

GLOBAL AUDIO-VISUAL APPROACH FOR COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE AMONG LEARNERS OF FRENCH IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper discusses the use of Global Audio-Visual approach of teaching French as a foreign and second language in Nigeria, particularly in higher institutions. The paper contends that learners of French should be adequately exposed to the Global Audio-Visual approach of teaching in an integrated manner in order to attain the set relevance of French as a major international language of Science, Commerce, diplomacy and technology. Furthermore, with this approach, Nigerian students will have access to the same educational, political, social and economic opportunities – that students in some of the more developed parts of the world enjoy – which this 21st century abound with. Hence the paper highlights the objectives of Global Audio-Visual approach to the development of communication competence among learners of French in Nigeria.

There is no doubt that language is a prerequisite for full mutual understanding and cooperation between nations. Foreign language learning promotes understanding, tolerance, and respect for the cultural identity, rights and values of others. Naturally, Nigeria shares borders with four French speaking countries with which the country has various socio-economic transactions. In addition to this, we are now in a very competitive world, where Nigeria and Nigerians cannot afford to lag behind. In view of all these, foreign language learning such as French is not a luxury but a necessity which we must embrace wholeheartedly thus according to Ade Ojo (2006) French cannot but play a very vital role. There is very little wonder, therefore, that the

Nigerian government has considered it necessary to raise the status of French to a core subject, acquiring the same status with Mathematics and English in the secondary school. “For smooth interaction with our neighbours, it is desirable, for every Nigerian to speak French. Accordingly, French shall be the second official language in Nigeria and it shall be compulsory in schools” (FRN: 1998:9).

In the long search for the best way of teaching a foreign language, hundreds of different approaches or methods have been devised. Each method is based on a particular view of language learning and usually recommends the use of a specific set of techniques and materials. It is recognized that there are several ways of reaching the goal of foreign language competence, and that teachers need to be aware of a range of methods; in order to find the one most appropriate to the learner’s needs and circumstances and to the objectives of the course.

Applied Global Audio-Visual approach of teaching which include the use of radio, television, tape recorder, can assist in solving some of the problems of teaching french language in Nigeria. These facilities have the capability to show colour, motion and simultaneous representation with sound. Communicative competence can be consciously developed in learners of French through the use of Global Audio-Visual approach of teaching as learners visualize, and hear the realities evoked in the lessons they are taught.

Communicative Competence

Hymes (1972) introduced the notion of communicative competence. This concept is more relevant to a second language situation. According to Alo (2003:116) communicative competence relates to the knowledge and ability which a speaker needs to possess in order to use language appropriately in real life situations. Canale and Swain (1980) proposed a theoretical framework in which they outline the contents and boundaries of three areas of communicative competence – Grammatical, socio-linguistic and strategic competence. Sociolinguistics competence was further divided by Canale (1983:5) into two separate components: Sociolinguistic and discourse competence. He defines communicative competence as “The underlying systems of knowledge and skill required for communication.

Hymes, referring to Chomsky’s concept of linguistic competence; states that, for a language to be used to exchange information, ideas, or feelings, the speaker must possess both the capacity to construct grammatically correct sentence and the competence to produce socially pertinent utterances. Communication then, depends on communicative competence which can include:

- (1) A linguistic component
- (2) A discursive component – which is a knowledge and understanding of different types of discourse and of their organizations as a function of the situation of communication within which they are produced.
- (3) A referential component – which is a knowledge of the domains of experience and the objects in the world and of their relationships.
- (4) A socio cultural component – which is a knowledge of the social rules and norms

of interaction between individuals and within institutions, including a knowledge of cultural history and of the relations between social objects.

In addition to this, we need to add a strategic component; which refers to the speakers ability to repair damaged utterances, either through the use of language – like sentence fillers, or through the use of extra-linguistic means- gesture, body-language in general.

Global Audio-Visual Approach

According to Femi Babatunde (2009), citing Robert Galisson (1991) “The audio-visual method of teaching was developed in France in the 50s through the works of Peter Guberina at the University of Zagreb and Paul Rivenc at the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Saint – Cloud”. The first full language learning program – *Voix et images de France* - was published in 1962, and was later adapted for primary school children as *Bonjour line* Guberina claimed that language was an acoustico –visual phenomenon, and elaborated a theory of auditive perception that was one of the bases of the method.

The Global audio-visual of teaching was based on the same kind of thinking as the audio-lingual approach. However, two important changes were made.

- (1) The matter to be taught was based not only on a structural analysis of language but also on the statistical analysis of a corpus of everyday language, both spoken and written. The analysis made is possible to construct the program on the basis of the frequency of particular structures and lexical items.
- (2) The lessons were structured around an opening dialogue which was accompanied with a film (stills) that contextualized it.

Moreover, the psychology of learning which underlay the method was opposed to the behaviourist model of the Audio-lingual approach. The basis was what is known as “Gestalt” theory, that held that the whole was more important than the parts – hence the term “Global”. Language was to be understood within a sensual context, rather than abstracted from visual reality.

