

Development of the Online Resource Databank Enhancing France Pronunciation at the Beginner Level (A1)

Thunyathorn Wechwithayakhlung^{*} and Dr.Matuross Chongchaikit^{**}

^{*} Student in Double Master's Degree Program: Curriculum and Instruction and MEF,
Department of Education, Kasetsart University

^{**} Associate Professor, Department of Education, Faculty of Education, Kasetsart University

Abstract

The purposes of this research were to 1) design and develop the **Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Pronunciation at the Beginner Level (A1)**; and 2) study the opinions of French language teachers on the usage of the **Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Pronunciation at the Beginner Level (A1)**. The samples used in this research were 40 French language teachers selected from the public schools in the Educational Service Area Office1 and Office 2 of Bangkok Metropolis using the multistage sampling, composing of cluster sampling, stratified sampling and simple random sampling by draw. The research instruments were the opinion and satisfaction questionnaires and the website of the Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Pronunciation at the Beginner Level (A1). The data were analyzed through the percentage, descriptive analysis and narrative descriptions and essay. The research findings were as follows: 1) the website of the **Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Pronunciation at the Beginner Level (A1)**, composing of 5 main menus: Knowledge, Culture, Activity, Mass Media, About, is located at the URL:<http://french4pronounce.wix.com/beginner>; 2) the study results obtained from the sample's opinion and

satisfaction questionnaires, showed that most of them were strongly agreed with the usage of the "Online Resource Databank" at 98.41%. Their satisfaction towards the "Online Resource Databank" was at the highest level of 4.89 for data presentation and technology used and 4.83 for utility and utilization. Despite few disagreements, most French language teachers have agreed to the advantages of this innovative media.

Keywords: online resources, online databank, French pronunciation

Introduction

Pronunciation is one of the most fundamental and intrinsic skills in learning French. As the sound system of Thai language are very different from that of French, Thai students at the beginner level tend to have many difficulties in making intelligible and correct pronunciation in French. Furthermore, many studies show that students do not clearly understand the system of French sounds. In view of this, Jiraprabha Boonprome (2008a, 2008b cited in Renard, 1971) pointed out that the pronunciation problems caused by the difference of French and Thai sound system may cause some phonetic and error systems, called in French, "système de fautes". Furthermore, Theera Rongtheera (2009) stated in the "Investigating Pronunciation Problems of French

vowels by Thai Learners” that it might be referred to their mother tongue “...The possible causes of mispronunciation are the interference from Thai as their mother tongue and English as their first foreign language as well as the complexity of the pronunciation of French vowels...”

Using the online resources is one of the interesting choices in today’s media use due to the benefits of this learning tool. Language learner nowadays can use this online media for self-studying and improving their language skills. There are a great number of French pronunciation online resources that are waiting for French language teachers and learners to choose on the Internet. Undoubtedly, the online resources have great benefits for language learners by providing them the authentic practices of their pronunciation. Hismanoglu (2010) pointed out that there were a number of online resources for pronunciation instruction and practices nowadays. Language teachers can also use these resources to improve their own language skills and pronunciation. Moreover, teachers can also express their opinions and discuss with each other the problems of teaching pronunciation through the existing online discussion groups and forums. Furthermore, Kruk (2012) stated in his research on “Using Online Resources in the Development of Learner Autonomy and English Pronunciation” that the online resources had the useful effect on the improvement of learner autonomy and English pronunciation.

All in all, this research aims at developing the “Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Pronunciation at the Beginner Level (A1)” and provides French language teachers in Thailand with the innovative French pronunciation teaching resources

that will be useful for both teachers and students at the beginner level.

Research Objectives

1. To design and develop the **Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Pronunciation at the Beginner Level (A1)**

2. To study the opinions of French language teachers on the usage of the **Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Pronunciation at the Beginner Level (A1)**

Research Methodology

1. Population and Sample

1.1 Population: French language teachers, teaching at the beginner level of French proficiency in public schools of Bangkok Metropolis

1.2 Sample: 50 French language teachers in French Program at Grade Level 10 that were selected from the public schools in Bangkok Metropolis using the multistage sampling as follows:

- Cluster sampling for the selection of Bangkok Metropolis as province with public schools and French program.

