STUDIA UBB PHILOLOGIA, LXX, 2, 2025, p. 223 - 239
(RECOMMENDED CITATION)
DOI:10.24193/subbphilo.2025.2.11

THE DESIGN OF TEACHING MATERIALS FOR ONLINE INTERACTION ACTIVITIES WITH THE HELP OF CHATGPT: THE CASE OF ROMANIAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Anca URSA[1], Mihaela MIHAI[2], Narcisa ALBERT[3]

Article history: Received 15 November 2024; Revised 19 April 2025; Accepted 27 April 2025; Available online 10 June 2025; Available print 30 June 2025.

ABSTRACT. ***The Design of Teaching Materials for Online Interaction Activities with the Help of ChatGPT: The Case of Romanian as a Foreign Language***. This study explores the role of ChatGPT, the most widely used current chatbot, in designing teaching materials for modern language instruction, with a focus on Romanian as a foreign language (RFL). The research aims to assess the usefulness and capabilities of this AI tool from the perspective of the teacher as

[1] **Anca URSA** is an Associate Professor at the University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine in Cluj-Napoca, where she teaches Romanian and French as foreign languages, with a special focus on intercultural communication and the development of communication competence through digital technology. Her academic activity includes scientific books and studies published in specialized journals, indexed in ISI and BDI databases. Her research field includes foreign language didactics, computer-assisted learning, and multiculturalism. Email: anca.ursa@usamvcluj.ro.

[2] **Mihaela MIHAI** is an Associate Professor at the University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine in Cluj-Napoca, where she teaches English for Specific Academic Purposes and Scientific English to bachelor and doctoral students, with a special focus on specialized terminology and improving students' communication competence in an international context. Her academic activity includes textbooks and scientific volumes and chapters published in specialized journals, indexed in ISI and BDI databases, research and institutional development projects. Her research fields include sociolinguistics, translation and terminology, foreign language didactics. Email: mihaela.mihai@usamvcluj.ro.

[3] **Carmen-Narcisa ALBERT** is a Lecturer at the University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Cluj-Napoca, teaching ESP (English for Specific Purposes) to different specializations such as Landscaping, Management and Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development, Land Survey and Environmental Sciences. The corresponding teaching activities target developing communicative skills and improving technical vocabulary in relation to the students' further professional community insertion. Her academic activity includes course textbooks and scientific articles published in ISI and BDI journals, as well as active participation to various education conferences. Her research interests comprise ESP methodology, integrating SEI (socio-emotional intelligence) in the teaching process and the use of different educational applications. E-mail: narcisa.albert@usamvcluj.ro.

a curriculum designer. The linguistic activity under analysis—online interaction—was only recently included in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR), *Companion Volume* (2018), and involves a multimodal approach to communication. Within this framework, the study investigates how CEFR grids for online interaction can be effectively used to create didactic scenarios tailored to international learners of Romanian. By applying techniques such as the "funnel strategy" and "progressive-hint prompting", the research generated a series of B1-level instructional activities with the help of ChatGPT, simulating authentic online communication contexts (e.g., collaborating in a chat group to plan an event). The results show that, under teacher guidance, ChatGPT can be an effective partner in designing interactive, relevant, and motivating materials that enhance learners' ability to engage in real-life online interactions. The study highlights both the potential and the current limitations of AI-assisted material development, emphasizing the need for a critical and reflective approach to using such tools in language education.

Keywords: *artificial intelligence, ChatGPT, language teaching, material design, Romanian as a foreign language, online interaction, CEFRL*

REZUMAT. ***Designul materialelor în activitatea de interacțiune online cu ajutorul lui ChatGPT. Cazul românei ca limbă străină.*** Studiul investighează rolul pe care ChatGPT, cel mai utilizat chatbot actual, îl poate avea în proiectarea materialelor didactice pentru predarea limbilor moderne, cu accent pe româna ca limbă străină (RLS). Cercetarea își propune să evalueze utilitatea și competențele acestui instrument de inteligență artificială, din perspectiva profesorului ca autor de curriculum. Activitatea lingvistică analizată – interacțiunea online – este una relativ recent inclusă în *Cadrul European Comun de Referință pentru Limbi* (CECRL), *Companion Volume* (2018), și presupune o abordare multimodală a comunicării. În contextul respectiv, studiul explorează modul în care grilele CECRL pentru interacțiunea online pot fi valorificate în proiectarea de scenarii didactice relevante pentru cursanții internaționali care învață limba română. Prin aplicarea tehnicilor de tip „strategia pâlniei" și „*progressive-hint prompting*", cercetarea a generat, cu ajutorul ChatGPT, o serie de activități didactice adaptate nivelului B1, care simulează situații autentice de comunicare online (de exemplu, colaborarea într-un grup de chat pentru organizarea unui eveniment). Rezultatele indică faptul că, sub ghidajul profesorului, ChatGPT poate deveni un partener eficient în elaborarea de materiale interactive, relevante și motivate pentru studenți, favorizând dezvoltarea competențelor de interacțiune online într-un mediu autentic. Studiul evidențiază atât potențialul, cât și limitele actuale ale implicării AI în proiectarea didactică, subliniind necesitatea unei utilizări critice și reflexive a acestui instrument.

