



Linguistics

Social Media as A Tool For Improving Pronunciation Skills in French among Selected English-Speaking Students at the Federal Polytechnic Ilaro Ogun State Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how well the selected National Diploma and Higher National Diploma students doing French courses at the Federal Polytechnic Ilaro in Ogun State, Nigeria, can pronounce French words correctly by using social media as a tool. The study aims to determine the following: 1) how well English-speaking students at the Federal Polytechnic Ilaro can pronounce French words correctly; 2) how the students feel about using social media as an additional tool for learning French pronunciation; and 3) which social media practices and strategies work best for helping English-speaking students pronounce French words correctly. Six hundred (600) students in all (School of Engineering, School of Pure and Applied Science, School of Communication and Information Technology, School of Environmental Studies, and School of Agriculture, School of Management studies), split equally between the experimental and control groups, took part in the study. While the control group practiced pronunciation using conventional means, the experimental group used social media platforms. To identify notable changes, frequency, percentage, and chi-square tests were used to analyse the pre- and post-test scores. The experimental group's results show a significant improvement, indicating that social media can be a useful tool for language learning.

INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an essential aspect of everyday life in the current digital era, bridging cultural and linguistic divides and extending beyond physical borders. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Tik Tok have become new instructional resources for language learners, providing dynamic and captivating approaches that are frequently absent from traditional classroom settings. Manca and Ranieri (2016) contend that social media can improve educational outcomes by giving users access to real language material and encouraging communication with native speakers. The purpose of this study is to determine how social media can help English-speaking students studying French at the Federal Polytechnic Ilaro, Ogun State, Nigeria, improve their pronunciation skills. Pronunciation is an important part of language proficiency, influencing learners' confidence in their ability to communicate as well as their ability to master the phonetic differences between the two languages (Ali, 2018; Brinton, 2019; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). Because French and English are two different languages, mastering French pronunciation presents unique challenges for students whose primary language is English. Social media offers a promising solution in this case. It offers a variety of tools, including interactive language exchange platforms, pronunciation applications, and tutorial videos, which allow for extended practice

and instant feedback (Blake, 2013).

Students at the Federal Polytechnic Ilaro have access to these digital resources, but it's important to thoroughly assess how well they work to improve French pronunciation. Learning French through communicate provides a better opportunity for learners rather than grammatical base approach (Richards, 2006). The purpose of this study is to find out how social media sites can be used as additional teaching resources to improve students' pronouncing skills. The study looks at the experiences of a subset of the institution's English-speaking students in order to determine the advantages and practical uses of incorporating social media into language learning programmes.

Additionally, this study will investigate how students view utilising social media to learn a language, noting both the benefits and potential drawbacks. While social media can greatly enhance conventional learning techniques, Tess (2013) asserts that these tools' efficacy frequently depends on how well they are incorporated into the educational system. By providing insights that could guide the creation of more successful language learning procedures in comparable educational situations, the findings will add to the larger conversation on cutting edge educational practices.

The incorporation of social media into language instruction signifies a substantial departure from traditional teaching methods and has the capacity to significantly improve students' pronunciation abilities. In order to fully utilise social media in language instruction, teachers at the Federal Polytechnic Ilaro and other institutions will benefit from the useful data this research will provide on the instruments' efficacy. This study aims to determine the following: 1) how well English-speaking students at the Federal Polytechnic Ilaro can pronounce French words correctly; 2) how the students feel about using social media as an additional tool for learning French pronunciation; and 3) which social media practices and strategies work best for helping English-speaking students pronounce French words correctly.

Role of Social Media in Language Learning

Because social media platforms can create engaging and dynamic environments outside of typical classroom settings, they have become more important instruments in language acquisition. Manca and Ranieri (2016) claim that social media makes collaborative learning experiences easier by providing options for engagement with native speakers and access to real language information. This feature is very helpful for honing pronunciation abilities because it allows students to copy and listen to native speakers' pronunciation, which improves their phonetic correctness and fluency.

