

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ONLINE RESOURCE DATABANK ENHANCING FRENCH READING AT THE BEGINNER LEVEL (A1)

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were to 1) design and develop the Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Reading Skills at the Beginner Level (A1) and 2) study the opinions and satisfaction of French language teachers on the usage of the Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Reading Skill at the Beginner Level (A1). The sample used in this research were 40 French language teachers selected from the Educational Service Area Office1 and Office 2 of Bangkok Metropolitan, using the multistage sampling method, composing of the cluster sampling, the stratified sampling and the simple random sampling. The research instruments were the opinion and satisfaction questionnaires and the website of the Online Resource Databank. The data were analyzed through percentage, descriptive analysis and narration. The research findings were as follows: 1) the website of the Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Reading Skills at the Beginner Level (A1), comprising 5 main menus: Knowledge - Culture - Activity - Media - About, is located at the following URL: <http://french4read.wix.com/beginner> ; 2) the 40 respondents were mostly agreed with the usage of the Online Resource Databank at 96.93 %. Few of them were uncertain about the usage of some online resources. Most of the 40 respondents were highly satisfied with the website of the Online Resource Databank at 4.49 for the data presentation and technology used and at 4.58 for the utility and utilization. The sample indicates that this innovative media can be helpful for both teachers and students. Most of the resources are appropriate to be adjusted for the preparation of the lesson plans and learning activities that can be used in class, outside the class and for personal use.

Keywords : Online Resource, French Reading Databank, French Reading Skills.

INTRODUCTION

The study of the problems of French reading skills of students in Thailand had shown that most Thai students still have problems on French reading due to many factors, for example, the big class size, generally too big for language teaching, about 50 students or more in one class session of 50 minutes. As a result, students do not have enough time to practice their reading skills during class attendance. They really need time outside the class for more practicing their French reading skills by themselves. Hence, Thai students should have the contemporary, non-classroom materials to read outside the class like newspapers or novels but the level of language will always cause problem to the beginners. With wrong choices of supplementary reading, too many unknown words, unfamiliar sentences, complex structures and long paragraphs will discourage them and make them less motivated to read. French language teachers do need some extras materials to appropriately support their French reading skills instructions.

At the present time, in Thailand, 221 schools still have French language programs under the Office of the Basic Education Commission, making the total number of about 35,490 students and 383 French language teachers. French is still one of the important foreign languages taught in Thailand. Many international and French companies, investing and doing business in ASEAN countries, will continue to require the competency in foreign language like English and French. Also some countries in ASEAN community like Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos still use French as the second language in their countries.

Therefore, as French language teacher, the researcher had conducted the research on the “Development of Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Reading at the Beginner Level (A1)” in order to provide French teachers with the innovative tools for their professional development and gaining better outcomes from Thai students on using more effective French reading skills.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To design and develop the Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Reading Skills at the Beginner Level (A1).
2. To study the opinions and satisfaction of French language teachers on the usage of the Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Reading Skills at the Beginner Level (A1).

EXPECTED BENEFITS

1. French language teachers in Thailand acquire the ready - to-use Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Reading Skills at the beginner level (A1) that can provide helpful instructions and reading skills practices for French language learners.
2. French language teachers can further exploit this study and use it as a guideline to develop the online resource databanks for French Reading at higher levels.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample

1. Population: French language teachers, teaching at the beginner level of French proficiency in public schools of Bangkok Metropolitan.
2. Sample: 40 French language teachers in French Program at Grade Level 10 were selected from the public schools in Bangkok Metropolitan, using the multistage sampling as follows:
 - 2.1 Cluster sampling for the selection of Bangkok Metropolitan as province having public schools with French program.
 - 2.2 Stratified sampling for the selection of 50 public schools: 25 schools from the Educational Service Area Office 1 and 25 schools from the Educational Service Area Office 2.
 - 2.3 Simple: random sampling by draw for 50 French language teachers from 50 public schools in Educational Service Area Office 1 and 2. From 50 distributed questionnaires, the 40 questionnaires were collected back, representing 80% of the survey data.

Research Tool

1. French resource websites on the Internet and World Wide Web.
2. Network computer, books and documents.
3. Sitemap and URL script files.
4. Web 2.0 flash and HTML5 web builder service: Wix.com
5. Questionnaires for the content experts.
6. Opinions and satisfaction questionnaires for French language teachers.
7. Website of the Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Reading Skills at the Beginner Level (A1).

Data Collection

The researcher collected the data in 2 phases by herself using the following procedures;

1. The researcher designed the sitemap of the Online Resource Databank by collecting the information from related books, documents and online resources. The researcher developed the URL scripts in Word file format by using the collected resources from the WWW and collected data from the experts and improved the scripts and the website as being suggested.
2. The researcher by herself collected the data of the online survey, analyzed the results and made the conclusion on it. The sample group was

administered individually for the completion of the missing data.

Data Analysis

Phase1: The data were analyzed, using the descriptive analysis and the narration.

Phase2: The data were analyzed, using the percentage, the descriptive analysis and the narration.

FINDINGS

1. The website of the “Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Reading Skills at the Beginner Level (A1)”.

The website was developed, using the web builder service with flash and Html 5 templates, WIX.COM, at the following URL: <http://french4read.wix.com/beginner>

The sitemap of this website is composed of five main menus with different sub-menus as follows:

- 1.1 Knowledge: Text, Audio & Video
- 1.2 Culture: Skill culture, Life culture
- 1.3 Activity: Drill & Practice, Quiz & Test, Game
- 1.4 Mass media: Radio, Television, Newspaper & Magazine, Web service
- 1.5 About: Author Profile and Usage instructions



Figure 1 Example of Website Homepage Screen.

