

Development of Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Listening Skills At The Beginner Level (A1)

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of the research study are to (1) design and develop the **Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Listening Skills at the Beginner Level (A1)** and (2) study the opinions of French language teachers on the usage of the **Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Listening Skill at the Beginner Level (A1)**. The samples are 40 French language teachers selected from the Educational Service Area Office 1 and Office 2 of Bangkok Metropolis, using the multistage sampling: cluster sampling, stratified sampling and simple random sampling. The research instruments are the website of the **Online Resource Databank** and the opinion and satisfaction questionnaires. The data are analyzed through the percentage, the descriptive analysis, the narration, and the essay

The research findings are as follows: (1) the website of the **Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Listening Skills at the Beginner Level (A1)** is located at the following URL: <http://french4listen.wix.com/beginner> and composes of five main menus: Knowledge – Culture – Activities – Media – About (2) 40 French language teacher respondents mostly agree with the usage of the **Online Resource Databank** at 97.28 %. Some of them are uncertain with the difficulty and the language level of some content but very few disagree

with some usage of the mass media. The overall satisfaction towards the **Online Resource Databank** shows that 40 respondents are highly satisfied at $\bar{x} = 4.66$ with the data presentation and technology used, and at $\bar{x} = 4.58$ for the utility and utilization. The **Online Resource Databank** is indicated as innovative instructional media that can be helpful in class, outside the class, and for personal use.

Keywords: online resources, online databank, French listening skill

INTRODUCTION

Learning a foreign language at the present generally focuses on the four learning skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing in order to enable students' ability to master their language competences for everyday life. In fact, for the effective communication in any language, we need these four skills. The natural way of learning our first language begins with **listening**, then **speaking**, after that **reading**, and finally **writing**. (Richards, Platt and Platt, 1992). One of the important skill to start learning a foreign language is listening skill. We notice that we use the same theory to learn any foreign language; the learners listen to the language first and then imitate what they heard. They, after that, will produce their oral expressions. Hence, listening skill plays a prominent role in learning the foreign language. At the present time, French as a foreign

language in Thailand becomes less popular by the rise of other Asian languages such as Chinese, Japanese and Korean. In addition, as the ASEAN community will soon take place, the government has to promote the learning of at least one ASEAN language in every secondary school. Learning French in Thailand will “sink into oblivion” if no one try to promote it. Some efforts, in 2013, of the permanent representative of “OIF: Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie” in Asia and the Pacific have shown the remaining needs of French language as follows:

... the OIF would like Thailand to promote the learning of French because students will have more chances to advance their studies. Studying French is cheaper than any other languages and, more importantly, it facilitates other areas of study like law, physics and biology... (Ministry of Education, 2013)

As French language teacher, the researcher understands well the situations and realizes that Thai students who are actually studying French must have also the questions on how French could be useful for their future careers. Some significant problems of French listening skill instruction in Thailand are as follows: (1) class size: too many students per class for French listening skill practice in class; (2) lack of authentic French listening materials such as cassette and CD as well as language laboratory for the sufficient practices of listening skills in various forms like audio and video conversations; (3) insufficient real life situations for the use of French language. As Thailand is neither a French-speaking nor French colonial country, it is difficult to have chance to communicate with French native speakers in daily life.

At the present situation, students can use some existing French materials at school but have no right to take them home. So with their free time at home, there is not enough practices that lead to the improvement of their listening skills. Fortunately, with the progress nowadays of the ICT: Information and Communication Technology, students can have access and reach more knowledge and information in authentic forms via Internet. They are able to improve their French listening skill via many resources on the websites, existing in large quantities. Therefore, these websites are spread out all over the Internet and difficult to find out properly and quickly by the search engines, especially for French beginners whose language skills are still limited. With a kind of online resource databank that collects the useful and interesting resource sites for them, students at the beginner level will be able to improve their listening skill by practicing more with the well-designed and approved resources. The research conducted by Christina Norman (2001) on Electronic Publishing Initiative at Columbia (EPIC) confirmed the utility of online/ electronic resource databank as follows: “...The advantages and disadvantages of the electronic resources are the easy access to information, and the comprehensiveness of electronic resources... **Advantages** of using electronic resources include: information can be accessed anywhere, anytime and the various kind of resources are available...” So this research entitled “Development of Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Listening Skills at the Beginner Level (A1)” aims at providing French language teachers In Thailand with the innovative French listening teaching resources that are helpful for both teachers and learners at the beginner level.

Research Objectives

(1) to design and develop the online resource databank enhancing french listening skills at the beginner level (A1).

