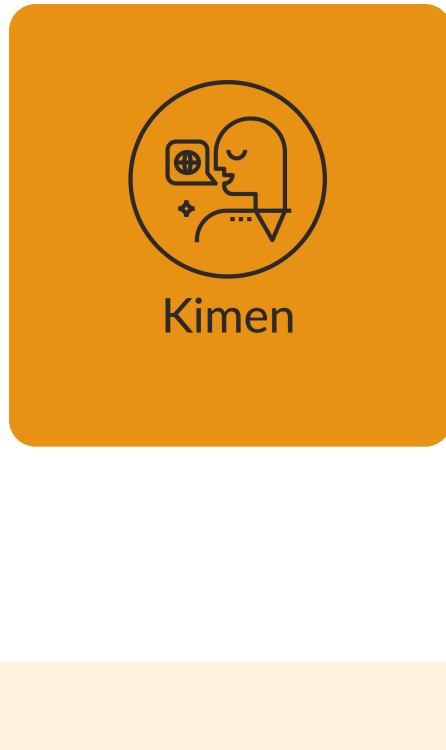


# Kimen - Case study

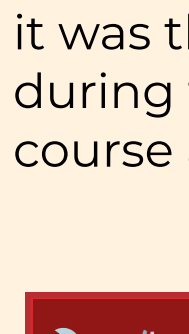


**Kimen** is an app that helps users learn a new language by choosing lessons by topics, setting learning goals, creating lists of words, and completing exercises to practice the lexicon of their lists.

Why "Kimen"? It means "to learn" in Mapudungun, the language spoken by the Mapuche people, who lived in Chile and Argentina. It's a name easy to pronounce in different languages.



**Objective:** design a mobile app that empowers people to learn new vocabulary.



**Role:** UX/UI designer

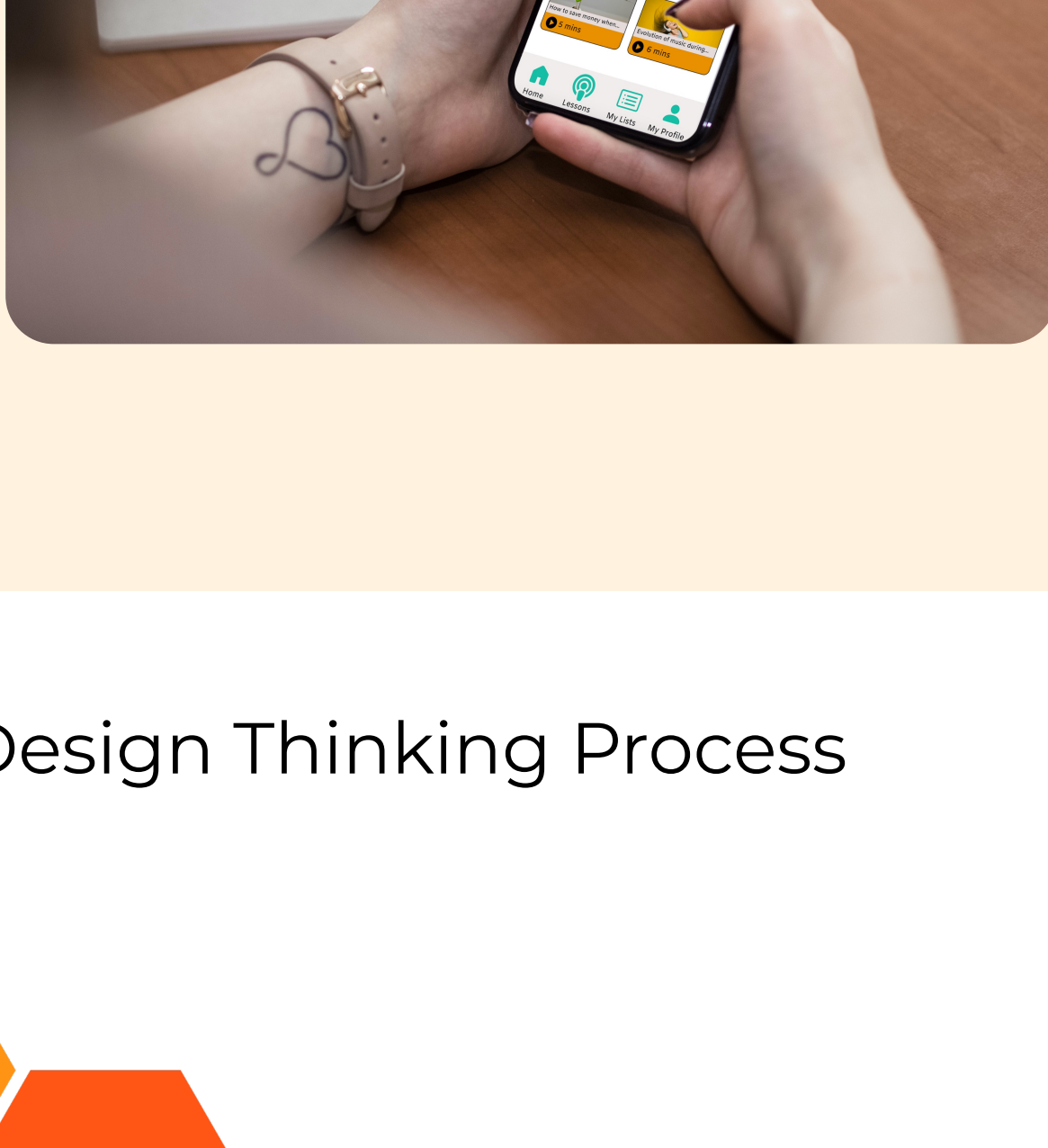
**Solo project:** it was the project I did during the Intro UX course at CareerFoundry.



