

Development of Online Resource Databank for Enhancing French Writing Skills at the Beginner Level (A1)

Chalermwut Baothongkham* and Dr. Noppawan Chimroyarb**

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

** Lecturer, 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 Writing Skills at the Beginner Level (A1)**; and to 2) study the opinions of French language teachers on the usage of the **Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Speaking Skills at the Beginner Level (A1)**. The sample were 40 French language teachers that were selected from public schools in the Educational Service Area Office1 and Office2 of Bangkok Metropolis using the multistage sampling: 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 Writing Skills at the Beginner Level (A1)**. The data were analyzed through the descriptive analysis, the percentage, the narration and the essay.

The research findings were as follows: 1) the website of the **Online Resource Data bank Enhancing French Writing Skills at the Beginner Level (A1)**, composed of 5 main menus: 1) knowledge, 2) culture, 3) activities, 4) mass media and 5) about, is located at the following URL:<http://french4write.wix.com/beginner>; 2) 40 respondents, French language teachers in public schools of Bangkok Metropolis, were mostly agreed with the usage of the **Online Resource Databank** at 96.42%. Few of them were uncertain

about some usage of the online resources with the main reasons for the lack of time to prepare the activity and lesson plan; 3) most of the 40 respondents were satisfied with the website; the overall satisfaction was at 4.67 (highly satisfied) for the data presentation and technology used and at 4.52 (satisfied) for the utility and utilization of the website. The **Online Resource Databank** was indicated as innovative instructional media that can be used in class, outside the class, and for personal purposes.

Key Words: Online Resource; Writing Databank;
French writing skills.

INTRODUCTION

Learning foreign languages is necessary in the present global society. It is essential to our everyday lives, serving as the important tool for communication, education, seeking knowledge, livelihood and creating the understanding of cultures and visions of world community (Office of the Prime Minister, 2008). Thai Ministry of Education had announced the implementation of Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008) (2008: 266) in which French language is one of the second foreign languages, implemented in Thailand for more than 30 years. The problems encountered in teaching

French writing skills were as follows: the limited time for language program instruction, 5 to 6 periods (of 50 minutes) per week, depending on each school policy; writing is one of the most difficult skills to

develop and teach. Students have not only to integrate linguistic knowledge such as grammar and vocabulary, but also to convey their internal thoughts in writing. (Byrne, 1991; Ioannou-Gheorgiou and Pavlou, 2003; Harmer, 2004; Soomim, 2006). The problem of learning how to express by writing both the ideas and the language is quite a common one among foreign language learners. (Harmer, 2004).

At the present time, the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has been widespread in teaching foreign language and also played the important role in educational management (Dudeney and Hockly, 2008; Palungtepin, 2012). A large number of the existing resources on the Internet are waiting to be collected, stored and managed for the effective redistribution. Using the online resources will be helpful and time saving for foreign language teachers who have so little time and technology skill to arrange the content and create the suitable instructional media for using with the learners inside and outside the class. (Walker and White, 2013).

Writing is one of the four important language skills because it is a tool for conveying and communicating ideas to others (Nigrotha, 2010). And that is the reason why the researcher would like to develop the “Online Resource Databank for Enhancing French Writing Skills at the Beginner Level (A1)” and provide French language teachers in Thailand with innovative instructional materials for French writing skill practices.

Research Objectives

1. To design and develop the Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Writing 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 Writing Skills 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 (Mattayomsuksa 4) that were selected from the public schools in Bangkok Metropolis, using the multistage sampling as follows:

– **Cluster sampling method** is used for the selection of Bangkok Metropolis as the province that has the public schools with French program at the upper secondary level.

– **Stratified sampling method** is used for the selection of 50 public schools of Bangkok Metropolis: 25 schools from the Educational Service Area Office 1 and 25 schools from the Educational Service Area Office 2.

– **Simple random sampling method by draw** is used for the selection of 50 French language teachers from 50 public schools in the Educational Service Area Offices of Bangkok Metropolis. From 50 distributed sets, the 40 questionnaires were collected back, representing 80% of the survey data.

2. Research Tools / Instruments

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 Writing Skills at the Beginner Level (A1)**.

3. Data Collection

The researcher collected the data in 2 phases by himself using the following procedures:

Phase 1 The researcher designed the sitemap by collecting the information from related books, documents and the World Wide Web. The researcher developed the URL scripts in Word file format, using the collected resources from the WWW, The evaluation comments of the experts were used to improve the scripts and the website.

Phase 2 The researcher collected by himself the data of the online survey for the analysis and the

conclusion of the results. The respondents were also contacted by the researcher in person for the completion of the missing data.

4. Data Analysis

Phase 1 The data were analyzed, using the descriptive analysis and the narration.

Phase 2 The data were analyzed, using the percentage, the descriptive analysis and the essay.