(2) to study the opinions of French language teachers on the usage of the online resource databank enhancing french listening skills at the beginner level (A1).

Research Methodology

1. Population and Sample

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

1.2 Sample: 50 French language teachers in French Program at Grade Level 10 selected from the public schools in Bangkok Metropolis. The multistage sampling is used as follows:

Stage (1) Bangkok Metropolis is selected as the province that has the public schools with French programs in the upper secondary level (Mathayomsuksa 4 – 6) using the cluster sampling method.

Stage (2) The public schools with French program are equally selected from the Educational Service Area Offices of Bangkok Metropolis using the stratified sampling method: twenty-five schools from the Educational Service Area Office 1 and twenty-five schools from the Educational Service Area Office

2. Stage (3) Fifty French language teachers in French program at Grade Level 10 are selected from 50 public schools in the Educational Service Area Offices of Bangkok Metropolis by using the simple random sampling method by draw. From 50

distributed sets, 40 questionnaires are returned, representing 80 % of the survey data.

2. Research Tools

2.1 French listening resources on the Internet and world wide web

2.2 Network Computer

2.3 Books and documents

2.4 Analysis table

2.5 Content expert questionnaire

2.6 Web 2.0 program and tools

2.7 Opinion and satisfaction questionnaire

2.8 Website of the “Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Listening Skills at the Beginner Level (A1)”

3. Research Procedure:

3.1 The researcher reviews and analyzes the related books and documents before designing the online resource databank sitemap using the analysis table.

3.2 The researcher proposes the site map to the thesis advisory committee for verifying the quality and improved it until reaching the perfection.

3.3 The researcher searches the WWW and develops the URL scripts as being designed, using WORD file format. They are submitted to the thesis advisory committee for its usability and utility and bring back for the improvement until reaching the perfection.

3.4 The researcher creates the questionnaire for the content expert. They are handed to the thesis advisory committee for its usability and utility and bring back for the improvement until reaching the perfection. The scripts are then proposed to the experts for the evaluation. The researcher uses the evaluation results

to improve the scripts and hands them to the thesis advisory committees for quality verifying.

3.5 The researcher selects Web 2.0 tools which is HTML5 web template service: Wix.com and develops the online resource databank website using the scripts. The completed website can be viewed at the following URL:<http://french4listen.wix.com/beginner>

3.6 The researcher verifies the developed website for the flow control and the content accuracy before presenting it to the thesis advisory committees for quality verifying. It is brought back for the improvement until reaching the perfection.

4. Data Collection

The researcher collects the data in two phases, using the following procedures:

In phase 1, the researcher collects the information from the related books, documents and the resources on the WWW for the sitemap design, the development of the URL scripts in Word file format and the website development.

In phase 2, the researcher collects the data from the online survey for the study of French language teachers' opinions and satisfaction with the usage of the Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Listening Skills at the beginner level (A1). The researcher also contacts the sample group in person for the completion of the missing data.

5. Data Analysis

Phase 1: Design and Development of the Online Resource Databank.

The researcher analyzes the data, using the descriptive analysis.

Phase 2: Study of French language teachers' opinions

The researcher analyzes the data, using data distribution, the percentage, the descriptive analysis.

Research findings

1. The Website of the Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Listening Skills at the Beginner Level (A1)

The website of the online resource databank enhancing french listening skills at the beginner level (A1) is developed using the web builder service with flash and Html 5 templates, WIX.COM, is located at the following URL: <http://french4listen.wix.com/beginner>

The sitemap comprises five main menus with different sub-menus as follows:

1. Knowledge : Text, Audio & Video

2. Culture : Skill culture, Life culture

3. Activities: Drill & Practice, Quiz & Test, Game.

4. Mass Media: Radio, Television, Newspaper & Magazine, Web service.

5. About: Usage Instruction and Author Profile.



Figure 1 Example of Website Homepage Screen (URL:<http://french4listen.wix.com/beginner>)

2. French Language Teachers' Opinions and Satisfaction towards the Website of the Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Listening Skills at the Beginner Level (A1)

Most of the respondents, 40 French language teachers agree with the usage of the "Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Listening Skills at the Beginner Level (A1)" at 97.28 %. Some of them are uncertain about the difficulty and the language level of some content. There are, nevertheless, few of disagreements. The reasons are due to the unfamiliarity

to take the initiatives on activity and lesson plan preparation, as well as for the use of some innovative tool like mass media. Most of the respondents are highly satisfied with the Online Resource Databank. The overall satisfaction for the website was at $\bar{x} = 4.66$ for data presentation and technology used, and at $\bar{x} = 4.58$ for the utility and utilization. It is indicated that this innovative media can be helpful for both teachers and learners. Most of the resources can be used as instructional materials in class and as supplementary media outside the class.