- Stratified sampling for the selection of 50 public schools: 25 schools from the Educational Service Area Office1 and 25 schools from the Educational Service Area Office2.

- Simple random sampling by draw for 50 French language teachers from 50 public schools in Educational Service Area Office1 and 2. From 50 distributed questionnaires, the 40 questionnaires were collected back, representing 80% of the survey data.

2. Research Tool

2.1 French resource websites on the Internet and World Wide Web.

2.2 Network computer, books and documents.

2.3 Sitemap and URL script files

2.4 Web 2.0 flash and HTML5 web builder service: Wix.com

2.5 Questionnaires for the content experts

2.6 Opinions and satisfaction questionnaires for French language teachers

2.7 Website of the **Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Pronunciation at the Beginner Level (A1)**.

3. Data Collection

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

3.1 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.

3.2 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.

4. Data Analysis

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

Phase2: The data were analyzed, using the percentage, the descriptive analysis, narrative descriptions and essay.

Findings

1. The website of the “**Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Pronunciation 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://french4pronounce.wix.com/beginner>

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

- **Knowledge:** text, audio & video
- **Culture:** skill culture, life culture
- **Activity:** drill & practice, quiz & test, game
- **Mass media:** radio, television, newspaper & magazine, web service
- **About:** profile of the author, usage instructions for the online resource databank, installation instructions for the online resource databank

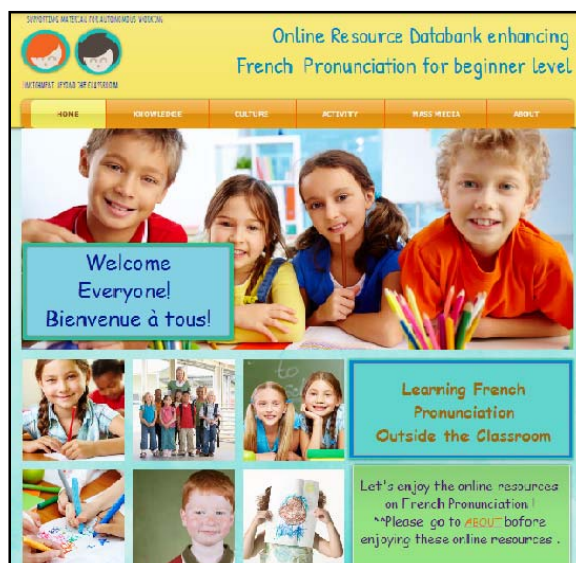


Figure 1: Example of Website Homepage Screen

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

The research findings showed that 40 French language teachers in the sample group mostly agreed with the usage of the main menus and the sub-menus of the "Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Pronunciation at the Beginner Level (A1)" at 98.41%. They were highly satisfied with this website both on the data presentation and technology used

and on the utility and utilization at 4.89 and 4.83, respectively.

The findings, hence, confirmed that this innovative media, "Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Pronunciation at the Beginner Level (A1)", can be a great classroom helper to French language teachers in their instructions of French Pronunciation to students at the Beginner Level (A1).

Table 1 Conclusion on amount and percentage of opinion and satisfaction of French language teachers for 4 main menus.

(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 (98.17%)	98.41%		
2. Culture (98.66%)		4.89≈ highly satisfied	4.83≈ highly satisfied
3. Activity (98.72%)		(Boonchom Srisa-ard, 2002)	(Boonchom Srisa-ard, 2002)
4. Mass Media (98.08%)			

Conclusions

For the overall opinions, we found that 40 French language teachers in the sample group were mostly agreed with the usage of the main menus and the sub-menus of the “Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Pronunciation at the Beginner Level (A1)” at 98.41%. They were highly satisfied with this website both on the data presentation and technology used and on the utility and utilization at 4.89 and 4.83, respectively, according to the criteria scale of Boonchom Srisa-ard (2002).