On this Global Audio Visual approach, the learner has no control over the contents of the program nor over the way the lessons are delivered. A lesson typically follows a foreordained structure:

- (1) First, the dialogue is presented in situation with the accompanying pictures. The dialogue is to be repeated, with a good imitation of the phonological forms taken globally, rather than broken down sound by sound.
- (2) Next, the new elements are ritualized in contexts which are slightly different from the one in which they were presented. At this stage, the learners will play out short sketches.
- (3) Finally, the language would be fixed through structural exercises – preferably in the language laboratory which is undoubtedly the best known technological aid in foreign language teaching. At this stage, the learning process resembles the Audio-lingual approach with a similar use of drills and “over learning” with particular attention being paid to natural pronunciation. Structural patterns in dialogues about everyday situations are imitated and drilled.

In a number of ways, the Global Audio-Visual approach appears to occupy an intermediary position between the audio-lingual method and the communicative approaches. There is on the one hand, the idea of a clear progression, determined by an analysis of the language to be used. The presentation of language is specially written dialogues, and the use of structural drills and repetition while on the other hand, there is the belief that language must be placed within a context within which it will be meaningful.

Global Audio-Visual Equipments

More than ever before, Nigerians have become aware of the influence of Audio-Visuals for dissemination of information; and for teaching and learning. The global Audio-Visual approach predisposes a presentation of the lesson on audio-visual equipments like television, films, video (motion pictures) and projected visuals (still pictures) in addition to the audio-lingual equipments like the record player, tape recorder and radio. And as we are all aware of the influence of media in our age then we can contend that we will be in order to talk about using audio-visuals for advancing effective teaching of French.

Television

Television belongs to the class of visual art and is a more likely path to getting students awakened. It also brings the real world experiences to the classrooms, homes, work place and it has high visual impact as it presents life-like and realistic experience combining both sound and moving pictures.

Radio

Radio is a type of wireless communication device into which sound wave are transmitted from a broadcasting studio. Unlike the television, radio is a blind medium

and as such it allows for more concentration. And there is the issue of access and portability which means many students can handle it at convenient times and in all places.

Films

A film is a long strip that consists of a sequence of still photographs each of which is called a frame. Films carry pictures, motion and sound. It provides intensely realistic experiences and creating in learners the emotional impact that facilitate learning.

Video

Video can be used to tape Instructional Television (ITV) programmes that suit specific learning objectives and particular teaching and learning situations. The video supplements or even replaces broadcast television as mode for delivery of instructional television.

Project Visuals

These are visuals that require the use of projectors and electricity for their projection for viewing; examples are Opaque projection, Overhead projection, Slide projection and film strips Projected visuals are also called projected still pictures because they project one picture at a time.

Tape Recorder

The tape recorder is used in playing the audio tape and cassettes. Many of the cassette tape recorders make use of electricity or ordinary batteries. Audio cassettes are very useful for teaching language arts (Oral aspect).

Objectives of Global Audio-Visual Approach for Communication Competence Among French Learners

The objectives of Global Audio visual approach can be classified as follows:

- (a) Linguistics objective.
- (b) Socio-cultural objective.

Linguistics Objective

The use of Global Audio visual approach of teaching the learners of French language are more accurate in mastering the formal social and conventional rules of the language, thereby developing their competence in speaking the language.

Onuko, (2001), citing Richard & Rodgers (1995), in “the role of Educational technology in the teaching of French language in Nigeria” said:

“if the teacher is not a native of the target language, the tape recorder provides accurate models for dialogues and drills. A language laboratory may also be considered essential. It provides the opportunity for further drill work and to receive controlled error-free practice of basic structures. It also adds variety by providing an alternative for classroom practice”.

The exposure of the native users of French language, through the use of authentic material such as video-tapes, television, audio-tape, newspaper, library, is a real benefit to the learner for his communication competence.

Socio-Cultural Objectives

Learning a foreign language is likely to mean learning a great deal about the foreign civilization and culture at the same time. Audio-visual components like video tapes, televisions, tape recorders, radios etc. increasingly incorporate information about physical, geography, economy, history, politics, religion, social institutions, educational system, literature, art, music, science and technology, sport, as well as about daily life-style, folk customs and social values. When this approach is used in teaching the learners of French Language in Nigeria. It helps them to become more fully aware of different ways of behaviour, and reduces the risks of culture shock, foreigner stereotyping and intolerance. A knowledge of the social rules and norms of interaction between individuals will go

a long way in helping the learners in their communication competence. Take for example, the “Vouvoyer” and “tutoyer” used in French for personality is part of French civilisation and culture.

The general objective of the Global audio-visual, according to Tagliante (1994) is “apprendre à parler et à communiquer dans les situations de la vie courante” meaning

Learning how to speak and communicate in real life situations – (our translation).

Conclusion

According to the resolution in the National Policy of Education (1998) cited earlier on, we can safely assert the indispensability of French Language for Nigeria’s social and economic development and for its relevance at international level on one hand. And on the other hand, the popularity of information and communication technologies have brought a number of possibilities for development in education and other key areas. As this paper indicates the adoption of Global Audio Visual approach for communication competence, accords the learners of French the unique opportunity to better understand and use the language.

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