Cuvinte-cheie: *inteligență artificială, ChatGPT, predarea limbilor străine, designul materialelor, româna ca limbă străină, interacțiune online, CECRL*

1. Introduction

One of the major challenges for foreign language teachers is to identify, adapt, and create curriculum content that aligns with the social changes and the evolving needs of students and foreign language users. In the European context, the main guiding tool for the language teaching-learning process emphasizes the learner as a social agent, co-constructing meaning in interaction (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – CEFR, 2001, and Companion Volume – CEFR-CV, 2018). Given that a significant portion of communication over the past two decades has shifted online, digital literacy has become a crucial component of contemporary education. Therefore, the second version of the CEFR includes digital interaction as part of communicative activities, incorporating it under interaction—one of the four modes of communication developed by the framework in specific descriptor grids.

Artificial intelligence (AI), particularly the new chatbots based on Large Language Models, can prove to be useful and creative assistants in designing communication materials for learning a new language. Among the array of available AI assistants, we chose to work with ChatGPT 3.5 not only because of its accessibility and popularity but also due to its ability to incorporate user feedback and progressively correct its discourse errors. It has evolved to generate increasingly accurate and complex output, even in lesser-known languages such as Romanian. Moreover, developing materials with the help of this prompt-driven digital assistant seems to us the most appropriate and productive direction in language didactics. Nowadays, true professional intelligence lies in learning how to use AI productively rather than managing study materials without it.

This article is based on an applied research project carried out within Romanian language classes for international students, in which we tested the effectiveness of using ChatGPT for generating and adapting teaching materials for online interaction activities. The proposed tasks were designed, implemented, and evaluated with B1-level groups, aiming to align CEFR descriptors with the learners' real communication needs. The next step is to identify appropriate pedagogical approaches and specific teaching activities for student groups, which are less present in the pedagogical guidance documents mentioned. These activities will allow us to manage Romanian language learning through its interactive and authentic component, in direct contact with real life.

2. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The phrase "online interaction" refers to any type of communication between two or more people, sometimes between a person and a machine or application, and it requires the mediation of a device. Its most visible and, at the same time, most complex feature is the multimodal perspective it involves, combining listening, reading, producing spoken or written messages, reacting through words or symbols, and conveying messages through images or words.

This study adopts a qualitative, exploratory approach aimed at assessing the pedagogical potential of Chat GPT in designing online interaction materials for learners of Romanian as a Foreign Language (RFL). The central objective is to determine how AI-powered tools can support curriculum development, particularly for activities aligned with the CEFR-CV descriptors for online interaction. More specifically, the research seeks to identify teaching strategies that integrate AI in meaningful, communicative tasks that replicate real-life online exchanges. The methodology is structured around two core components: (1) a content-based analysis of the CEFR-CV descriptors pertaining to B1-level online interaction activities, and (2) a series of structured prompts and interactions with Chat GPT designed to generate, adapt and refine online learning tasks. These prompts were developed using two main strategies: the *funnel method*, which progressively narrows the task focus based on descriptor analysis, and *progressive-hint prompting*, which builds on previous responses to improve relevance and clarity. The goal is not only to evaluate Chat GPT's performance as a digital assistant in instructional design but also to generate practical, ready-to-use didactic scenarios that are authentic, student-centered, and adaptable to various classroom contexts.

2.1. CEFR and Online Interaction Activities

As mentioned in the introduction, while preparing materials for language lessons with international students, we refer specifically to the most important European document available to teachers and students on the Council of Europe's platform (https://t.ly/eEPNO). The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – Companion Volume* is fundamental for the level-based grids it proposes for learning a new language. Although it proves to be a useful self-assessment tool for learners, the CEFR is primarily "a tool to assist the planning of curricula, courses, and examinations by working backwards from what the users/learners need to be able to do in the language" (CEFR-CV 2020, 21). Thus, after it came into use, the action-oriented perspective gained ground in the institutionalized environment. The "learner can" descriptors allow teachers

to focus more on what still needs to be acquired in the classroom and less on what is incorrect in the students' messages. As for the syllabi, they gradually abandoned content-based progression and focused instead on the needs of the target group, decisively oriented towards real-life tasks.