Research Findings

1. The website of the **Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Writing Skills at the Beginner Level (A1)**, developed by using WIX.com, the free web builder service with flash and HTML5 templates, is located at the following URL: <http://french4write.wix.com/beginner>. The sitemap is composed of 5 main menus and sub-menus as follows:

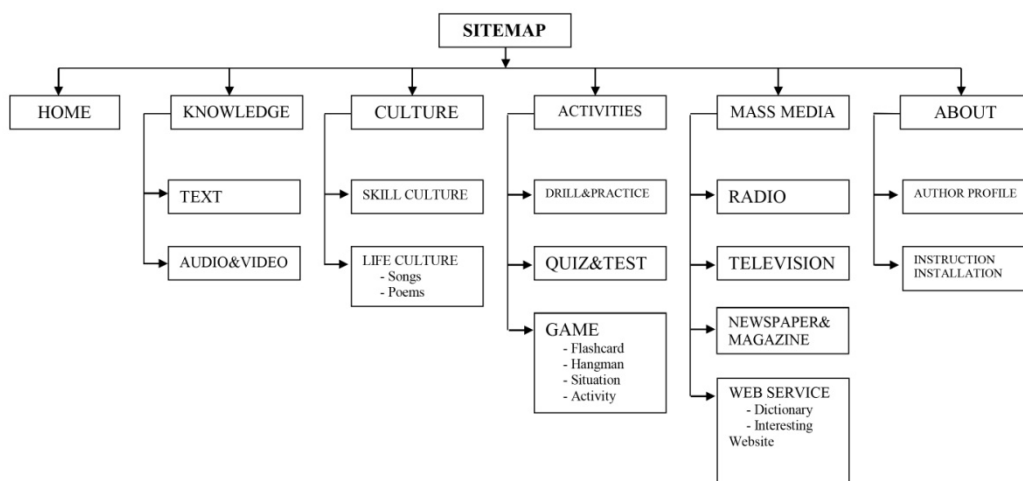


Figure 1: Sitemap



Figure 2: Website Homepage

1. **Knowledge:** Text, Audio&Video



Figure 3: Main Menu: Knowledge

2. **Culture:** Skill Culture, Life Culture



Figure 4: Main Menu: Culture

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



Figure 5: Main Menu: Activities

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



Figure 6: Main Menu: Mass Media

5. **About:** Author Profile, Usage Instructions



Figure 7: Main Menu: About

2. French language teachers' opinions on the usage and the satisfaction towards the website of the Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Writing Skills at the Beginner Level (A1). After the study results, the 40 respondents were mostly agreed with the usage of the Online Resource Databank at 96.42%. Few of them were uncertain about some usage of the online resources. For the overall satisfaction, most of the respondents were highly

satisfied with the website of the Online Resource Databank at 4.67 for the data presentation and technology used and at 4.52 for the utility and utilization. The sample indicated that this Online Resource Databank can be helpful both for teaching and learning application and for personal use. It can be used as innovative instructional materials and media in class and after the class.

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

(n=40)

Percentage of Overall opinions		Level of Overall Satisfaction (Likert's Scale)	
Main Menu	Agreement	Data Presentation and Technology Used	Utility and Utilization
1. Knowledge	97.30%	4.67	4.52
2. Culture	99.23%		
3. Activity	95.38%		
4. Mass Media	97.30%		
Total	96.42%	4.67 = very satisfied (Wichien Ketsingha,1995)	4.52 = satisfied (Wichien Ketsingha,1995)

Conclusions

The Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Writing Skills at the Beginner Level (A1) was developed, using the web builder service: wix.com, and located at the URL: <http://french4write.wix.com/beginner>. Most of the respondents in the sample group were agreed with the usage of the Online Resource Databank at 96.42%. Few of them were uncertain about some usage of the online resources. For the overall satisfaction, most of the respondents were highly satisfied with the website of the Online Resource Databank at 4.67 for the data presentation and technology used and at 4.52 for the utility and

utilization. The sample indicated that this Online Resource Databank can be helpful both for teaching and learning application and for personal use. It can be used as innovative instructional materials and media in class and after the class. The research on the "Development of Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Writing Skills at the Beginner Level (A1)" has provided French language teachers in Thailand with the innovative and ready-to-use media for the instruction and practice of French writing skill and the guidelines for further development of the other instructional materials.

Discussions

1. The sitemap design and the resources search for the “Online Resource Databank Enhancing French Writing Skills at the Beginner Level (A1)”

The sitemap was designed in 5 main menus: 1) Knowledge, 2) Culture, 3) Activities, 4) Mass Media and 5) About, depending on the information survey generally done on the Internet at the beginning in order to get the basic ideas on the existing resources for French writing skill practices. In addition, the information from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in level A1 was also used for naming the main menus and shaping the sub-menus. According to the CEFR, it should be related to both knowledge and culture of French writing. The resources on mass media can be the innovative and authentic ways of foreign language teaching to French teachers if they accept to contribute on activity and lesson plan preparation despite their problem on the lack of time.

