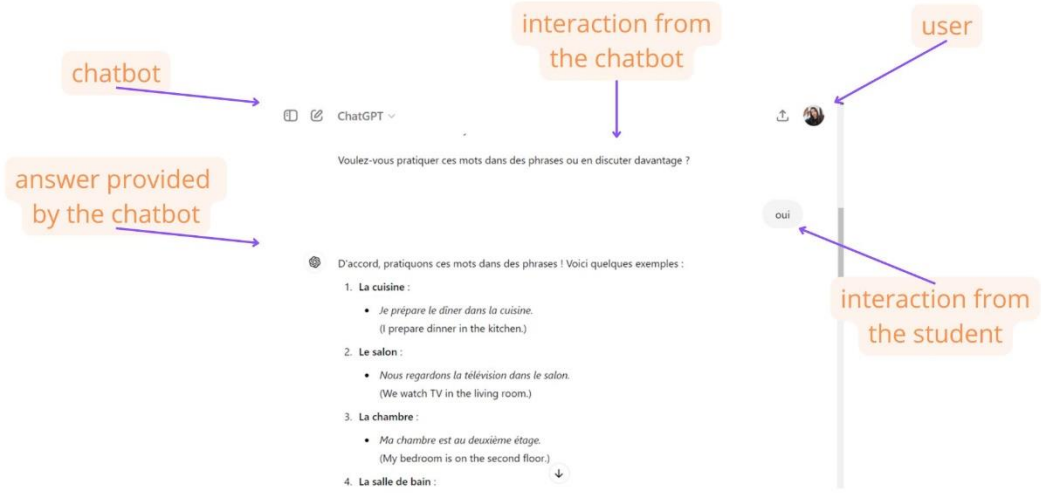
The following images are a simulation on how students can interrac during their autonomous worktime using Chat GPT. These examples where used during the session with the students as examples to guide them.

Figure 8. Chatbot interaction used as example for students



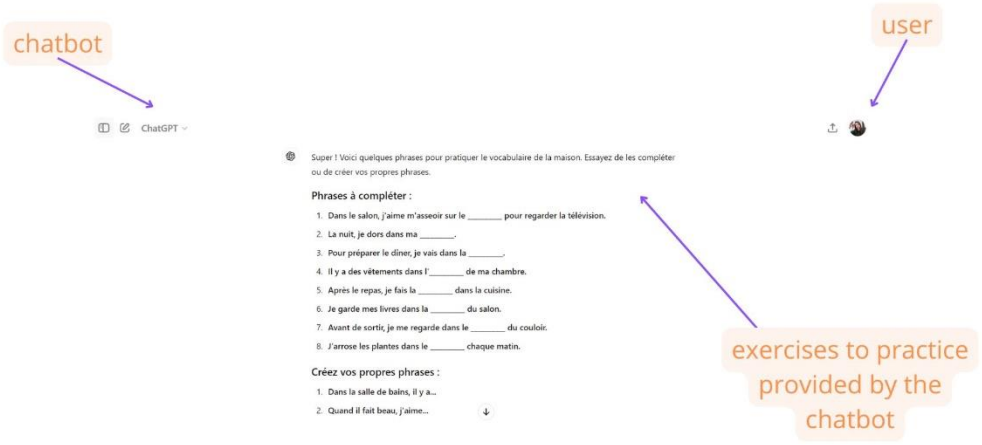
Elaborated by: Patricia Constante
Source: Provided by ChatGPT

Figure 9. Chatbot interaction using vocabulary in context used as example



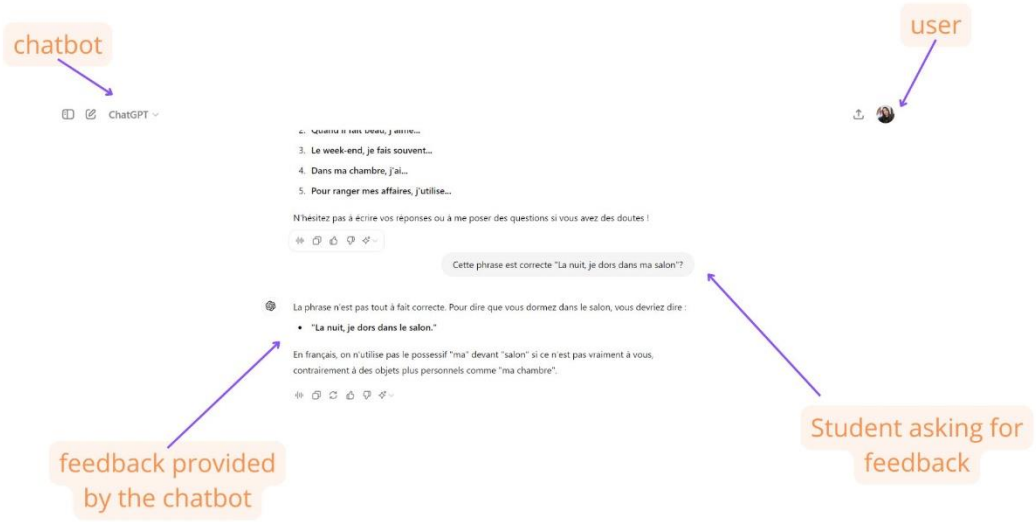
Elaborated by: Patricia Constante
Source: Provided by ChatGPT