Substantial content additions were made to the 2001 version of the CEFR in the Companion Volume (CEFR-CV 2018), including the entire activity that is the subject of this study: online interaction. It can be found in section 3.3.1.3 of the new guide, framed within one of the four fundamental modes of communication: reception, production, mediation, and interaction. The latter includes, in addition to oral and written interaction, online interaction, which combines elements from the first two, as well as complementary activities, such as understanding and generating messages.

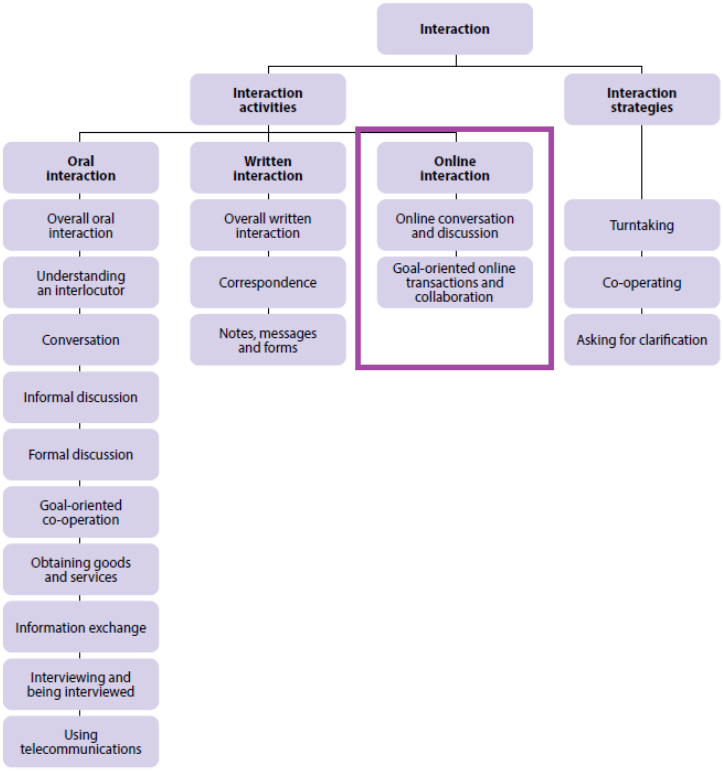

Table 1. (adapted) Interaction Activities and Strategies (Fig. 13 from CEFR-CV 2020, p. 71)

The most important features of this new activity lie precisely in its interstitial nature, situated between classic forms of communication, both oral and written, reception and production. The four communication skills structured the 2001 volume of the CEFR, following a model adopted from the 1960s. When using digital channels, the activity becomes multimodal, "including just checking or exchanging responses, spoken interaction and longer production in live link-ups, using chat (written spoken language), longer blogging or written contributions to discussions, and embedding other media" (CEFR-CV 2020, 25). Compared to face-to-face communication activities, web users must remain vigilant to a few unique aspects: "the need for more redundancy in messages; the need to check that the message has been correctly understood; the ability to reformulate in order to aid comprehension and address misunderstandings; and the ability to handle emotional reactions" (CEFR-CV 2020, 84).

The 2018 *Framework* not only introduces online communication as part of interaction—an activity partially outlined in the 2001 edition—but also proposes two related grids, which include progressive descriptors from pre-A1 to C2. The categories of the scales provided are complementary: *online conversation and discussion* and *goal-oriented online transactions and collaboration*. We will return with a brief analysis of these in the following section, before the practical exercises involving ChatGPT as an efficient assistant for the foreign language teacher. For now, we find this new online interaction activity commendable, even though it offers only two grids, compared to the more complex and nuanced guidance provided for other activities. But, as Brian North, the patriarch of the Framework, states, "The CEFR is certainly not perfect, but it is open-ended, as shown by the recent update with the CEFR/CV. The CEFR is still not used to its full potential" (North 2020, 19). We remain convinced that digital literacy will be more extensively presented in a third edition of the volume in question.

2.2. Artificial Intelligence in Developing Communication Competence

On June 14, 2023, the European Parliament began the process of negotiating its stance on AI, aiming to finalize the specific law after discussions with all member countries. The law would ensure that AI developed and used in Europe is fully aligned with EU rights and values, including human oversight, safety, privacy, transparency, non-discrimination, and social and environmental well-being. (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20230609IPR96212/meps-ready-to-negotiate-first-ever-rules-for-safe-and-transparent-ai)

Such regulations would bring greater comfort and security to users, including in the use of chatbots as useful tools in education. The challenges and dilemmas currently include concerns such as those raised by Reinders and Pegrum, who explained the risk of reducing language learning to a few daily minutes of activity within smartphone applications, known as "applification" (Reinders and Pegrum 2015, 2). From collaborative learning designs to learning based on structured exercises, this approach leaves little room for the creation of complex and creative messages, generating insurmountable limits that block linguistic progression. Therefore, encouraging interaction with one or more communication partners, in a formal or non-formal setting, is a critical goal for learning a new language in the era of Web 3.0.

