

The Role of Media Materials in French Language Learning: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The importance of media in language learning is covered in this article. The goal is to identify the media that students find engaging and how it advances or enhances their learning process. The development of the French language among students has increased, as this article will demonstrate, particularly for those who regularly consume media on TV and other platforms like YouTube, Netflix, etc. A survey was conducted among the students of the department of French Language & Culture at the Institute of Modern languages, Dhaka University. There are 50 French learners who have participated in this study are the students of French Language & Culture, IML, International Relations, Dhaka University and the students of BUP. Through this study, a survey based on a quantitative data was conducted by distributing a set of questionnaires to the participants. An impressive impact on learning French is seen when data collected from participants is analyzed along with their ideas. This definitely helps to accelerate the learning process. Ultimately, some recommendations on how to choose suitable media resources to enhance the course's relevance and effectiveness will be given.

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Introduction

Language is a unique kind of social information that is used to represent past knowledge as well as serve as a foundation for new knowledge to be formed. Our culture is always evolving because language plays a key role in the process of active cognitive activity, which transforms our informational picture of the world. The media language is the best example of how the language has changed to reflect these changes. As an essential source of information, the media became even more important throughout the pandemic by emphasizing the most happening

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occurrences. For those who are learning French as a foreign language, the media is seen as a unique, socially aware information source that serves an essential interaction role. During learning a foreign language, using a variety of media resources including journals, magazines, documentaries, short films, different news sources, and YouTube channels bring learners close to the real world as possible. For example, depending on the competency level of learners, the use of media resources in French language learning enables a more comprehensive understanding and explanation of the socio-political and cultural realities of the French society. Media resources are highly helpful for teaching a foreign language because they give engaging and pertinent content that is unique to the target country.

Acquiring proficiency in a foreign language, particularly French, can be extremely difficult and time-consuming, especially if one is staying in Bangladesh. This country is not francophone and again is very far away from France. Therefore, in an effort to speed up and improve the learning process, French language learners are constantly looking for new material. Using media resources to improve language proficiency is one of the newest methods French language learners find attractive (Albiladi et al., 2018). The availability of an immense variety of media materials has made learning French as a foreign language comparatively simple in the present.

Purpose of Study

Everything in our everyday lives has a direct relationship with language. We cannot advance without language, and as a result, we become trapped in society. Therefore, we have to learn the common language of society where we wish to live in. With the help of this article, an initiative will be taken by talking with the students about how to enhance their language acquisition outside of the classroom by implementing alternative strategies. Frequent consumption of media, particularly short films on many topics and modern documentaries can accelerate and strengthen language learning.

Through the use of questionnaires given to the participants in the study, we tried to find out how these media resources might improve the learning process. After collecting the responses to the survey, we analyzed the results to determine the study's conclusions. The objective of this paper is to examine the role of media resources to spark their interest and encourage active language learning. Here, the research began by focusing on a specific objective based on the questions mentioned below, which would be helpful in determining the impact of regular consumption of media materials in learning the French Language.

The questions for this study:

1. Do you agree that media materials are helpful in learning French?
2. What are your preferable materials?
3. Do you think that only the text book is sufficient or not sufficient?

4. What are the most effective materials according to you?
5. Do you agree that such materials play a vital role in the learning process?

Literature review

Several scholars think that the media helps students acquire new information and improve their media competency from a pedagogic perspective (Cuq, Gruca, 2017). The extensive use of media materials in foreign language instruction can be seen as an addition to the current manuals and textbooks, as well as a resource offering real, contemporary content, increasing student motivation, and impacting the development of their capacity for critical thought as well as their communicative, linguistic, and intercultural competencies. There is a particular typology that comprises research, narratives, comments, viewpoints of foreign authors, and publications that are solely informative for the purpose of learning. The ability for students to engage in virtual discussions through the use of modern communication technology encourages their creative activity. The multiple perspectives, interactivity, multimedia, and content visualization that are intrinsic to contemporary technologies are valuable tools for teaching foreign languages. Writing, reading, engaging in discussion, and the capacity to articulate ideas both orally and in writing are just a few of the abilities that can be developed with the help of the media. Grammar, vocabulary, semantics, phonology, and pronunciation abilities are developed by the media (Porcher, 2004; Albert, 2008).