Table 1 Conclusion on amount and percentage of opinions and satisfaction of French Language Teachers for the “Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Listening Skill at the Beginner Level (A1)”

(n=40)

| Opinions | | Satisfaction (Likert Scale/ 5 levels) | |
|-----------------------|--------|---|---|
| Main Menu / Agreement | | Data Presentation and Technology Used (\bar{x}) | Utility and Utilization (\bar{x}) |
| 1.Knowledge | 97.02% | | |
| 2.Culture | 97.31% | 4.66 | 4.58 |
| 3.Activity | 97.63% | | |
| 4.Mass Media | 97.16% | | |
| Total | 97.28% | 4.66 ≈ highly satisfied (Wichien Ketsingha,1995) | 4.58 ≈ highly satisfied (Wichien Ketsingha,1995) |

Conclusion

The website of the “Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Listening Skills at the Beginner Level (A1)” is located at the URL: <http://french4listen.wix.com/beginner>

Forty French language teachers in the sample group mostly agree with the usage of the Online Resource Databank at 97.28%. Most of them are highly satisfied with the website at $\bar{x} = 4.66$ for the data presentation and technology used and at $\bar{x} = 4.58$ for the utility and utilization. The overall opinions and satisfaction indicate that this Online Resource Databank can be used as instructional media to enhance French listening skills of the students both in class and outside the class as the supplementary material. It can be useful for the instructional application and for personal uses.

Discussion

1. The Sitemap, Scripts and Website Designs for the Online Resource Databank.

The researcher designs the sitemap by relying on the information surveyed from the Internet in order

to get the basic ideas of the existing French Listening skill resources. Also, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in level A1 is used for shaping and naming the main menus and the sub-menus. According to the descriptions in CEFR, knowledge and culture should be linked in foreign language instruction. Moreover, the resources on supplementary activities and mass media aim to provide French teachers with the innovative ways for lesson plan preparation and to inspire them with the authentic materials. The searching results for script file development shows that the sound resources together with texts or exercises are mostly found, as well as the existing video resources in large number on the Internet. Therefore, the two sub-menus: Sound and Video in main menu Knowledge are grouped instead into 1 sub-menu: Audio & Video. Consequently, the researcher realizes that for the resource development, the sitemap design should be always flexible for change, depending on the searching results. Change on web resources had become beneficial to students as said Courtney Boyd Myers (2011), “... in this era, free education has never been so accessible. The Web gives lifelong learners

the tools to become autodidacts, joining the ranks of other self-taught great thinkers in history such as Albert Einstein, Alexander Graham Bell, Paul Allen and Ernest Hemingway..." For website development, the expert on technology had mentioned that the use of free blog or web template services like Blogger.com or Wix.com might make our website unstable for the existence. The solution is on the choice of good web builder services available in quantity on the Internet nowadays, as concluded Jeremy Wong (2015) in Best Website Builder Review 2015 on Wix.com. As free web builder service that allows anyone to create website, blog or other multi-media presentation, WIX.com helps the researcher to save time for storyboard creation since the results of change can be seen immediately. Also, the risk on copyright breaking can be avoided due to a large number of free pictures, icons, and flash animation which are provided, as well as the virus and security control for the created site.

2. The Study of French Language Teachers' Opinions and Satisfaction.

For the study results, there are the overall agreement with most of the usages of the Online Resource Databank and the high satisfaction towards the website for the data presentation and technology used and for the utility and utilization. The results may due to the process of verification that is also done by the French experts for both the content and technology during the researcher's study time in France according to the collaborative project between Kasetsart University and University of Montpellier. Few of disagreement, especially for the usage of the mass media menu can come from the unfamiliarity with the live presentation of these media required preparation on activity and lesson planning. The rare opportunity to use the innovative tools on mass media

menu like radio, television, newspaper and magazine, may also relate to the lack or insufficiency of computer and network materials in schools. All of the positive comments confirmed by the way the good resource selection under the control of experts and thesis advisory committee and the best practices of web design principles which the researcher had followed.

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 listening.
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 further development of other online resource databank

According to the research findings and discussions, the novice 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 scripts and website creation, as well as the main menus and sub-menus. Despite of the fact that these kind of

instructional media is quite new for teachers in Thailand, especially for listening skill teaching, the research results show French language teachers' high satisfaction as well as the awareness for the benefits of using the online resources as teaching media. The research study proves 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 are ready to use this kind of online media in their classes, and also to develop more online resource databank for French language teaching.

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