In the following pages, we intend to test a research hypothesis that seeks to overcome the outlined anxieties: under conditions of supervision and with progressive guidance, we can transform ChatGPT into a creative and reliable ally in our work of developing communication competence and improving the online interaction activities of our students learning Romanian as a foreign language (RFL). This is because, to a large extent, it succeeds in promoting personalized learning experiences, fostering an understanding of another language and its associated culture, overcoming language barriers, facilitating the creation of an inclusive learning environment, encouraging critical thinking, and supporting student collaboration, among others (Ekellem 2024, 2).

3. Results

Since the starting point for creating activities and materials lies in the two specific grids from the CEFR-CV, we will first clarify their features before selecting specific descriptors to guide the interaction with ChatGPT. The progression of communication from pre-A1 to C2 in the provided scales considers four important principles for language learners: moving from simple social exchanges to professional and educational interactions; evolving from asynchronous to synchronous interactions; utilizing symbols, images, and other codes to compensate for the absence of emotional cues or suprasegmental features (such as tone or stress); and developing the ability to manage misunderstandings, both linguistic and cultural (Goodier & Piccardo 2020, 17).

The first CEFR scale for managing online interaction focuses on *Online conversation and discussion*. It incorporates spontaneity in responses and turn-taking strategies from oral interaction, but also includes new skills such as commenting on others' posts, reacting to embedded media, and inserting images, symbols, emojis, GIFs, and other graphic reactions into one's own

discourse. The skills outlined in the grid evolve from "can post simple online greetings" or "can formulate very simple messages" (A levels) to "can make personal online postings" or "can participate actively in an online discussion" (B levels), while at the C levels, we see skills such as "can adapt their register according to the online context" and "can anticipate misunderstandings, including cultural ones" (CEFR-CV 2020, 85-86).

The grid entitled *Goal-oriented online transactions and collaboration* deals with interactions that pursue a specific goal: purchasing goods and services online, negotiating terms, participating in a joint project, resolving communication issues, and so on. Here too, the progression is visible across the grid levels: "This can be seen as a progression from filling in predictable online forms at Pre-A1, to solving various problems in order for the transaction to take place at the B levels, through to being able to participate in, and ultimately co-ordinate, group project work online at the C levels" (CEFR-CV 2020, 85-86). In terms of skills, the progression moves from "can make selections in a form" and "can use formulaic language to respond to routine problems" (A levels) to "can respond to instructions" or "can take a lead role in online work" (B levels), and finally to "can deal with communication problems and cultural issues" or "can deal effectively with frictions that arise" (C levels).

From the proposed levels, we have chosen to develop several activities related to *online interaction* with the help of ChatGPT, and to assess their relevance, adaptability, and efficiency in the curriculum. These activities target only one level, as space does not permit the exploration of multiple online communication skills across levels. The chosen level is B1, the first one where the language user becomes independent. We will develop the B1 descriptors with all types of activities from the two scales. In our conversation with ChatGPT, we applied two essential techniques for managing the provided content in order to reach a valid and productive instructional scenario.

a. *The funnel strategy* involves narrowing down the discussed content, starting from the descriptors in the scales and shaping the conversation with the Open AI chatbot towards concrete suggestions for content and appropriate methods.
b. *The method of progressive hint prompting* involves interactions with ChatGPT4, where we use previous responses as clues to obtain a better output, more tailored to our specific objectives (Zheng et al. 2023, 2). If we were to provide all the details from the start, hoping for a complete and accurate response, we might be disappointed. In fact, the chatbot could feel overwhelmed and begin to "hallucinate," as any user might observe under such conditions.

We will not reproduce the entire conversation from the Open AI platform, as it is too extensive for the limited space of an article. However, interested readers can find the full version at the following URL: https://chatgpt.com/share/af98078e-3ce2-4474-b27d-38a408dd21e0.
Instead, we will outline here the stages of the discussion and the chatbot responses in four structured steps. At the end, we will select the activity we have adjusted to build a complete online interaction scenario, applicable to the group of students learning Romanian as a foreign language (RFL).