2. French language teachers' opinions and satisfaction towards the website of "Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Reading Skills at the Beginner Level (A1)".

For the study results of the opinions on the usage of the Online Resource Databank, the findings showed that most of 40 French language teachers were agreed with the usage of the Online Resource

Databank at 96.93 %. Some of them were uncertain with some usage of the online resources.

For the overall opinions and satisfaction, the findings showed that most respondents were highly satisfied with the Online Resource Databank at 4.49 for the data presentation and technology used and at 4.58 for the utility and utilization.

Table 1 Conclusion on amount and percentage of opinions on 4 content menus: Knowledge, Culture, Activity and Mass Media, and the overall satisfaction of 40 French language teachers.

(n=40)

Percentage of Overall Agreement		Level of Overall Satisfaction (Likert Scale)	
Main Menu	Opinions	Data Presentation and Technology Used	Utility and Utilization
1. Knowledge (97.21%)	96.93%	4.49 ≈ high satisfaction (Ketsingha, 1995)	4.58 ≈ highest satisfaction (Ketsingha, 1995)
2. Culture (98.17%)			
3. Activity (98.14%)			
4. Mass Media (94.18%)			
5. About ()			

CONCLUSION

This kind of instructional media using the authentic online resources is rather innovative for French language teachers in Thailand. In addition, there are not, nowadays, many kinds of medias available for teachers and students, especially for French reading skill instruction and practice. The research finding, thus, showed that French language teachers were mostly satisfied with this kind of instructional media. This research results insisted on the fact that a) the website development using web 2.0 tools and services can be the best practice to follow since users can change or improve what they want at any time; b) French language teachers in Thailand were ready to use this kind of online media in their class, and also to develop more online resource databank for French language teaching.

DISCUSSION

1. The researcher had designed the sitemap containing 5 main menus: Knowledge, Culture, Activity Mass media and About, according to the information survey generally done on the Internet in order to get the basic ideas of the existing French Reading skill resources. The CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages in level A1 was also used for naming the main menus and shaping the sub-menus. Following the descriptions in CEFR, we have found that they should be related to knowledge and culture of French reading skill practices. The resources on the mass media and the supplementary activities could help and give the guidelines to teachers for lesson plan preparation.

The research results of sound resources had made us combine two sub-menus Sound and Video in main menu Knowledge into the new sub-menu: Audio & Video. The sound resources were mostly found along with text documents, consisting of the principles for French reading from words to sentences and texts, including the articles. Otherwise, with the progress of the information and communication technology nowadays, the video resources are existed in a large number on the Internet with more interesting usage and easier access for any users. The researcher found that the sitemap design should be flexible and adaptable for change according to real situation of research conducting. Even the sitemap that had been created with good basic research for the designing, their sub-menus could still be subjected to the modification when necessary. The main menu “Culture”, with 2 sub-menus: Skill Culture and Life Culture, was designed to present the resources in 2 different aspects: one is the practicing culture of French reading skills, related to the principles and methods like types of readings, reading contextually, critical reading, and reading comprehension (skimming, scanning, etc). The other is related to French reading in daily life situations and culture such as tales, stories, songs, poems, advertising and news.

2. For the process of website development, the experts had suggested that the researcher should not use various font sizes, font styles and too colorful background. Their comments correspond in fact to the principles of web screen design focusing on the important information and the easy navigation through the information. (Hannafin & Hooper, 1989). The researcher had followed the suggestions and adjusted the font sizes, font styles and background color by focusing on the web design principles of Consistency (Schwier & Misanchuk, 1993). Wix.com that is free web builder service with HTML5 templates can allow anyone without the programming

knowledge to create website, blog or other multimedia presentation. Using WIX.com helps the researcher save the time for storyboard development since the results of change can be immediately showed at any time. Moreover, the service can free us from the copyright problem with their gallery of free pictures, icons, symbols and flash animation.

3. The study results showed that the 40 respondents were mostly agreed with the usage of the Online Resource Databank. They were also highly satisfied with the website for data presentation and technology used and for utility and utilization. Moreover, the sample indicated that the Online Resource Databank can be helpful for both teachers and students, for the in class and after class activities, as well as for personal use. Some of them had left the positive comments.

All these good results may be due to the research conduction that was based on the application of good web design principles (Levie & Lentz, 1982). The content of the Online Resource Databank was also verified and improved by French experts of language and technology during the researcher’s study time in France according to the collaborative project between Kasetsart University and University of Montpellier.

SUGGESTIONS

For Usage Implications

1. French language teachers should prepare their teaching materials like computers, network and multimedia facilities, before introducing this resource databank in class. The network computer should be equipped with multimedia features and devices for the good practices of French reading skills.

2. Teachers should study and test the online resources for the existence well before doing the lesson plans since the absence of the websites on the Internet are quite common.

3. French language teachers should prepare in class activities and homework by focusing on more practices and good motivation of the students. Their guidelines and suggestions that based sharply on the resources in form of worksheets or knowledge sheets will be very helpful for the students.

For the further development of other online resource databank

According to the research findings and discussions, the new developers should do the resource survey thoroughly before designing the sitemap. The selection of easy and friendly tools for website development can be helpful for the creation of the scripts and the website's main menus and sub-menus. Despite the fact that this kind of instructional media is quite new for teachers in Thailand, especially for Reading teaching, the research results had shown French language teachers' high satisfaction as well as the awareness for the benefits of using the online resources as teaching media.

This research had proved that: a) the online resource databank can be easily and well developed using the web 2.0 tools and services ; b) French language teachers in Thailand were ready to use this kind of online media in their class, and also to develop more online resource databank for French language teaching.

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