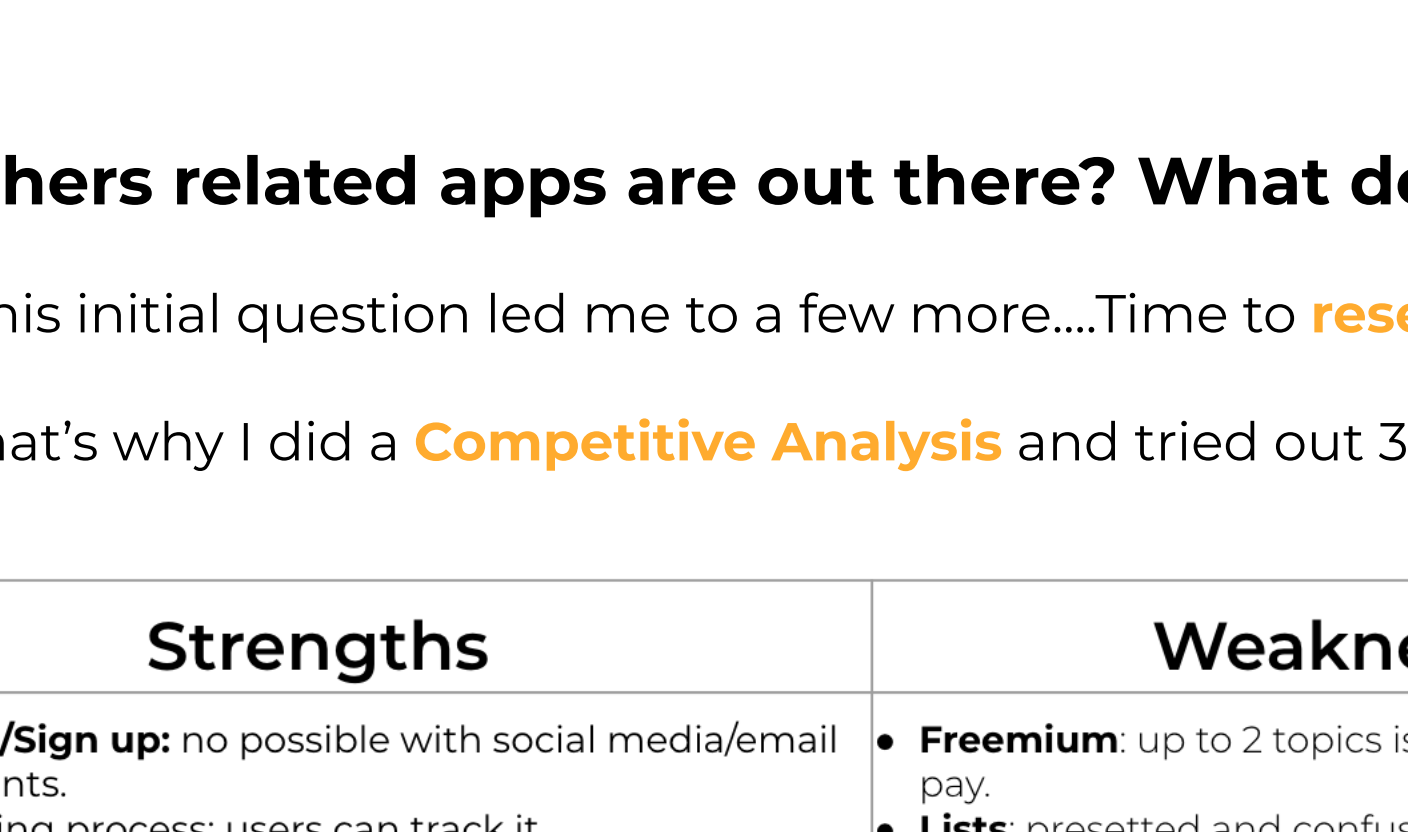
**Duration:** 2 weeks



**Tools:** paper and pen, Balsamiq, Google Drive, Marvel, Figma, Zoom



To design Kimen, I followed the Design Thinking Process



I was excited about the project because it was the first I did and about a topic I like: education

## 1: Empathize

Which others related apps are out there? What do they offer?

This initial question led me to a few more...Time to **research!**

That's why I did a **Competitive Analysis** and tried out 3 apps.

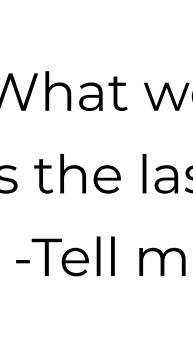
APP	Strengths	Weaknesses
 Pons Vocabulary Trainer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Login/Sign up:</b> no possible with social media/email accounts.</li><li>• <b>Learning process:</b> users can track it.</li><li>• <b>Training:</b> users can choose different exercises.</li><li>• <b>Ads:</b> none</li><li>• <b>Onboarding:</b> there is a guide to learn how to use it</li><li>• <b>Usability:</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Freemium:</b> up to 2 topics is free, then users have to pay.</li><li>• <b>Lists:</b> presetted and confusing. Different topics in one.</li><li>• <b>Level:</b> users can't choose it if they have previous knowledge</li></ul>
 VokabelBox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Login/Sign up:</b> no needed.</li><li>• <b>Pronunciation:</b> it's possible to configure the speed and the voice.</li><li>• <b>Learning process:</b> users can see it with graphics.</li><li>• <b>Lists:</b> it is possible to build lists; import and export them</li><li>• <b>Ads:</b> the app has no ads.</li><li>• <b>Training:</b> users can choose different exercises</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Training:</b> there are not many types of exercises and these are quite monotonous and boring.</li><li>• <b>Freemium:</b> Practice only with 50 words for free.</li><li>• <b>Content:</b> there is no guide about how to use the app</li><li>• <b>Level:</b> users can't choose it if they have previous knowledge.</li></ul>
 Quizlet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Login/Sign up:</b> quickly with social media/email accounts.</li><li>• <b>Share:</b> users can share progress with friends and compete against them</li><li>• <b>Content:</b> content is well written and friendly.</li><li>• <b>Lists:</b> users can create own lists.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Languages:</b> users can't select the language they want to learn or see their progress</li><li>• <b>Goals:</b> users can't set an objective or level</li><li>• <b>Onboarding:</b> there is no guide about how to use the app</li><li>• <b>Ads/Freemium:</b> almost every content is available after paying and the free version has ads.</li></ul>

After this initial research, I concluded that these apps **didn't offer a free platform to learn a language by organizing and adding lists** of vocabulary and setting goals to achieve it.