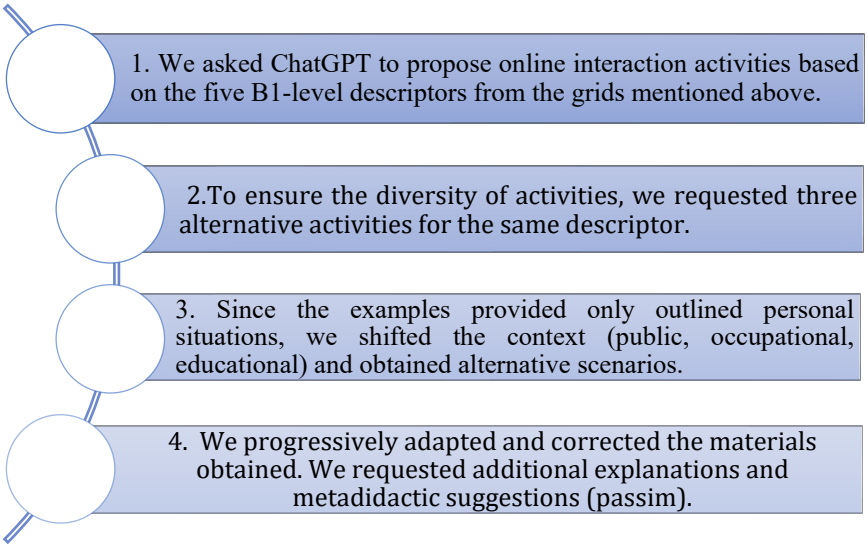

Figure 1. Key Points of the Dialogue with ChatGPT on Online Interaction

1. We asked ChatGPT to propose online interaction activities. In the table below, the targeted descriptors appear on the left, specifically those from the B1 level in both grids. It should be noted that we did not include the higher level, B1+, even though there are developed skills for that level as well. In the right column, we have reproduced the activities suggested by ChatGPT in their initial formulation, before applying the progressive hints to optimize and adjust the applicable scenarios. Each activity suggestion was integrated into a didactic scenario with objectives, instructions, and steps, but for now, we will only reproduce the activity itself in the table.

Descriptors, B1	Activities
Online conversation and discussion	
Can post a comprehensible contribution in an online discussion on a familiar topic of interest, provided they can prepare the text beforehand and use online tools to fill gaps in language and check accuracy.	Students will participate in an online discussion forum on platforms such as Google Classroom, Moodle, or any other learning platform used. The discussion topic will be "My Hobbies and Interests." Each student will be required to choose a hobby or interest and write an initial contribution of 150-200 words.
Can make personal online postings about experiences, feelings and events and respond individually to the comments of others in some detail, though lexical limitations sometimes cause repetition and inappropriate formulation.	Each student will create an online journal, either on a private blog or on a file-sharing platform, where they will post weekly about a recent personal experience, a feeling, or an event that impacted them.
Goal-oriented online transactions and collaboration	
Can engage in online collaborative or transactional exchanges that require simple clarification or explanation of relevant details, such as registering for a course, tour or event, or applying for membership.	Students must register for an online Romanian language course on an educational platform. To enroll, they need to interact with a platform representative via online chat.
Can interact online with a partner or small group working on a project, provided there are visual aids such as images, statistics and graphs to clarify more complex concepts.	Students must collaborate online in small teams to create a presentation about a tourist city in Romania (e.g., Braşov, Sibiu). They will use images, statistics, and graphs to support their descriptions and recommendations.
Can respond to instructions and ask questions or request clarifications in order to accomplish a shared task online.	Students work together to organize an online welcome event for new international students. The task is to create an agenda for the event and distribute responsibilities.

Table 2. B1 Descriptors for Online Interaction (CEFR-CV 2020, 85; 87) and Activities Suggested by ChatGPT

2. To ensure the diversity of activities, we requested three alternative suggestions for the same descriptor, specifically for "Can engage in online collaborative or transactional exchanges that require simple clarification or explanation of relevant details, such as registering for a course, tour or event, or applying for membership." The proposals focus on the same scenario, online registration, with slight variations: registering for a city tour, subscribing to an online library, and signing up for a local cultural event.

3. Since the examples provided only outlined personal situations, we explicitly asked the chatbot to shift the context, and we obtained alternative scenarios in the public, occupational, and educational domains, as suggested by the Companion Volume in the examples from Appendix 5, an additional resource for users of the online interaction scale (CEFR-CV 2020, 191). While in the personal context, the descriptor led, with the help of progressive hints, to a WhatsApp discussion with classmates (for which the teacher will create a real group on the app), the alternative suggestions appear from the start (or perhaps as a result of the previous adjustments) to be more productive and efficient:

- ✓ *Public situation*: Students will make a post on a public Facebook group dedicated to the local community about their experience at a recent event held in the city, such as a festival, exhibition, or volunteer activity.
- ✓ *Occupational situation*: Students will simulate a post on a company's internal platform, sharing their thoughts on a recent workshop or training session they attended.
- ✓ *Educational situation*: Students will post on a discussion forum dedicated to a group project, describing the progress made and the challenges encountered so far.