The sitemap design was found to be necessarily flexible and changeable depending on the real situation of research conducting as the example of grouping 2 sub-menus: Sound and Video, into one sub-menus: Audio & Video. The searching results revealed that the sound resources together with texts or exercises were mostly found and a number of useful videos were found available for both teacher and students.

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

The problem on how to find the name of website's owners was found during the resource

collecting phase. The solution is to step back the URL from path to path until reaching the first page or to search for the names at the bottom of the homepage.

During the website development process, the experts had given the suggestions about the inappropriate use of different font sizes, font styles and too many pictures that are not related to the content. This can be referred to Hannafin and Hooper (1989) who had stated that the web screen design should focus on the important information or make the easy navigation through the information. The font sizes, font styles and pictures were then corrected and improved, corresponding to the web design principles of Consistency (Schwier and Misanchuk 1999).

Wix.com, the free web builder service that allows anyone to create website, blog or other multi-media presentation. As the development is easy to be done: the user can add, change, or even remove the text boxes that are on the template and also drag and drop in pictures and all types of multi-media objects, and the gallery of free images, icons and animations is provided, using WIX.com can incredibly save the researcher both on the production time and from the risk of breaking the copyright.

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

The overall opinions of the respondents, 40 French language teachers, that were mostly agreed with the usage of the Online Resource Databank at 96.42% and the overall satisfaction with the website that were highly satisfied at 4.67 and 4.52, showed that this innovative instructional media can be helpful in class, outside the class and for personal use. The

results may be owed to the research conduction that was based on both the application of good web design principles (Levie and Lentz, Misanchuk, Schwier and Boling, Lynch and Horton, M.J. and Hooper, Pettand Wilson S. 1982–1999) and also the verification of the content by the French experts of language and technology since the study time in France of the researcher according to the agreement of the collaborative project between Kasetsart University and University of Montpellier in France.

Suggestions

For Usage Implications

As this kind of teaching media, using the authentic online resources in various forms is quite new to French language teachers, the following instructions would be useful to follow:

1. French language teachers should study first the main menu « About » in order to follow the installation and usage instructions and use appropriately the Online Resource Databank.

2. French language teachers should prepare properly and in advance the multimedia features of computers to be used in class such as speaker or headphone in order to be able to fully use the audio and video features of the online resources, focusing on writing skill practices.

3. French language teachers should study the Online Resource Databank and plan in advance the use of these resources in class and outside the class. The design and development of the unit plans and lesson plans that integrated these resources can lead to the effective and successful teaching and learning for both teachers and students.

For Further Development

As website development today becomes more and more possible for people with no knowledge on programming language by using the available and easy-to-use blog and web builder services, the contributions on the addition of more web resources will be welcome, as well as the updating of the existed ones. This innovative media will be useful for teachers, students and anyone who wants to brush up their French writing skills. The researcher believes and hopes that the development of this innovative media will encourage French language teachers to take more initiatives on activity design and planning for both in class and outside the class, using these online resources so that the students will be more motivated to improve their French writing skills. The further research and study should also be conducted on the effects of different usages of this Online Resource Databank.

References

- Byrne, D. 1999. **Teaching Writing Skills**. England: Longman.
- Council of Europe. 2001. **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment**. The United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Dudeney, G. and N. Hockly. 2008. **How to Teach English with technology with CD**. 3rd ed. Harlow, England: Pearson Education.
- Hannafin, M. J, and S. Hooper. 1989. An integrated framework for CBI screen design and layout. **Computers in Human Behavior**, 5(3): 155–165.

- Harmer, J. 2004. **How to Teach Writing**. Harlow, England: Pearson Education.
- Ioannou–Ggeorgiou, S. and Pavlou, P. 2003. **Assessing Young Learners**. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Levie, W.H. and Lentz, R. 1982. "Effects of text illustrations: A review of research." **Educational Communications and Technology Journal**, 30 (4): 195–232.
- Ministry of Education. 2008. **The Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008)**. Bangkok: Kurusapa Ladprao Publishing.
- Nigrotha, A. 2010. **The Development of Web–Based Instruction on the Topic of Essay Writing Skill by Using Weblog of Matthayomsuksa 2 Students**. Master of Educationg in Educational Technology, Silpakorn University.
- Palungtepin, M. 2012. "Application of the principles of design in the new media environments for learners of English as a second or foreign language." **Journal of English Studies** 7: 27–61.
- Schwier, R. and Misanchuk, E. 1993. **Interactive multimedia instruction**. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publications, Inc.
- Soomim, R. 2006. **Strategy for Teaching French Writing Process for Communication to Matayom 6 Students**. Master of Art in Teaching French, Kasetsart University.
- Tongpun, P. 1982. **The Achievement of French Writing Skill of Mathayom Suksa Five Students with Auduo–Visual Methodology in Public School in Bangkok**. Master of Art in Teaching French, Kasetsart University.
- Walker, A. and White, G. 2013. **Technology Enhanced Language Learning**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.