They suggest using real media texts, beginning at the A1 and A2 level, if a student has reached a particular competency level and has built up enough lexical and grammatical stocks. Actual magazines are the sources of material for learning political and social terminology. Along with gaining a general understanding of the French press, the students also learn the specific vocabulary from the media and expand it with common words that appear in a variety of reports in the media. Genuine documents enhance the development of communicative skills by providing important linguistic and cultural information Bahrani, T., & Sim, T. S. (2012). By exposing learners to the reality of living in many nations across the world, the cultural component of media texts helps in the development of intercultural competency in them. One can study media documents to get knowledge about a new nation as well as its language and culture. According to Byram (1992), one of the key roles that the media plays in foreign language instruction is highlighting cultural aspects.

These kinds of media resources aid students in developing their critical thinking skills as well. A relevant issue can be chosen, and then it can be studied and discussed from many viewpoints as well as how it has been stated by the media (Aknazzay, Castinaud, 2009; Cipra, Hermelin, 1984). When choosing media materials for class, the teacher considers the knowledge level of students and selects a text of a certain volume, topic, complexity. Materials should be interesting for students and should make them want to read and understand the text in a foreign language. The teacher, being an intermediary in the educational process, helps the students, for example,

while watching a video, to understand the material, creating a lesson based on educational, realistic and inspiring objectives.

In recent years, in foreign language classes, as additional material, they increasingly use media resources on the Internet. A combination of newspaper texts and video materials on the same topic gives good results. That is why, for greater motivation and diversity of the educational process these kinds of materials are used when learning a foreign language, both inside and outside the class room. Some media sites, for example, France24, RFI,, RTL, France Info, Fun Radio, France Culture, TV5, TV5Monde, provide a variety of materials for different levels of the French Language from A1 to B2 allowing the learners to be able to develop general language skills both in oral and written. When utilizing audio-visual resources, it is assumed that the learner will get interested in the topic and grasp the implications after the initial listen. The next task is to be able to reproduce the text in a group or independently both in written or orally. One could describe this stage as exciting, igniting curiosity about media language. (Colavecchio, Pâquier, Van Dixhoorn, 2021; Charaudeau, 2011) stated that students must acquire the ability to talk in a suitable manner on a particular topic.

The authors suggest a variety of exercises and projects to help students consolidate the material, based on the text style, group level, and medium type. Using a white paper, for instance, students should look up the answers to the following fundamental questions: Who, What, whom, Where, When, and Why. Students are required to include detailed information on the event in their syntheses, and the print review presumes that they can incorporate a range of quotes and remarks. Analyzing diverse research findings on the subject matter is essential when working on a special documentary part, whether it be in print or digital format. The majority of educators acknowledge the media's significant contribution to the teaching of skills like speaking and writing.

Methodology

The survey was conducted on students studying different French language courses. The survey was designed with a total of 6 questions including some open-ended questions and some closed-ended questions. The questionnaire was distributed among the 50 students who are regular and later their answers were collected along with some suggestions. All of them voluntarily agreed to participate in this research study by responding to the survey and providing their advice as well. Since we are already connected to offline classes after the pandemic situation, the questions have been sent to the participants through mail. Then some of their responses were collected directly and some were collected by mail. All the participants felt proud to participate in this research because being able to express comments on the work they perform regularly is an excitement. It is also an honor to learn about a variety of digital media resources for language study during the discussion of this article.

Discussion and Analysis

Discussion on the findings of question (i)

In response to question 1, all the participants in the survey already agreed that all media materials available on the Internet are the most useful for practicing French and that they are really helpful for learning the language. A wide variety of media materials, usually in the form of short films and video clips, are readily available on the Internet for students of different language proficiency levels. All these materials are actually prepared especially for students depending on different situations like meetings and conversations between two friends in shop, restaurant, office, or railway station. The videos or audios of these situational conversations are created with the surrounding environment in such a way that they can imagine a real view of French culture and society. Subtitles are added to the materials so that new students can easily understand such documents, but if no one wants it, it can be kept off.