4. In addition to these steps, which build the basic structure of the future course, we consistently asked ChatGPT for clarifications, examples, corrections, and further details when the response was not sufficiently accurate or specific. In the following section, we will detail some of the minor deviations or unexpected solutions provided by the digital assistant.

We summarized the final product we developed with ChatGPT, namely the didactic scenario ready to be implemented with the groups of international students at our university, learners of Romanian as a foreign language (RFL). It should be noted that the model below is inspired by the structured scenarios from Johann Fisher and his collaborators at the ECML (The European Centre for Modern Languages) in Graz, in a useful project that provides CEFR users with an implementation toolbox including grids, tables, and models (Fisher et al. 2023, https://t.ly/i4yQ1).

Didactic Scenario

Title: Chat Group for Planning a Weekend Outing
Language: Romanian as a Foreign Language
CEFR Level: B1
Author:

Scale: Online Interaction (Online Conversation and Discussion)
Descriptor: B1
Objective of the Activity: To develop the ability to actively participate in informal online discussions, reflecting the real dynamics of communication in chat groups, where spontaneous interaction and decision-making negotiation are essential.

Description of the main activity:
Students will participate in a chat group on WhatsApp, Telegram, or Discord to plan a weekend outing. The discussion will begin with an initial proposal, and other group members will react by suggesting changes, additions, or alternatives.

Introducing the activity in the classroom:

1. **Creating the chat group:** The teacher will create a chat group on the selected platform and add all students. The theme of the conversation will be "Let's plan a weekend outing in the city."
2. **Initial proposal:** A volunteer student (or the teacher) will start the discussion by proposing a specific activity for the weekend, such as "Let's go to a music festival in the park" or "What do you think about going to see a movie at the cinema?"
3. **Reactions and discussions:** The rest of the students will react to the proposal by expressing their opinions (e.g., "Sounds interesting, but maybe we can find something closer?" or "I like the idea, but I'd prefer to go in the morning"). They can also suggest alternatives or additions (e.g., "We could go to the festival and then to a café?").
4. **Final decision:** After an active discussion and exchange of opinions, the group will decide on a final activity. Each student will then write a short post (50-100 words) explaining why they chose that activity and what they expect from it.
5. **Review and correction:** Students will review their contributions after the discussion, using online resources to check and correct any language mistakes.

Peer feedback:
Duration: 20-30 minutes
a. Peer Feedback: 10-15 minutes

- **Goal:** To provide students with the opportunity to analyse each other's contributions, learn from their peers' mistakes and successes, and develop critical and constructive skills.
- **Activities:**
  1. **Sharing contributions:** Each student receives links or screenshots of their peers' posts and comments from the online discussion.
  2. **Guide for feedback:** The teacher provides a simple guide for offering peer feedback, which includes aspects such as:

○ **Message clarity:** "Was the peer's message clear and easy to understand?" ○ **Relevance of ideas:** "Were the proposals and solutions offered appropriate to the issue discussed?" ○ **Interaction and collaboration:** "Did the peer manage to contribute constructively to the discussion, supporting or developing others' ideas?" ○ **Formulation and vocabulary:** "Are there language errors that affected the message's understanding? How could it be improved?" **Assessment**:		
	Yes	No
Did the student make use of appropriate vocabulary to suggest alternative plans or modifications?		
Did the student actively participate in the discussion by responding to at least one suggestion from a peer?		
Did the student clearly express their opinion about the initial proposal in the chat?		
Did the student use online resources to check and correct their language errors before finalizing their contribution?		
Did the student complete the final task by writing a short post (50-100 words) explaining their reasons for choosing the final activity?		

Table 3. Didactic Scenario for the Online Interaction Activity, Developed with the Help of ChatGPT

4. Discussions. Limitations

In the process of synthesizing the strengths and weaknesses of using AI assistants in the design of specialized teaching materials, it has become evident that it is difficult to imagine this activity in the future without chatbot assistance. Although the conscious presence of the teacher in the design process is still necessary, and the virtual assistant's responses should be taken *cum grano salis*, the support provided is not negligible in the didactic design.

When doing an analysis of the vulnerabilities, one can immediately notice ChatGPT tends to be exhaustive in its responses, aiming to cover as many aspects of the request as possible. However, this exhaustiveness comes at a cost: it generates horizontal development of the subject and suggests treating it in a rigid manner, often using clichéd language from the field rather than providing a more complex approach with examples and nuances. To achieve a satisfactory and useful result for the classroom, it was necessary to apply what Zheng et al. (2023, 1 et passim) call the "progressive-hint prompting" method. This method involves initially avoiding a large, detailed request, as the chatbot

might feel overwhelmed and respond in a fragmented and disorganized way. Therefore, the solution is a gradual conversation, allowing for a concentric approach to the subject, with content details requested step by step. For example, to reach the scenario in the previous table, it took a discussion that included 40,000 characters. However, given the chatbot's very fast response rate, the conversation took no more than 20 minutes, definitely less than it would take a teacher to think through and develop the entire scenario with alternative branches.