Figure 10. Exercises provided by Chatbot to practice used as example



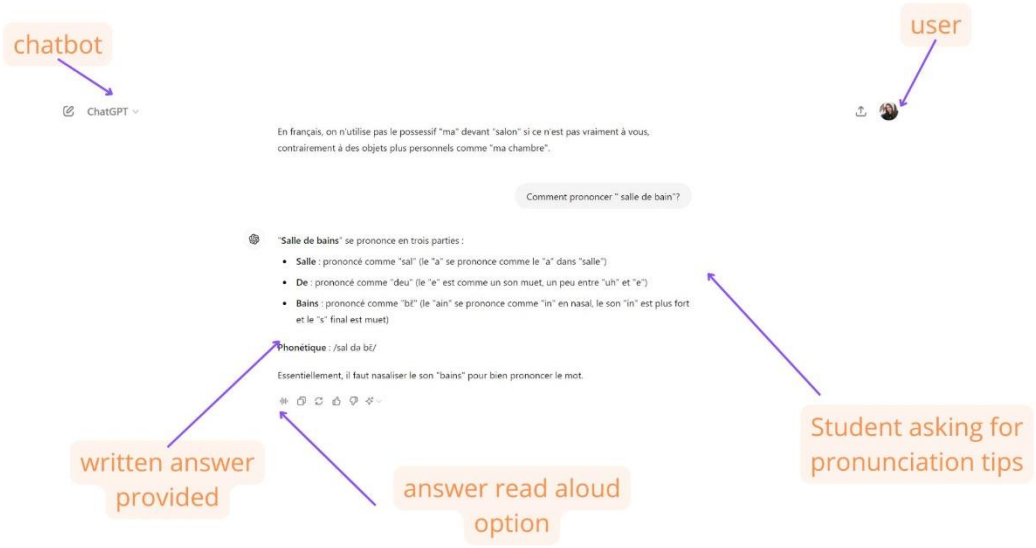
Elaborated by: Patricia Constante
Source: Provided by ChatGPT