Nowadays, in the radio and programs of different channels on the internet, we get many types of conversations based on current affairs that we are already familiar with. As a result, they said that whenever they consume such programs, even if they do not understand all the sentences, they can at least understand the overall situation and topic. Moreover, by reading various articles, stories, and events written on contemporary issues in daily newspapers, even if they don't know all the words, they can overall identify the meaning of the text with the help of the title and some key words. They also said that by using these materials outside of textbooks, they can improve their language skills. However, 30% indicated that such real-life conversations could not be understood without at least having completed French A-1 as they perceived from their experience.

Discussion on the findings of question (ii)

In response to question 2, about 50% of the survey participants said that the French language learning method used in class, which is known to us as textbooks, where short videos made of different stories and dialogue characters are more interesting to students. This is mainly because the names of all the characters and their dialogues are already known to them due to their class. As a result, conversations are a little easier to follow. They enjoy watching these videos as they see a real reflection of the stories. Because of these stories, class lectures seem more alive to them. Again 70% of the class felt that short videos are more useful in various situations available on YouTube. These videos take into account the surrounding environment and present the situation in such a way that the students think they are in a real French society.

Sometimes sounds or noises are added to make such a particular situation more acceptable. Not only will they learn the language by listening to conversations in such real situations, but they can also pick up French body gestures and expressions in conversation. A small number of 10% of the participants felt that it was possible to master new styles of French writing while

increasing their vocabulary by carefully reading magazine or newspaper articles and stories. The benefit of reading these news or articles is that you can speak fluently with facts and figures on any topic with great confidence. According to them, all types of media materials outside of textbooks are very attractive to them.

Discussion and Analysis on the findings of question (iii)

In response to question 3, all the participants said, just prescribed textbooks are not enough. According to them, nothing like words, sentences, proverbs etc. of a new language can be developed. Language is always changing. As a result, it is difficult to observe the movement of language across place, time, situation, person, and at the same time simultaneously perceive the expression or body gesture. According to them, those who follow regular classes and only textbooks may score particularly well on written tests but cannot speak French clearly and fluently in the various class activities like presentations, recitation, speeches, conversations, or formal oral exams. The French may not express their true feelings in different situations.

40% of the participants observed that among their classmates who regularly absorb and consume available media materials in French at different levels, they can speak fluently for longer periods with greater confidence in and out of class. So, they strongly claim that textbooks are genuinely inadequate for learning French. 70% believe that an overall improvement in French can be achieved quickly by regularly consuming such media materials using textbook experiences. According to them, now that there is Wi-Fi everywhere in the university, students can continue to practice French without spending time on other activities. Considering my own experience, I would like to say that any new language is not complicated, but if you ensure regular practice, it is possible to master the language easily.

We sometimes use this kinds of video content. One thing to note is that students also love such content and many want to know the source of these materials. This is because the stories and characters of these small visual documents are created in such a colorful and lively way that students can enjoy these materials. Moreover, they will feel as if they are physically present somewhere in France. So these kinds of activities are undoubtedly effective and fruitful as acknowledged by most of the students.

Discussion on the findings of question (iv)

In response to question 4, 80% of the participants felt that the materials available on TV5, TV5 Monde and RFI were very good and interesting. On the other hand, 60% said that French films on TV or Netflix, especially with subtitles, can be learned a lot. Moreover, according to 80 % of the participants, YouTube offers a wide variety of media materials depending on their language skills. However, they mentioned that language speaking and listening skills may be increased

through these, but writing and reading practice may not be the same. In that case something has to be found out to improve writing and reading. Here, 30% mentioned *français facile* and 20% said “*Mondly Languages*”, an app that allows you to learn French grammar with a variety of exercises to speak and write correct French.

Hence, due to the internet’s easy availability, language learning materials are available everywhere in different formats: written, audio, or video. Taking into account these competitive situations, French language textbook publishers nowadays are also creating a variety of short videos or short films in line with the book’s stories, which are available on CD with the book or easily available for free on their website. These media materials are very effective and interesting. After reading the modules of the textbook, when the existing dialogues are visible through these materials, then every story, event and character of the story can be clearly understood which is not possible only by reading the textbook.