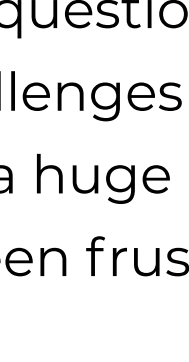
As a consequence, I started thinking: **"how do we actually learn something?"**

So, I decided to look for publications about this topic and appeal to my experience as a teacher.

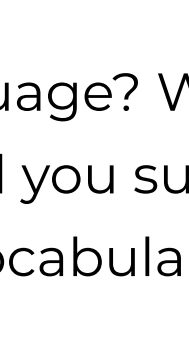
I collected some insights:



we learn better when we have a goal we want to achieve



we can learn faster when emotions and interests are involved in the process



we can learn without conscious effort, like when we play games.

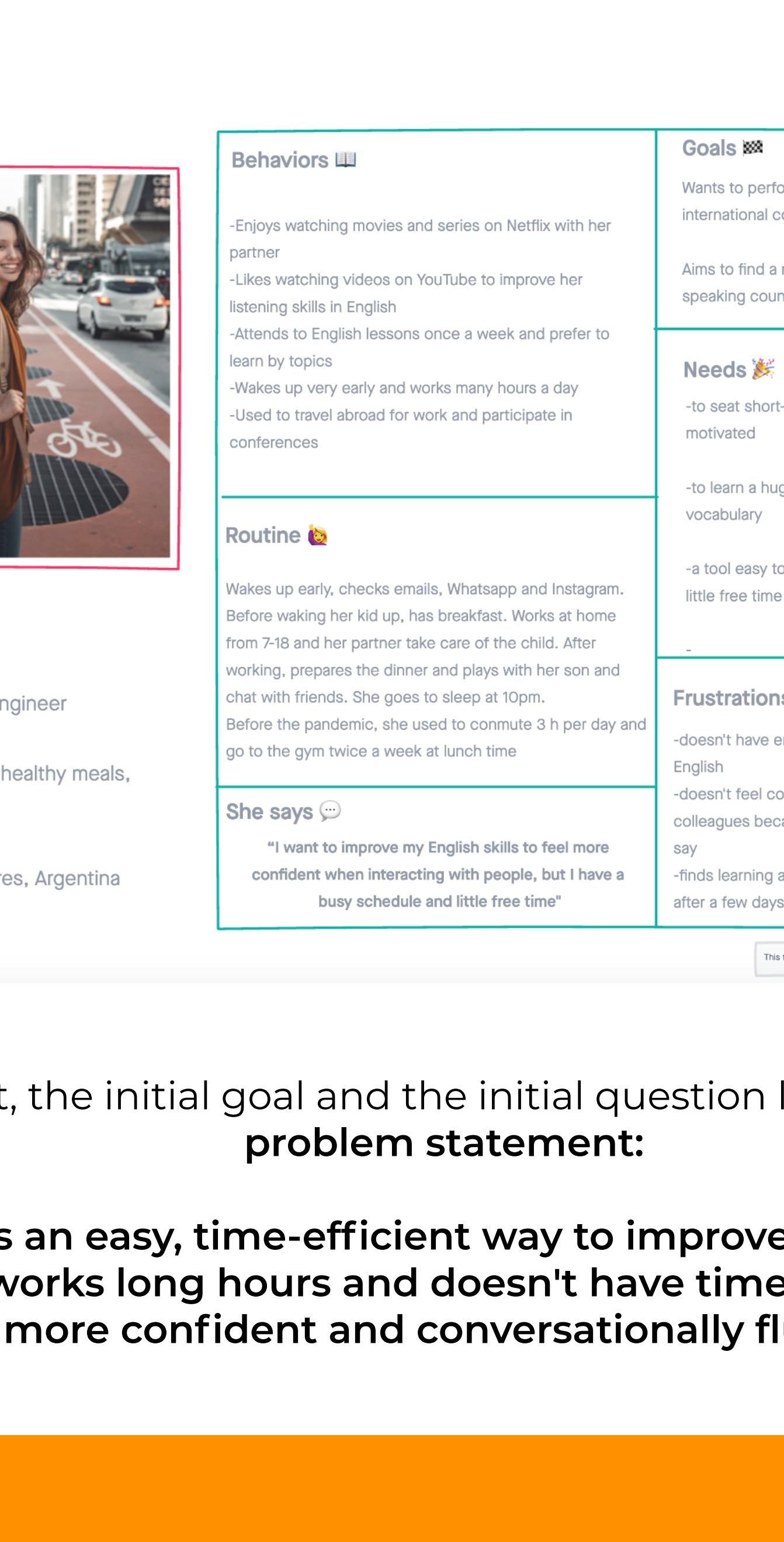
Whit this information in mind, the next thing I needed to know was: **what do the potential users of Kimen think?** What do they do and how? Do they use apps to learn? How?