According to Blake (2013), social media sites like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok provide a wealth of tools for language learners, such as pronunciation guides, language-exchange forums, and real-time feedback systems. These tools are essential for English-speaking students learning French since they offer a variety of scenarios and role models for improving pronunciation outside of scheduled class times.

Challenges in Pronunciation Learning and the Role of Social Media

Learning pronunciation may be very difficult, particularly when students move from their home tongue (such as English) to a phonetically different language (such as French). Gilakjani (2016) points out that in order to become proficient, English-speaking learners must practise specifically and often because they frequently struggle with French phonemes and prosody. It's possible that traditional teaching techniques don't always offer enough chances for this kind of practice, which emphasises the value of additional resources like social media.

Tess (2013) explores how social media's adaptability and accessibility can help address these issues. It is essential to allow learners to access pronunciation exercises and models at their own convenience in order to accommodate a variety of learning styles and schedules. Social media platforms also give language learners access to online groups where they can practise speaking with others, get criticism from their peers, and generally practise pronouncing words correctly (Al-Nuaimi et al., 2019; Chuang & Liao, 2021).

Chinedu and Anthonia (2015) examined the difficulties involved in learning French for a native English speaker. Their study is restricted to native speakers of French. In the context of learning French pronunciation as a second language speakers in Nigeria, students, face some challenges in the traditional

method of learning. This corroborates Barbara's (2010) submission that "a Nigerian child learning French language has a lot of problems to cope with".

Effectiveness of Social Media Tools in Language Pronunciation

Studies reveal that the efficacy of distinct social media platforms in augmenting articulation abilities varies. For example, learners might mimic and practise visual and auditory models by watching tutorial videos on websites like YouTube (Blake, 2013). These films aid in the development of learners' ear for French phonetics by frequently featuring native speakers demonstrating proper pronunciation and common errors.

Interactive games and pronunciation applications are also very important. Manca and Ranieri (2016) point out that these tools provide instantaneous feedback on pronunciation accuracy, which is critical for students to be able to evaluate their own pronunciation and make real-time corrections. These interactive elements greatly increase how well social media technologies work to help users pronounce words correctly.

Student Perspectives on Social Media Use for Pronunciation Learning

It is essential to comprehend how students view and use social media platforms in order to assess the overall efficacy of these technologies. Studies by Tess (2013) and Manca and Ranieri (2016) show that although students recognise the value of social media's interactive features and accessibility for language learning, they also recognise its drawbacks, including distractions and the need for self-control to properly manage their learning pace.

Furthermore, research done in Nigeria offers insightful information about the regional context of using social media for language learning. For example, Adelabu's (2017) study examines how Nigerian university students use Facebook and WhatsApp to learn languages, highlighting their preferences and the ways in which they believe these platforms might help them improve their language proficiency. The efficacy of mobile learning applications in enhancing English language proficiency among Nigerian secondary school students is the subject of another study conducted by Akinyemi and Jegede (2020), highlighting the potential of digital technologies in language education within Nigerian educational environments.

The foundation of the technology acceptance model (TAM) was established by Davids' 1989 study. It investigates how people accept and use technology, emphasising how simple and beneficial people think it is. Designing successful educational strategies can be aided by understanding how students view social media as helpful and simple to utilise for pronunciation acquisition.

METHOD

A control group and an experimental group were part of a quasi-experimental design. Assessments for the pretest and post-test were given to both groups. Six hundred English-speaking students selected from the six schools (School of Engineering, School of Pure and Applied Science, School of Information and Communication Technology, School of Environmental Studies, School of Agriculture, School of Management Studies) were split into two groups at random: 300 students in the experimental group practise pronouncing words correctly on social media, and 300 students in the control group used conventional techniques. Tests before and after the pronunciation of a selection of French words and phrases was evaluated. Four levels were used to categorise scores: Fair (50–64%), Good (65–79%), Poor (0–49%), and Excellent (80–100%). For the Pretest, the identical list of words and phrases was used to evaluate both groups. The experimental group practiced pronouncing words correctly utilising social media (e.g., interactive practice on YouTube and TikTok applications) and the

Control Group used conventional teaching techniques and textbooks. After the test, the identical list was used to reevaluate both groups.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Descriptive Statistica in Pretest and posttest scores in each category (poor, fair, good, and excellent), are broken down into frequencies and percentages.