Textbooks are the starting point for learning any foreign language, like French. In the modern world, using digital media resources in addition to textbooks is a great way to progress your language learning process. Students nowadays are fortunate in that they may quickly locate these resources on different websites and utilize them however they see fit. As a result, students’ learning time is not restricted to class hours; instead, they are free to pursue language-learning activities whenever they want. As a result, everyone involved in this study agreed that media resources other than textbooks were effective.

Discussion and Analysis on the findings of question (v)

In response to question 5, all the participants here agreed that if this language was to continue for a long time, these media materials were effective and there is no comparison. However, such materials exist in different formats so students should select materials according to their own preference and skill level. They believe that these media materials are playing an important role in learning French. The reason that they are so helpful is that we are located in a country that is far away from France and is a non-francophone country. Since our country was a part of India for a long time and was ruled by the British, we have historically lived with the English language for a long time. Because of this English is closely involved in our education system. As a result, we mean the English language by our own media material i.e. in books, education, TV channels, newspapers, radio, short films or videos, music, plays, and various cultural events where we find the presence of the English language. In such a situation, the presence of the French language can be said to be absent.

Even for higher education or good jobs, English is very much mandatory. So there is a sufficient source of media material around us for the development of the English language which is quite the opposite in the case of the French language. If you look for materials for learning French in this country, it seems that nothing is available; everything that is available is prepared by

the French thinking of the needs of French students in different countries around the world and for the promotion of the French language. So there is no alternative to these media materials other than textbooks. These media materials are created with great care so that there is no loss of place, time and character otherwise students will learn the wrong language. Because of this, students believe that media products that are based on real-life events are innovative in the language learning process. Maybe for the French, such videos, short films, stories, dialogues, or conversations based on real life situations are very common but for students from other countries, they are very important because through them they get the opportunity to learn the French language and culture without going to France.

Suggestions & Conclusion

This article provides a thorough review of the various ways of how learners are influenced by media materials when learning French. About fifty French language learners participated in a survey for this purpose, and both closed- and open-ended questions were given out. The participating students received these five questions mentioned above by mail and whatsapp, and only a few of them also expressed their opinions via the messaging app. To make it clear how different media materials enhance language acquisition, all of the questions' responses have been collected, their opinions and suggestions have been integrated, and everything has been explained in detail with the answers to each question above.

In conclusion, some recommendations have been proposed on several points to encourage current French students to use all available internet resources in addition to textbooks to learn the language and develop an overview of both culture and idioms. Several recommendations that have been redefined at various points are shown below:

- Students should gradually familiarize themselves with the media material while attending the classes.
- These resources need to be chosen based on individual preferences and assessment of language skills.
- Students claim that learning pure French pronunciation and expressions can be accomplished rapidly with adequate practice, something that cannot be accomplished by merely following regular textbooks.
- It is not extremely difficult to consume these things because educational institutions have Wi-Fi available everywhere.
- Since these media resources are offered as visual documents, studying language is not the only thing that can be accomplished with them; body language and its various expressions can also be learned.
- Students are highly motivated to improve their French language skills when they use these

materials for language exercises. Therefore, it is essential to keep up these activities in along with classes.

- Every one of these educational resources is available as a media resource in a variety of vibrant and attractive formats. The fundamental explanation behind this is because every story in the content is connected to various real-life incidents. You can thus learn the language and become proficient in the new body language and expressions of the language if you pay close attention to these mat
- A significant number of respondents pointed out that consistent presence at language classes may develop friendships, as well as strengthen existing bonds by regularly consuming this material in small groups, which may act as a genuine source of motivation for learning a new language.
- Students can progressively improve their fluency and self-assurance in French by doing regular practice in this way.
- This type of video series is quite effective in helping students connect with the outside world. Consequently, it is essential to recognize that there is no substitute for media materials for learning a language that relies on numerous everyday phenomena that participants have already found and adapted to.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize to the students the importance of media resources in the study of French, which is evident. The process of acquiring a language is not completely understood if these resources are ignored. So that learning the French language is accompanied by studying the culture and values, we strongly suggest that such resources be effectively incorporated into the language learning process.

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