We progressively adapted and corrected the materials obtained, taking into account the suggestions for managing online interaction, structured by Johann Fisher and the team from Graz. One of the grids provided is of particular interest because it allows us to check whether the materials prepared for the courses meet professionalism criteria. It is called the "Checklist for online interaction activities" and advances ten criteria for analyzing an online interaction activity. We focus on the first five, which are characteristic of the material design stage, the subject of this paper: reflect a real-life exchange, engage students in authentic communication, is motivating for students, the skills practiced in the activity are applicable to real-life situations, and the activity can be implemented in the classroom (Fisher et al. 2023, https://t.ly/9bKVB). The criteria that were most rarely met were authenticity and reflecting a real-life situation. For instance, in the activity generated for the first criterion in **Table 2**, which was developed and refined throughout the entire conversation with ChatGPT, it was necessary to use successive prompts such as "the activity doesn't seem authentic/the students don't have such dialogues in real life/in a real WhatsApp group, young people don't intervene the way you've suggested." In the figure below, the amplification of authenticity hints can be observed, from one version to another, moving from an unbelievable online monologue to organized interventions and finally to a group discussion with agreements and disagreements.

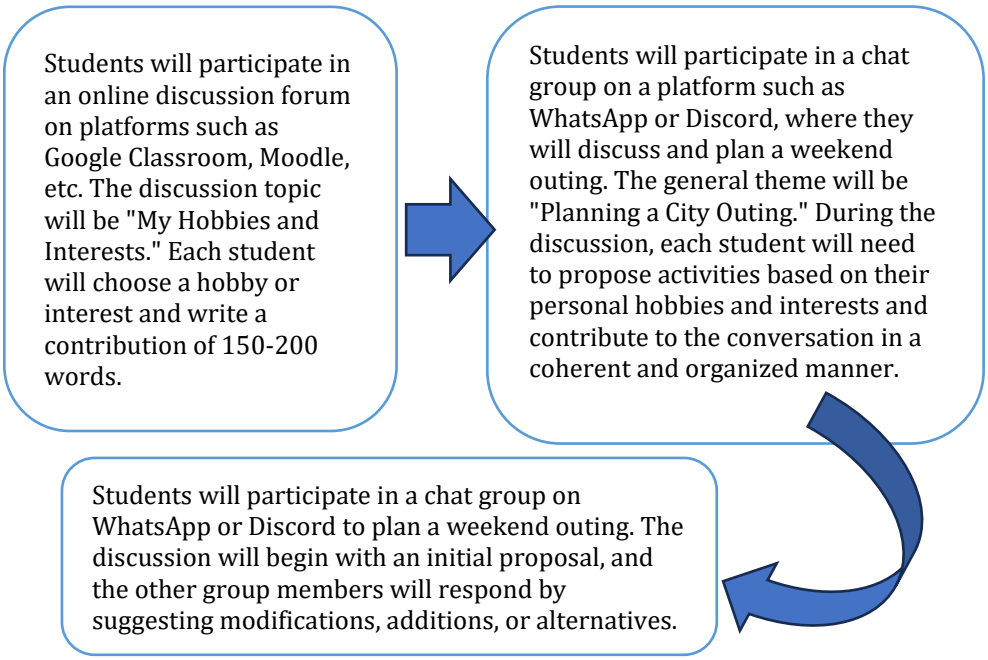

Figure 2. Adjusting ChatGPT's Responses through Progressive Hint Prompting

Another vulnerability we observed and tried to remedy was the presence of static, non-progressive prompts. Even the last prompt in **Figure 2**, though more authentic, was not supported by sub-elements of content useful for mapping out the online discussion for students. To prevent a loss of motivation, another important criterion from Fisher et al.'s checklist, we suggested the AI tool generated templates for introducing a response, and we received 13 thematic sets. We randomly reproduce here the one named *Establishing the Next Steps*: "The next step would be to…"; "I suggest we start with…"; "We can take care of this by…"; "Someone should handle…". Moreover, a major reason for giving up on learning a new language has proven to be the loss of motivation, especially due to the curriculum's misalignment with students' needs: "one reason why learners may lose interest can be if the material used in class does not seem relevant to individual needs, or the fact that activities in class do not mirror real-life contexts where they would naturally feel the need to communicate." (Saurer 2022, 170).