The findings confirmed that this innovative media, “**Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Pronunciation at the Beginner Level (A1)**”, can be helpful to French language teachers in their instructions of French Pronunciation to students at the Beginner Level (A1).

Discussions

The ideas and concepts, fallen within the conduction of this research, are as follows:

1. The sitemap design and the resource search for the development of the “Online Resource Databank

Enhancing French Pronunciation at the Beginner Level (A1)”

The researcher designed the sitemap composing of 5 main menus: Knowledge, Culture, Activity, Mass Media and About. Each main menu comprises different sub-menus. The main menu, “Knowledge” was firstly composed of 3 sub-menus: text – sound – video. The 3 sub-menus were combined into 2 submenus: text – audio & video after the resource search had been done. The modification by grouping tended to give more easy access to the attractive, useful and authentic medias.

2. The scripts and website development for the “Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Pronunciation at the Beginner Level (A1)”

Some principles on website design and development had been found essential as basic knowledge for the researcher as follows:

– For the development of the script files, the survey on the existing French pronunciation resources should be done thoroughly before designing the sitemap due to the large amount of information on French pronunciation available on the Internet.

- Too many colors for background and the varieties of font sizes should not be applied for each webpage, the simple and consistent design are more preferable. It should be corresponded to the basic principles of web design. (University of Michigan, 1999)

- Using the web builder service with flash and HTML5 templates can save a lot of time and the expenses on graphic design, as well as copyrights, for the researcher and any other web developers.

3. The study of French language teachers' opinions and satisfaction towards the "Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Pronunciation at the Beginner Level (A1)"

The results from this study showed that the sample group mostly agreed with the main and sub-menus of the Online Resource Databank. Their overall satisfaction towards the Online Resource Databank was at the highest level for data presentation and technology used and for the utility and utilization. However, there are few disagreements with some of the questioning items as follows:

- "The use of language is quite difficult for the beginner level."

- "We have not enough time to prepare and do the activities in class."

- "Too much time to spend for planning the instruction of this media"

The given disagreed reasons can be explained by the overloaded of teachers' tasks apart from the teaching ones, the very limited time for doing the activities in class, as well as the time for preparing their lesson plans as mentioned in Scriven, M.'s article (1994). Despite some of this disagreement, the

overall agreed opinions of French language teachers for this Online Resource Databank were shown at 98.41%, as well as their overall satisfaction at the highest level at 4.89 and 4.83, respectively for data presentation and technology used and for the utility and utilization of the website.

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 pronunciation.

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 pronunciation 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.

References

- Boonprom, J. 2008a. **The Errors System in French Pronunciation by Thai Learners.** Chiang Mai: Faculty of Humanities, Chiang Mai University. cited in Renard, R. 1971.
- _____. 2008b. **Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Phonetic Correcting Strategies for the Improvement of French Pronunciation Ability by Thai Students: Prosodies, Vocalic Sounds and Consonant Sounds.** Chiang Mai: Faculty of Humanities, Chiang Mai University. cited in Renard, R. 1971.
- _____. **Introduction à la méthode verbo-tonale de correction phonétique.** Paris: Didier.
- Hismanoglu, M. 2010. "Online pronunciation resources: hobbies or fobbies of EFL teachers?" **International Journal on New Trends in Education and Their Implications** 1 (2): 33-45.
- Kruk, M. 2012. "Using online resources in the development of learner autonomy and English pronunciation: The case of individual learners." **Journal of Second Language Teaching & Research** 1(2):113-142.
- Rongtheera, T. 2009. "Investigating Pronunciation Problems of French Vowels by Thai Learners." **Songklanakarin Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities** 15(5): 857 – 869.
- Scriven, M. 1994. Duties of the teacher. **Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education** 8(2): 151-184.
- Srisa-ard, B. 2002. **Preliminary research (in Thai).** 7th ed. Bangkok : Suweeriya Sarn.
- Umich.edu. 1999. **Basic Web Design Principles** (Online). <http://umich.edu/~ece/resources/design.html>, August 4, 2015.