

EFFECTIVE INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO ORAL FRENCH ACQUISITION FOR THE ANGLOPHONES IN THE DISPENSATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract

*The study of any language outside its linguistic community is very difficult for everyone, but adults find it more tasking, either by formal or informal means of learning. To succeed, there are certain strategies that need to be applied, because, much efforts are needed in order to effectively speak a foreign language. In our contemporary world, artificial intelligence has globally become an advanced technology that is mostly used in every field of study. In fact, it has made difficult tasks such as, research in Mathematics, Engineering, History, Politics, Languages amongst others very simple and interesting. In the field of languages, especially in the study of French, some inevitable means must be considered in order to deepen the general knowledge of this language. For French, writing, reading, speaking and listening, each of them has a unique approach in order to excel in the language. Incidentally, the uniqueness of French connotes this expression; *ce n'est pas ce qu'on entend qu'on écrit, et ce n'est pas ce qu'on écrit qu'on entend*. (it's not what we hear that we write, and it's not what we write that we hear). This expression means that French learners must know the grammatical, phonetical and phonological rules of the language in order to communicate effectively. As such, this article aims to guide French learner and Francophiles with the effective innovative approaches of oral French acquisition in this dispensation of artificial intelligence. Furthermore, it recommends thus: the integration of AI powered conversational tools in language classrooms, the encouragement of personalized AI-based learning pathway, the training of teachers in AI-enhanced language pedagogy, the promotion of real French speaking environment and the development of localized AI resources for anglophone African learners.*

Keywords: French, oral, effective, innovative, approach, acquisition, anglophone, dispensation, artificial intelligence.

Introduction

The easiest and the most acknowledged means of knowing that someone is rooted in any given language are through speaking and listening. The other means like writing, reading etc. could be considered afterwards.

Where English happens to be the official language in Nigeria, her borders are all enclosed by francophone countries and Atlantic Ocean. In the south east, it borders Cameroon, Chad is found in the north east, Niger borders the northern region, Benin republic borders south western part while Atlantic Ocean takes the south southern border. This phenomenon proves the importance of French in Nigeria, even though it's not the official language. Despite the importance, some inevitable challenges make it much tasking. Such as limited access to native speakers, inadequate instructional materials, limited trained teachers and even lack of interest at the middle of learning, if proper guidelines are not strictly adhered to.

Nevertheless, a good number of people are interested in learning the language, but how to start or improve becomes the challenge hunting and discouraging many people. Thankfully, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is already making waves in linguistic field, as much as other fields of study. As such, it's pertinent that the Francophiles are properly guided on the inevitable effective measures to leverage on this modern technology. AI-powered devices are always at our disposal, but often times, the naïve speakers who are computer literate may not even know what to do.

A French beginner could be confused on what to do in order to speak the language and have it retained overtime, but with the help of this study, the effective innovative approaches and the precautionary measures required for oral acquisition of the French language will be explicitly revealed.

Self-Determination and Personal Interest

What makes dreams realistic is determination. For one to propose in his heart and determine to accomplish a task as a fundamental layout is his personal interest. As such, self-determination shouldn't be overemphasized. The study of French language for the Anglophone can be so tasking and discouraging at some points. Hence, giving up would seem like the only way to have a relief. But, with self-determination, striving till glorious days becomes the ultimate goal.

Generally, self-determination proves to be the bedrock for any fast learner. According to Maya Sugita McEown & W.L.Quint Oga-Baldwin (2019), citing R.Ryan & Deci (2017), "Self-Determination Theory, SDT is a human motivation and well-being, and as such, it touches on many realms, not least of which is language education". Furthermore, Maya Sugita McEown & W.L. Quint Oga-Baldwin (2019) reiterate that SDT has in its content what is arguably known as Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) which is amongst other theories in his article, is the most fundamental aspect of self-determination theory SDT, and most relevant to formal language education, for it concerns how people interact with their environment. In many contexts, environment of language, either physically sociolinguistic or through devices which AI has given the opportunity, it has inevitably become one of our linguistic environments which by self-determination theory, we could figure out how to leverage on it.

In as much as a learner is self-determined, what keeps this determination alive is personal interest. What he desires! This could be built naturally or intentionally, but the desire has to be there in order to achieve the set goals. Using French learner as example, it's also as a result of personal interest sustained by desires that the said learner would indulge in reading French books/articles, watch French documentary/films, listen to French radio, use the aid of AI etc. As such, Shanty Halim (2019) said that there are some factors that influence learning interests like motivation, attention, attitude, study habit, self-control etc. Without these factors, even the use of AI would be perceived as either a waste of time or a whole workload.

ACQUISITION OF VOCABULARIES (AI AIDS)

Certain measures are considered in the speaking of foreign language, but one of the first steps is the acquisition of vocabularies. In fact, nothing so meaningful can be done in any language except one knows the meaning of words. So, to effectively speak a foreign language, one needs to be enriched in some vocabularies as much as

possible. Alternatively, AI enriches and significantly boosts vocabulary acquisition through many platforms embedded in it.