Regarding the strengths of ChatGPT in the conversation presented above, the following stand out: its quick response time, structuring of answers into easily followable points, adherence to the specified CEFR level (both in terms of language and task complexity), variety of solutions, and the ability to

quickly and systematically synthesize theoretical information and the concepts upon which a foreign language course is built. For example, in our conversation, we asked at one point for advice on how to apply the constructed scenario differently to homogeneous and heterogeneous student groups. Our university has both a French and an English line. While in the first case the mother tongue is exclusively French, in the English line the first language varies. The chatbot, emphasizing the advantages of the homogeneous group, organized the adaptations according to the group profile in the didactic scenario, carefully considering differences based on several precise criteria found in the theoretical literature of the field: linguistic comfort level, cultural influences, emphasis on linguistic complexity and finesse vs. clarity and understanding, and reflection time.

ChatGPT assistance with metadidactic issues is another advantage. From the very beginning, the request for the design of online interaction activities was met with quasi-complete scenarios, not just task guidelines. Each proposal included objectives, specific tasks, and implementation steps. When we asked for other elements from the teacher's internal toolkit, such as peer feedback methods for students and strategies for assessing teaching methods, they were generated in a manner adapted to the previously outlined scenario, with specific details regarding language and interaction skills on devices, as seen at the end of **Table 2**.

The above observations, as mentioned from the start, refer to a single level of study—namely, the independent speaker level (B1). We tracked all descriptors and related online interaction activities only horizontally at that level. The future challenge remains collaborating with ChatGPT and reflecting on its ability to generate responses vertically, ensuring correct evolution of proposed scenarios according to the pre-A1 to C2 CEFR scales.

5. Conclusions

This study confirms that Chat GPT can be a valuable ally in the design of teaching materials, particularly for training online interaction in Romanian as a Foreign Language (RFL). The core hypothesis—that teachers should shift focus from avoiding AI to strategically leveraging it for curriculum enhancement—has been validated through both theoretical alignment and practical outcomes. Despite certain limitations, such as Chat GPT's tendency to produce overly generic or rigid responses, the benefits of integrating AI into the instructional design process are substantial. Notably, Chat GPT excels in content generation speed, organization, and adaptability. Its metadidactic capacities—such as

providing peer feedback models, tailored task instructions, and CEFR-aligned scenarios—offer tangible support in lesson planning and materials development. The study also demonstrates that effective use of AI requires thoughtful prompting and iterative refinement. By applying strategies such as progressive-hint prompting, teachers can elicit richer, more contextually appropriate outputs that resonate with learners' real-life communication needs. Furthermore, the CEFR-CV's new focus on digital interaction, though still underutilized, provides a structured yet flexible framework that aligns well with AI-supported pedagogy. Looking ahead, the challenge lies in expanding this approach vertically—across CEFR levels from Pre-A1 to C2—and tailoring it to diverse student profiles. Nonetheless, the current findings already point toward a paradigm shift: from AI as a novelty or threat to AI as a co-designer in the evolving landscape of language education.

WORKS CITED

Ekellem, Elizabeth Ango Fomuso. 2024. *Enhancing Multicultural and Multilingual Education through Problem-Based Teaching with Conversational AI: A ChatGPT Perspective*. Authorea Preprints.

Fischer, Johann, Rouveyrol, Laurent, Sawicka, Barbara, and Zabala-Delgado, Julia. 2023. *CEFR Companion Volume implementation toolbox*, Council of Europe (European Centre for Modern Languages), Graz, available at www.ecml.at/companionvolumetoolbox, accessed 7.10. 2024.

Goodier, Tim., and Piccardo, Enrica. 2020. *Capturing the multi-modality of remote communication–the new CEFR online interaction scales*. *Benedetti F., Cinganotto L., Langé G.(a cura di), L'interazione nel Companion Volume del Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le lingue. Un progetto pilota italiano,* Indire, Firenze: 11-23.

North, Brian. (2020). "Trolls, unicorns and the CEFR: Precision and professionalism in criticism of the CEFR". *CEFR Journal–Research and Practice*, no. 2: 8-24.

Reinders, Hayo, Lakarnchua, Onuma, Pegrum, Mark, and Thomas, Michael. 2015. *A trade-off in learning: Mobile augmented reality for language learning. Contemporary task-based language teaching in Asia*. New-York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Saurer, Gigi. 2022. *Student engagement: online interaction and language learning, in enriching 21st-century language education The CEFR Companion volume in practice*, edited by Brian North, Enrica Piccardo, Tim Goodier, Daniela Fasoglio, Rosanna Margonis-Pasinetti and Bernd Rüschoff, Council of Europe, 2022: 169-176.

Zheng, Chuaniang, Liu, Zhengying, Xie, Enze, Li, Zhenguo, and Li, Y. 2023. *Progressive-hint prompting improves reasoning in large language models,* ultima accesare aici: arXiv http://arxiv.org/abs/2 304.09797, la data de 4.10.2024.