I conducted a few remoted **user interviews**, people who had previuos previous learning a language.

Some of the questions I prepared were:

- What were/are your biggest challenges about learning a new language? Why?
- When was the last time you had to learn a huge amount of vocabulary? Did you succeed? Why?
- Tell me about a time you've been frustrated with learning new vocabulary.

After analyzing the interviews, I created an **Affinity map** to cleary see my findings:



The research revealed that most users didn't have positive experiences with other learning apps and that they prefer multimedia tools to learn.

## 2: Define

Once I understood my users needs, I created a **persona**: Ariana.

She helped me to design for real people.

**Ariana Rossi**

Age: 33 years old

Profession: food engineer

Interests: cooking healthy meals, watching series

Region: Buenos Aires, Argentina

**Behaviors**

- Enjoys watching movies and series on Netflix with her partner
- Likes watching videos on YouTube to improve her listening skills in English
- Attends to English lessons once a week and prefer to learn by topics
- Wakes up very early and works many hours a day
- Used to travel abroad for work and participate in conferences

**Routine**

Wakes up early, checks emails, Whatsapp and Instagram. Before waking her kid up, has breakfast. Works at home from 7:18 and her partner take care of the child. After working, prepares the dinner and plays with her son and chat with friends. She goes to sleep at 10pm.

Before the pandemic, she used to commute 3 h per day and go to the gym twice a week at lunch time

**She says**

"I want to improve my English skills to feel more confident when interacting with people, but I have a busy schedule and little free time"

**Goals**

Wants to performance better at international conferences

Aims to find a new job in an English speaking country.

**Needs**

- to seat short-term goals to keep motivated
- to learn a huge amount of technical vocabulary
- a tool easy to use that help her use her little free time to practice actively

**Frustrations**

- doesn't have enough time to learn and practice English
- doesn't feel comfortable interacting with colleagues because doesn't understand what they say
- finds learning apps boring and stop using them after a few days