Figure 11. Feedback provided by the chatbot used as example



Elaborated by: Patricia Constante
Source: Provided by ChatGPT

Figure 12. Prononciation practice

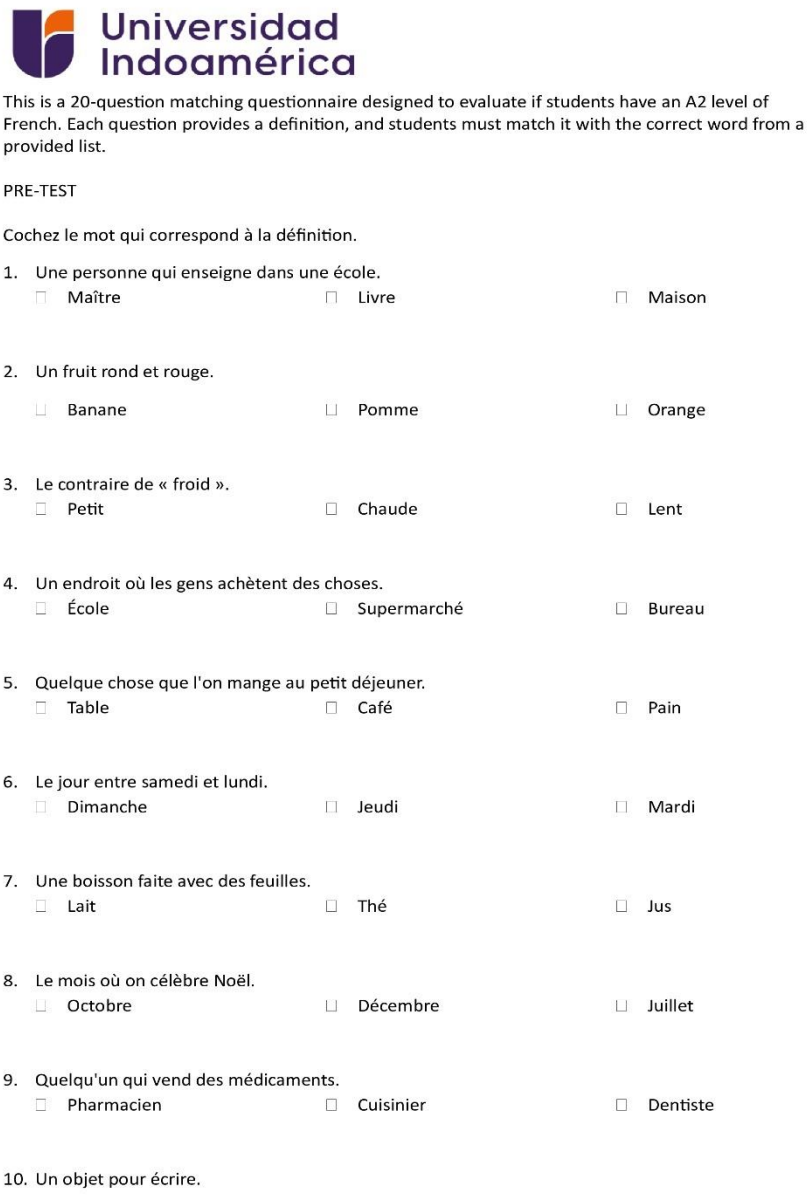


Elaborated by: Patricia Constante
Source: Provided by ChatGPT

Evaluation of the proposal

Considering the type of study, tests (pre and post application) will be conducted to ensure the use of chatbot effectively enhances vocabulary retention and conversational skills, the questionnaires applied are shown below:

Figure 13. Pre-test applied to students



Universidad Indoamérica

This is a 20-question matching questionnaire designed to evaluate if students have an A2 level of French. Each question provides a definition, and students must match it with the correct word from a provided list.

PRE-TEST

Cochez le mot qui correspond à la définition.

1. Une personne qui enseigne dans une école.
   - ☐ Maître
   - ☐ Livre
   - ☐ Maison

2. Un fruit rond et rouge.
   - ☐ Banane
   - ☐ Pomme
   - ☐ Orange

3. Le contraire de « froid ».
   - ☐ Petit
   - ☐ Chaude
   - ☐ Lent

4. Un endroit où les gens achètent des choses.
   - ☐ École
   - ☐ Supermarché
   - ☐ Bureau

5. Quelque chose que l'on mange au petit déjeuner.
   - ☐ Table
   - ☐ Café
   - ☐ Pain

6. Le jour entre samedi et lundi.
   - ☐ Dimanche
   - ☐ Jeudi
   - ☐ Mardi

7. Une boisson faite avec des feuilles.
   - ☐ Lait
   - ☐ Thé
   - ☐ Jus

8. Le mois où on célèbre Noël.
   - ☐ Octobre
   - ☐ Décembre
   - ☐ Juillet

9. Quelqu'un qui vend des médicaments.
   - ☐ Pharmacien
   - ☐ Cuisinier
   - ☐ Dentiste

10. Un objet pour écrire.

- ☐ Stylo ☐ Téléphone ☐ Livre

11. Un animal qui aime le lait et miaule.
    - ☐ Chien ☐ Vache ☐ Chat

12. Un lieu où on peut emprunter des livres.
    - ☐ Musée ☐ Bibliothèque ☐ Hôpital

13. Le contraire de « plein ».
    - ☐ Vide ☐ Sombre ☐ Dur

14. Quelque chose que vous portez sur la tête.
    - ☐ Chapeau ☐ Gant ☐ Sac

15. Le membre de la famille qui est le frère de votre mère ou de votre père.
    - ☐ Oncle ☐ Cousin ☐ Grand-père

16. Un véhicule à deux roues.
    - ☐ Moto ☐ Bateau ☐ Voiture

17. Un appareil que l'on utilise pour voir l'heure.
    - ☐ Montre ☐ Télévision ☐ Lampe

18. Le nom du repas que l'on prend le soir.
    - ☐ Petit-déjeuner ☐ Déjeuner ☐ Dîner

19. Un objet que l'on utilise pour ouvrir une porte.
    - ☐ Clé ☐ Fenêtre ☐ Couteau

20. Un lieu où l'on voit des films.
    - ☐ Théâtre
    - ☐ Cinéma
    - ☐ Église

Elaborated by: Patricia Constante
Source: designed by the author

Figure 14. Post test applied to students

This is a 20-question matching questionnaire designed to evaluate if students have an A2 level of French. Each question provides a definition, and students must match it with the correct word from a provided list.