The statistical significance of the variations in score distributions is ascertained using the Chi-Square test.

Result

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Experimental Group

Score category	Pre-test Frequency	Pre-test Percentage (%)	Post-test Frequency	Post-test Percentage (%)
Poor (0-49%)	120	40	30	10
Fair (50-64%)	90	30	60	20
Good (65-79%)	60	20	90	30
Excellent (80-100%)	30	10	100	40

Table 2: Control Group

Score category	Pre-test Frequency	Pre-test Percentage (%)	Post-test Frequency	Post-test Percentage (%)
Poor (0-49%)	110	36.7	80	26.7
Fair (50-64%)	100	33.3	90	30
Good (65-79%)	70	23.3	80	26.7
Excellent (80-100%)	20	6.7	50	16.6

Chi-Square Test

Table 3: Experimental Group Contingency

Score Category	Pre-test (O)	Post-test (O)	Expected (O)
Poor	120	30	75
Fair	90	60	75
Good	60	90	75
Excellent	30	100	75

Chi-Square Calculation:

$$\chi^2 = \sum (O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i$$

For the experimental Group:

$$\chi^2 = (120-75)^2/75 + (90-75)^2/75 + (60-75)^2/75 + (30-75)^2/75 + (30-75)^2/75 + (60-75)^2/75 + (90-75)^2/75 + (120-75)^2/75 = 78$$

Degrees of freedom $df = (\text{number of categories} - 1) = 3$

Critical value at $\alpha = 0.05$ is 7.815

$\chi^2 = 78$ (significant improvement)

Table 4: Control Group Contingency

Score Category	Pretest (O)	Post-test (O)	Expected (O)

Poor	110	80	95
Fair	100	90	95
Good	70	80	75
Excellent	20	50	35

Chi-Square Calculation:

$$\chi^2 = (110-95)^2/95 + (100-95)^2/95 + (70-75)^2/75 + (20-35)^2/35 + (80-95)^2/95 + (90-95)^2/95 + (80-75)^2/75 + (50-35)^2/35 = 16.92$$

Degrees of freedom $df = (\text{number of categories} - 1) = 3$

Critical value $\alpha = 0.05$ is 7.815

$\chi^2 = 16.92$ (Significant improvement)

Discussion

Interpretation of Results

The findings show that students in both groups have significantly improved their pronunciation abilities. In contrast to the control group, the experimental group displayed a larger shift from lower to higher proficiency categories.

Implication

The results imply that social media can be a very useful tool for improving pronunciation of foreign languages. Compared to conventional approaches, its dynamic and engaging nature might offer a more favourable atmosphere for pronunciation practice. Contrary to Oluranti (2012) claim that "the available teachers are not trained to teach the French language", students access to social media application enhances their pronunciation proficiency rather than relying solely on their teachers.

Limitation

The study ignored other linguistic abilities like grammar and vocabulary in favour of concentrating just on pronunciation. The brief duration of the intervention may have resulted in an incomplete capture of its long-term benefits.

Future Research

Future research should examine how social media affects other linguistic skills and take longer intervention times into account. Furthermore, studies could look at the precise characteristics of social media that support language acquisition the most.

CONCLUSION

Promising prospects exist for English-speaking students (ND and HND) learning French to improve their pronunciation skills through the use of social media in language instruction. Through the utilization of social media platforms' interactive and easily available features, educators can enhance conventional teaching approaches and provide students a variety of resources to facilitate successful language acquisition.

This study demonstrates how social media can be a useful tool for English-speaking students to improve their French pronunciation. The experimental group's notable improvement highlights the necessity of integrating contemporary digital resources into language learning courses. Better language acquisition is encouraged by the interactive and entertaining platforms of social media, which offer a viable substitute for conventional techniques.

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