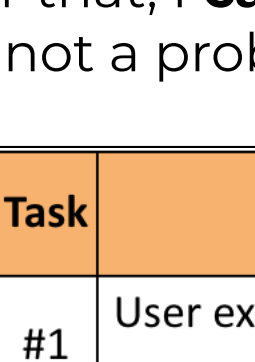
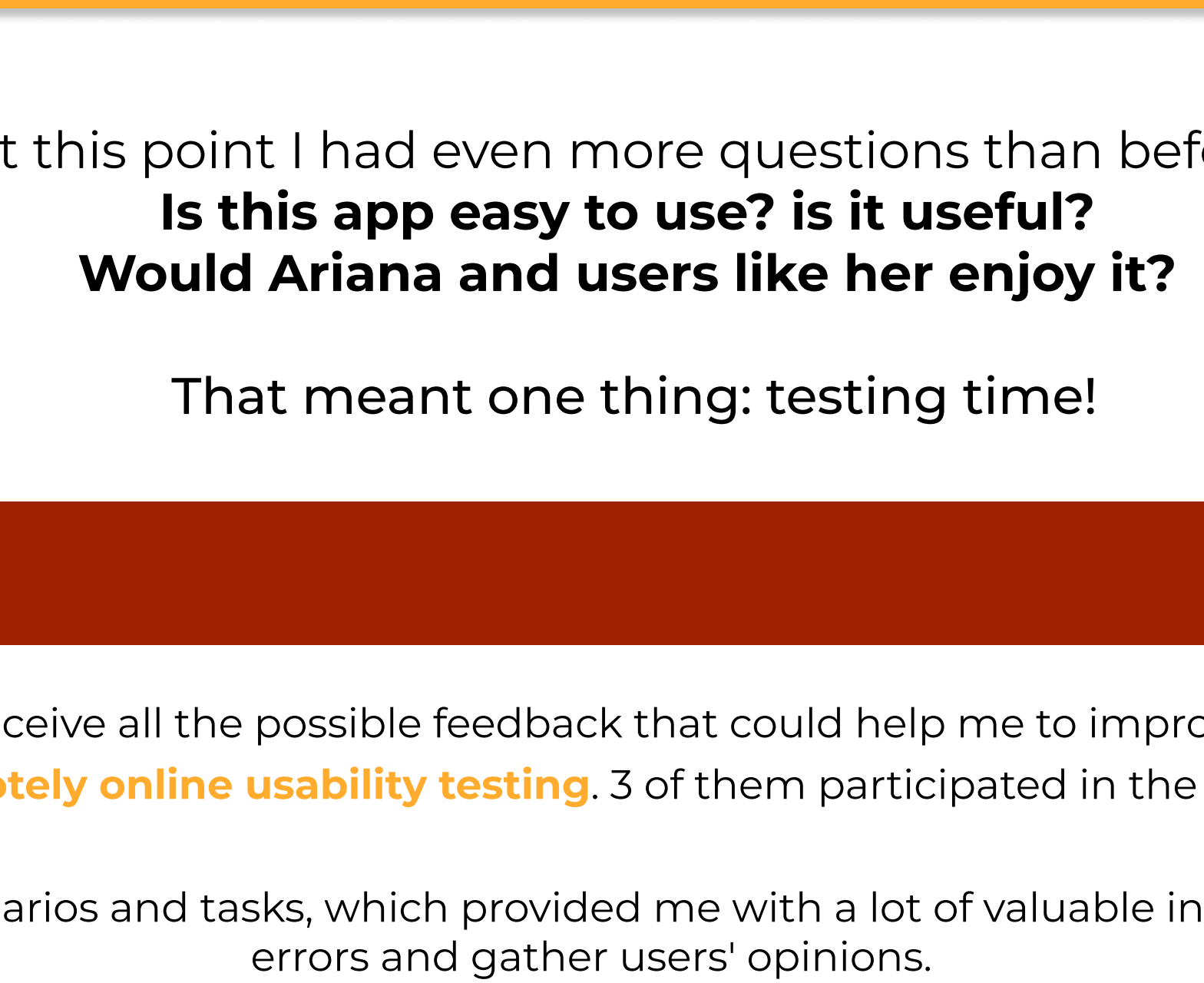
At this point, the initial goal and the initial question led to a narrowed **problem statement**:

**Ariana needs an easy, time-efficient way to improve her English skills because she works long hours and doesn't have time to study, and feels more confident and conversationally fluent.**

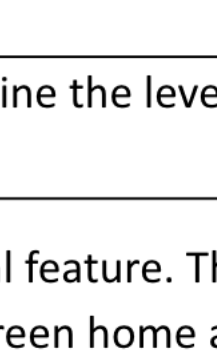
## 3: Ideate

Having her and her needs in mind, I started to think of possible solutions:

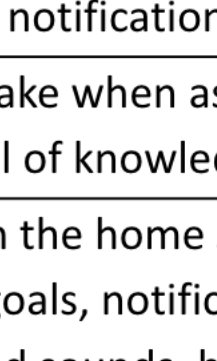
If some users had bad experiences with apps, it could be good to provide them something they already know.