POST-TEST

Cochez le mot qui correspond à la définition.

1. Un légume orange qui est souvent croquant.
   ☐ Pomme ☐ Carrote ☐ Raisin

2. Un endroit où l'on dort dans une maison.
   ☐ Cuisine ☐ Salle de bain ☐ Banane

3. Le contraire de « rapide ».
   ☐ Facile ☐ Lent ☐ Fort

4. Un objet que l'on utilise pour se coiffer.
   ☐ Brosse ☐ Couteau ☐ Chaussure

5. Une pièce de la maison où on prépare les repas.
   ☐ Chambre ☐ Salon ☐ Cuisine

6. Un animal qui peut voler.
   ☐ Oiseau ☐ Cheval ☐ Chien

7. Un appareil utilisé pour conserver les aliments au froid.
   ☐ Four ☐ Réfrigérateur ☐ Chaise

8. Une boisson faite avec des grains bruns.
   ☐ Thé ☐ Lait ☐ Café

9. Un vêtement que l'on porte en hiver pour ne pas avoir froid.
   ☐ Écharpe ☐ Short ☐ Chapeau

10. Un moyen de transport qui roule sur des rails.
    ☐ Train ☐ Avion ☐ Vélo

11. Le contraire de « heureux ».

☐ Gentil ☐ Triste ☐ Riche

12. Le nom du repas que l'on prend le midi.

☐ Petit-déjeuner ☐ Dîner ☐ Déjeuner

13. Un objet pour couper des aliments.

☐ Assiette ☐ Couteau ☐ Verre

14. Une couleur qui est un mélange de bleu et de jaune.

☐ Rouge ☐ Vert ☐ Noir

15. Un membre de la famille qui est le fils de votre sœur.

☐ Neveu ☐ Oncle ☐ Cousin

16. Un endroit où l'on peut nager.

☐ Plage ☐ Montagne ☐ Ferme

17. Un objet que l'on utilise pour voir la télévision.

☐ Télécommande ☐ Réfrigérateur ☐ Poêle

18. Une saison de l'année où il fait chaud.

☐ Hiver ☐ Été ☐ Automne

19. Un meuble où l'on s'assoit.

☐ Table ☐ Chaise ☐ Lit

20. Quelqu'un qui répare les tuyaux et les robinets.

☐ Electricien ☐ Plombier ☐ Maçon

Elaborated by: Patricia Constante
Source: designed by the author

Validation of the proposal

According to the type of study and product offered, validation through implementation will ensure that the proposed solution is tested in a real-world setting, providing valuable insights and data to confirm its effectiveness and guide further improvements.

In the pre-test phase, students completed an assessment immediately after a traditional vocabulary lesson aligned with the curriculum and textbook content. This lesson involved one or two sessions focused on helping students learn vocabulary through typical classroom exercises, including formulating questions. This was a 20-question matching questionnaire designed to assess whether students have an A2 level of French. Each question provides a definition, and students must match it to the correct word from a provided list.

The results showed an average score of 8.2 out of 20, reflecting a moderate understanding of the material. In terms of score distribution, 28% of students scored between 1 and 5, 56% scored between 6 and 10, 8% scored between 11 and 16, and another 8% scored between 17 and 20. These findings highlight that the majority of students scored in the lower to mid-range, underscoring the need for additional support to enhance vocabulary retention and usage. To address this, the following sessions included instruction on how to formulate chatbot prompts related to the lesson topics. Students created a vocabulary list, and the teacher provided guidance on writing effective prompts—inputs for the AI that could be either conversational or instructional—to encourage practice and allow for immediate feedback. This approach aimed to bridge the gap between textbook learning and practical language application, giving students a structured foundation for engaging with chatbots to reinforce their vocabulary skills.