Nevertheless, acquisition of vocabularies goes beyond knowing the meaning of words. It comprises of placing vocabulary words into the context of specific sentences. Thankfully, AI exceptionally and explicitly does the semantic, morphological and syntactic work for easy understanding, regardless of the learner's initial knowledge of French. AI is programmed to equally have a normal conversation and answer our questions. The devices like Chatbots, ChatGPT and many more are specifically designed for this task. For example, Chatbots are AI programmed devices that stimulate human conversation through texts or voices. They use their advanced rules or artificial intelligence, including Natural Language Processing (NLP) to understand the users and communicate effectively. ChatGPT, Generated Pre-trained Transformer equally does the same task as Chatbots and many others.

What AI Tools for Conjugation and Pronunciation Do

Often times, some English speakers would say that they do not know what conjugation is all about. This ignorance is not only peculiar to the undergraduates, but can equally be found among some graduates who may have advanced in studies other than the domain of English language. Conjugation is an act of transforming verbs from their original form known as infinitif in French in order to suit any given subject. This act is applicable in English as much as it is in French, but it is not explicit like French. The knowledge of this conjugation only comes to light for those who advanced in English and linguistic studies. Aside this, most regular anglophone would wonder what conjugation means. Below is the conjugation of a verb and the English equivalent in simple present tense known in French as *présent de l'indicatif*.

Parler-to speak

Je parle – I speak

Tu parles – you speak (singular)

Il/elle parle – he /she speaks

Nous parlons – we speak

Vous parlez – you speak (plural)

Ils/elles parlent – they speak

Naturally, the verb 'to speak' cannot be used with any subject, until it's conjugated to suit a subject (the noun or pronoun performing the action). This is also practically done in English.

AI helps learners to conjugate various verbs across all tenses. The tenses are found in what the French call *l'indicatif*. The indicative mood expresses the facts, truths, certainties, and straightforward statement of reality, e.g. the verb to speak conjugated above. On the other hand, the conditional mood expresses hypothetical situations, wishes, or polite request.

For example, *J'aimerais manger* – I would like to eat. This is an expression of wish.

We also have *le subjonctif* which is a verb form that expresses a subjective attitude, such as wishes, emotions, doubts, or necessity. Not only will AI help a learner to conjugate these verbs, AI will also use them in sentences as examples and pronounce the words accurately like the native speakers of French would do.

Syntax of COD, COI, Y, EN

The use of these elements is always difficult for French beginners, especially the anglophones. Below are some insights that will help them whilst navigating AI tools to learn French.

COMPLÈMENT D'OBJET DIRECT, COD

Complément d'objet direct, COD is a direct object complement. It's the noun or pronoun that receives the action of a transitive verb. Examples:

(1) Sandra regarde la télévision. – Sandra watches television.

(2) Elle l'aime. – She loves him.

COD asks the question; 'what?' or 'who?'. Sandra regarde quoi? La télévision. Sandra watches what? Television. Elle aime qui? Lui. She loves who? Him.

COMPLÈMENT D'OBJET INDIRECT, COI

Complément d'objet indirect, COI is an indirect complement. It is the noun or pronoun that indirectly receives action of a transitive verb with the help of preposition. Examples:

(1) Je pense à mon ami. – I think about my friend.

(2) Nous parlons à eux. – we talk to them.

COI asks the questions; 'je pense à qui? Mon ami. – I think about who? My friend. Nous parlons à qui? À eux. We talk about who? About them,

THE PRONOUN 'Y'

'Y' is not a letter in this context, but a pronoun. It is an adverbial pronoun that usually means 'there'. It replaces a place that has already been mentioned in a sentence. Example:

Elle va en France. Elle y va pour apprendre français.

Meaning; She's going to France. She's going there to learn French.

THE PRONOUN 'EN'

'En' usually replaces nouns in phrases about quantity or with verbs that are normally followed by 'de'. Example:

Voudriez-vous des pommes? Oui, j'en voudrais deux, s'il vous plaît.

Would you want some apples? Yes, I would want two of them.

AI has some applications that will explicitly explain the functions of these pronouns and many other aspects of French grammar for easy understanding for the learners.

The Use of AI Translation Tools

AI translators do great work in translation as they provide the curious learners' mind with some grammatical support, vocabularies, enhancement comprehension, provision of interactive practices and even provision of instant translation. The processes do not only help the students to get solutions to their problems, but also make them smart and tip them off on what they should expect from their teachers, thereby making the work easy. Citing Guo Yi (2021) "AI voice translation not only brings challenges, but also promotes the thinking of French teaching design".

So, this study also recommends AI tools such as Chatbots, Mondly, Glossika, Textcortex, Langua, Duolingo, ChatGPT, Talkpal among others.