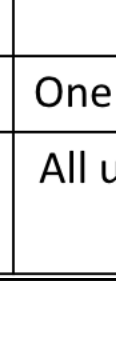
set learning goals



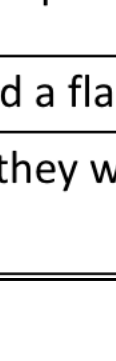
create lists of vocabulary and practice them with quizzes.



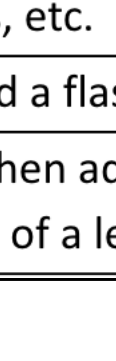
listen to short podcasts lessons by topic



It helps to stay motivated



Games are an effective way to learn, as we all do when we are kids!



It is like listening to a lesson at school. It allows to learn words in context and listen to the pronunciation.

Now the question was: **how would Ariana navigate this app?**

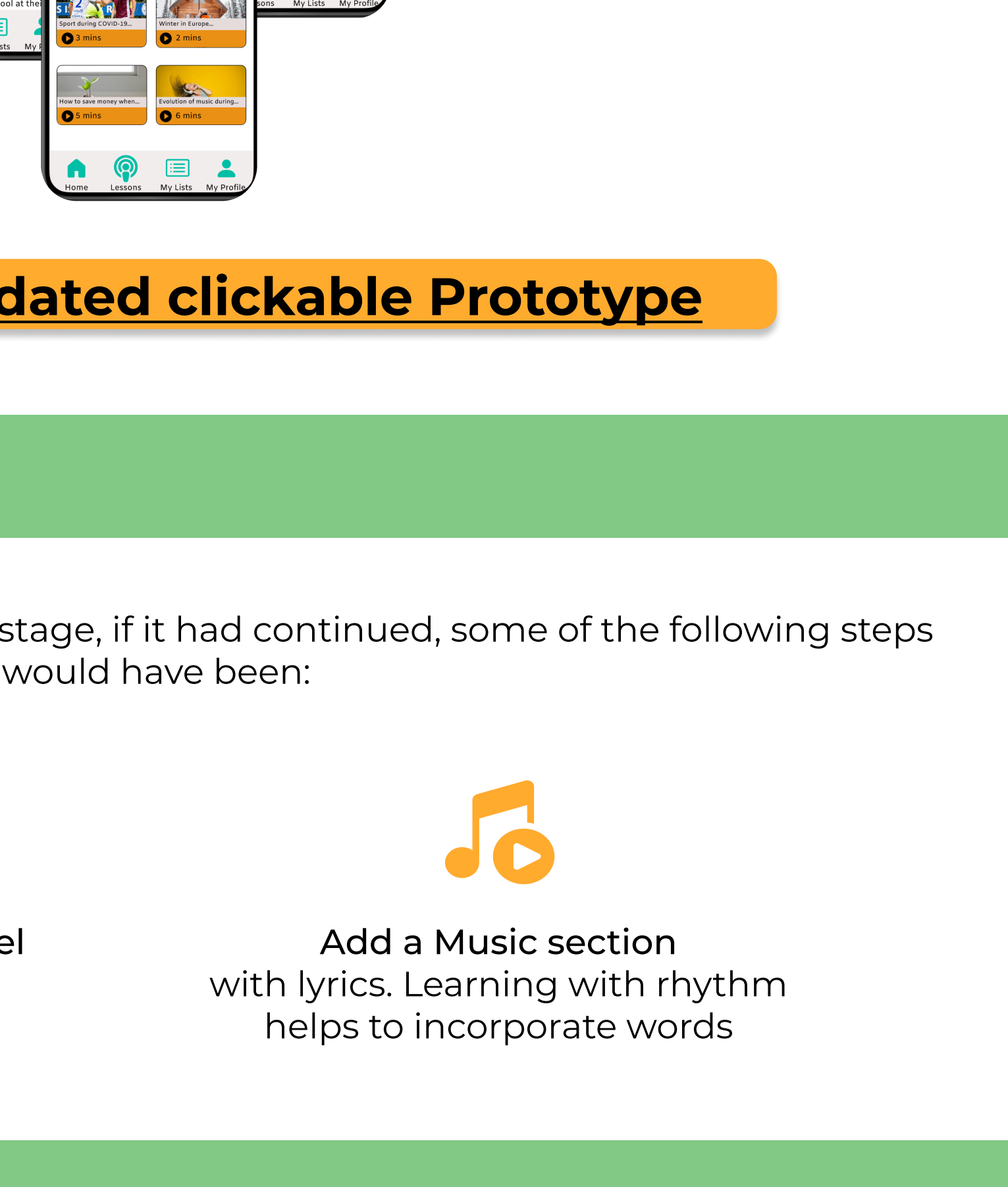
Time to outline the **user journeys** Ariana would take to complete her goals:

I also organized the content of the app by creating the **Information Architecture**.

**User Journeys**

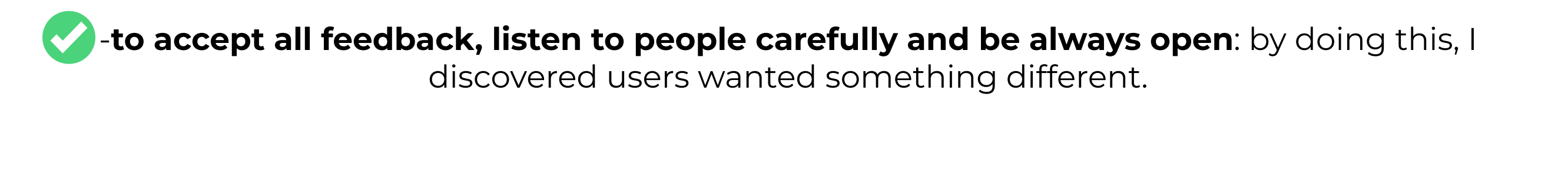


**Information Architecture**



## 4: Prototype

Later on, I started designing the **wireframes** and creating the first **prototype**.



**Access to the 1st.clickable Prototype**

At this point I had even more questions than before: **Is this app easy to use? is it useful? Would Ariana and users like her enjoy it?**

That meant one thing: testing time!

## 5: Test

Ready to receive all the possible feedback that could help me to improve Kimen, I conducted **4 remotely online usability testing**. 3 of them participated in the interview process.

I've created 5 scenarios and tasks, which provided me with a lot of valuable information to find errors and gather users' opinions.

After that, I **categorized the errors** according to Jakob Nielsen's error severity rating scale (being 0 not a problem at all and 4 a usability catastrophe) to help me prioritize the improvements.

Task	Observation	Severity	Recommendation
#1	User expected to fill in personal information before allowing notifications	2	Let users set their profile in first and then ask to allow or deny notifications
#1	One user wants to do a quick test to determine the level of the language to learn	2	Add an optional test to take when asking user to choose the level of knowledge
#2	All users got confused trying to find the Goal feature. They expected to find a Settings option on the screen home and think here are too many steps to set it up	4	Add a Settings option on the home screen to allow user configure goals, notifications, download lists, voices and sounds, home feed preferences, etc.
#3	One user thinks there are too many steps to add a flashcard	4	Reduce steps to add a flashcard
#3	All users wants the app to translate the words they want to learn	3	Add a translate option when adding a card, clicking on a word of a lesson

**Access to the complete Usability Testing document**

Having the chance to see the participants interacting with my solution was amazing. I gathered the most important issues to **iterate again, create a mid-fidelity prototype and add some improvements**:



And I **iterated again, created a high-fidelity prototype**:



**Access to the updated clickable Prototype**

## What's next

Although the project ended at this stage, if it had continued, some of the following steps would have been:



Add a Community Channel because learning among peers is fun!



Add a section with lyrics. Learning with rhythm helps to incorporate words

## Learnings

Kimen was my first UX project. I've learned a lot in only 2 weeks:



**-to have the user always in mind**, because it's easy to lose focus.



**-avoid assumptions**



**-to question every decision I make** to be sure it would help users meet their needs.



**-to discover that I really enjoy the Research part** of the whole UX journey.



**-to test the solution whenever possible**



**-to accept all feedback, listen to people carefully and be always open**: by doing this, I discovered users wanted something different.