Following the intervention, a post-test was conducted to assess the effectiveness of chatbot-based vocabulary practice. This assessment took place after one session where students learned to formulate chatbot questions related to the vocabulary topic, reinforcing their skills through guided practice. In these sessions, students compiled a

vocabulary list, and the teacher demonstrated how to craft prompts—specific inputs for the chatbot—to generate relevant responses and provide immediate feedback. During autonomous work, students practiced using these prompts to strengthen their vocabulary in an interactive, feedback-oriented environment. The post-test results showed a significant improvement, with an average score of 15.88 out of 20. None of the students scored below 9, marking a substantial shift from the pre-test results. Specifically, 36% of students scored between 9 and 13, 20% between 14 and 18, and 44% achieved scores between 19 and 20. These findings highlight the positive impact of integrating chatbots into autonomous vocabulary practice, with marked gains in student performance and engagement.

Conclusion

The conclusions of this study indicate that AI-based chatbots can be an effective tool for enhancing vocabulary proficiency in intermediate-level French language learners during autonomous learning sessions. The results demonstrate a clear improvement in vocabulary knowledge, as evidenced by the significant increase in the average scores from 8.2 in the pre-test to 15.88 in the post-test. This improvement suggests that the use of AI chatbots positively contributes to vocabulary retention and application, particularly when students are guided in formulating targeted prompts to engage with chatbots for practice and feedback.

Additionally, the didactic proposal—where students created vocabulary lists, learned to write effective prompts, and practiced interacting with chatbots in a structured way—proved to be a successful approach to fostering autonomous learning. Students' engagement with chatbots allowed them to reinforce vocabulary in an interactive

format that traditional methods could not provide, especially regarding immediate feedback and conversational practice.

Furthermore, survey feedback highlighted a generally positive perception of chatbots as a tool for autonomous language learning. A substantial percentage of students expressed interest in using chatbots for vocabulary practice and valued the adaptability of the AI, reinforcing the viability of chatbot interactions for self-paced language learning. Overall, this study supports the use of chatbots as a complementary resource to enhance vocabulary learning autonomously, with the potential to address the needs of students seeking both flexibility and immediacy in language practice.

Recommendation

1. Integrate Chatbots into Vocabulary Practice: Include AI-based chatbot interactions in the language curriculum to reinforce vocabulary gaining and retention, providing students with regular opportunities for autonomous practice and immediate feedback.

2. Provide Training on Effective Chatbot Use: Offer guidance to students on creating meaningful prompts and using chatbots effectively, maximizing the benefits of these tools for independent language practice.

3. Further exploration: Promote more comprehensive, empirical research on the integration of AI in vocabulary acquisition, emphasizing the need for longitudinal studies and innovations tailored to French learners.

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ANEXES

Universidad Indoamérica

This questionnaire is part of a thesis of the Indoamerica Technological University, in the Master degree of National and Foreign Languages Pedagogy.

Objective: The objective of this survey is to assess the interest and perceived value among students in using AI chatbots as a tool for practicing French during autonomous work hours. The survey aims to identify current challenges students face in language practice, gauge their openness to integrating AI technology into their learning routine, and determine the potential effectiveness of AI chatbots in enhancing language fluency and conversational skills.

Instructions: Read carefully the questions and select the best option that suits your opinion. You can only choose one option.

QUESTIONNAIRE

How do you currently practice your French language skills outside of classroom hours?

a) Language apps
b) Traditional exercises
c) Conversation partners
d) Chatbots

How often do you find yourself wanting to practice French but lacking a partner or resource to do so?

a) Always
b) Often
c) Sometimes
d) Rarely

Do you feel that you could benefit from a tool that offers immediate feedback while practicing French during your independent study time?

a) Yes, definitely
b) Yes, somewhat
c) Not sure
d) No

Would you be interested in using a tool that allows you to practice conversational French at any time?

a) Very interested
b) Somewhat interested
c) Neutral
d) Not interested

How important is it for you to have a resource that adapts to your learning pace when practicing French?

a) Extremely important
b) Important
c) Somewhat important
d) Not important

How do you feel about the idea of using an AI chatbot to simulate real-life conversations in French?

a) Very positive
b) Positive
c) Neutral
d) Negative

Would you be more likely to practice French regularly if you had access to an AI tool that could converse with you in French on a variety of topics?

a) Yes, definitely
b) Yes, probably
c) Maybe
d) No

How do you rate your current confidence level in speaking French during unstructured or spontaneous conversations?

a) Very confident
b) Confident
c) Somewhat confident
d) Not confident

Do you think an AI chatbot could help you improve your fluency in French?

a) Yes, very much
b) Yes, somewhat
c) Unsure
d) No

If a user-friendly AI chatbot were available to help you practice French at any time, how likely would you be to use it as part of your autonomous work hours?

a) Very likely
b) Likely
c) Unsure
d) Unlikely