Some Methods of Approach for Listening and Speaking French

Using AI, some guidelines will help the students in the areas of listening comprehension and speaking of the language. Furthermore, while exploring the auditory aspect of French language, it has unique approach other than that of speaking. A French beginner may be able to say a few things in French and even communicate with the second speakers, to the best of his ability, but when he's found in the mist of the native speakers, there is a high probability that he might not even make out a comprehensive idea of what the subject matter is all about. "Understanding of the culture-specific nature of conversation, including listening as well as speaking behavior, is an important component of cross-cultural awareness and interactional competence" (Elizabeth M. Knutson, 2009). With this citation, we would agree that exploring the cultural and linguistic behavior of the native speakers is inevitable.

With the light to this assertion, we can deduce that everything stretches towards training one's auditory ability and understanding the language by always listening to the native speakers/autochthon. Radio France International is a solution that could be recommended for the anglophones who may not physically have access to the native speakers. RFI can be accessed through the application radio.net.

On the other hand, speaking French takes different route, whereby the learner has to train his articulatory organs, aside the grammatical aspect of the language. This helps the learners to pronounce the words appropriately. Using the recommended AI applications above, the learner also does a repetition technic that helps him to pronounce the words or make statements on repeated occasions, until his articulatory organs like the lips, tongue, teeth, among others, are accustomed to the pronunciation of French words.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Ai for Oral Acquisition of French Language.

Advantages

Computational linguistic has really helped French learners in different aspects of learning the language, especially when it's properly explored. It has helped learners who are far away from the native speakers, and may not be able to afford personal coach in the language. It has also helped learners to easily discover new vocabularies without much stress. Not only that, once these new words are discovered, there are proper guidelines on how to use AI applications and enrich one's knowledge in the language.

In the course of learning French through AI, learners can explore the AI applications anytime convenient for them. AI powered devices help learner to correct spellings, grammatical errors, improve pronunciation whilst being engaged in French dialogue and boost their French proficiency. As such, the learners will be able to monitor their level of advancement in the language.

Disadvantages

In as much as AI has numerous merits in improving learner's linguistic proficiency, its flaws can equally cause havoc, if it's not properly used. Language as a sociolinguistic element strives better and more effectively in its linguistic community. Its in such environment that the fully embedded aesthetics in it are inevitably revealed and exhibited. But anything aside that, learners must beware of some diluted

substances that might be introduced, or inevitable stereotyped errors that must occur. These errors are mostly found in the effective application of the cultural and stylistic embodiments of the language, more especially in the areas of translation/interpretation. "Findings revealed that although the emergence of French language translation studies from the perspective of AI promotes a rethinking of theoretical methods in translation research, expanding and deepening the content of French language research, it is observed that artificial intelligence translation has challenges and problems with the choice of content and the logic of the language, hence the need for improvement. Besides, artificial intelligence now being mechanized is no longer able to analyze the deeper meaning of the author's message, leading to errors in translation, which errors human translation avoids." So, AI language users should be culturally sensitive throughout the period of indulging in it for linguistic acquisition.

Conclusion

Our contemporary world has gradually turned into a global community of artificial intelligence. Virtually all domains of studies have their branches effectively excelling with the help of AI. As such, this study reveals some effective innovative measures that will help the English speakers to learn or improve their oral French skills, for those who may in one way or the other not be able to access the French native speakers or afford a French tutor.

This study reveals not only the AI application to improve oral French and their radio programs in RFI, but also the role a learner's self-determination and personal interest could play in the rapid assimilation of what French entails. It further highlighted some precautionary measures at the cause of using AI to improve one's linguistic knowledge. Be it as it may, AI is still a garbage in, garbage out device. Furthermore, it's an advanced decoding processes of language, and in some cases, especially in areas of translation, the author's message or style may not be holistically passed across. As such, a proper guideline on how to explore AI should be strictly adhered to.

Recommendations

The study recommends the followings:

1. Incorporate AI-Powered Conversational Tools in Language Schools: AI chatbots, speech-recognition apps, virtual tutors and modern language laboratories should be provided by educational institutions. This ensures the learner's real-time conversational practice and corrective feedback. thereby enhancing oral proficiency
2. Strengthen Personalized AI-Based Learning Channels: AI system should be used to design individual learning programs that adapt to each learner's pace, learning style, pronunciation challenges, and ensuring oral French acquisition is more efficient for anglophone learners.
3. Certify Teachers in AI-Enhanced Language Education: French teachers should receive professional training on how to integrate AI tools into teaching methods, ensuring that technology complements traditional oral communication techniques rather than replacing human interaction.

4. Create French Speaking Environment: There should be a deliberate environment made specifically for communication in French. Learners should be made to speak French often and practice authentic communication contexts.
5. Easy AI Devices for Anglophones: Let there be AI devices that can facilitate easy, attractive and interesting methods for the learning of French. These localized AI-Powered devices should be very much accessible for anglophone French learners in Africa.

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