



## Modern languages and ICT

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### Abstract

We are living in the era of technology where it is impossible to ignore the same in the academic domain. In present days teaching-learning system is no more limited only in the classroom but it expands outside as well. The teacher's role also has changed according to the needs of the targeted students. An enriching interactive class involves in more resources than study materials and text books. The learners of modern era are taking breath and they are growing up in an environment wrapped with technology where the education and training must be very much *smarter* than earlier days. In this research we are going to unveil several ways of using ICT in teaching-learning process of a foreign language. We are also going to discuss the advantages and challenges for the teacher and also for the student of using ICT.

**Keywords:** teaching, learning a foreign language, French as a foreign language (FLE), technology, induction of ICT, constraint and limitation of using ICT

### Introduction

First of all it is very important to know what is ICT (enfrançais TICE): Information and Communications Technology. It includes the tools and digital products that one can use in the educational context: training and teaching. These are a set of tools that is used to produce, process, save the soft copy, exchange views, classify the materials, find and read new digital documents for teaching and learning. In present days ICT is also called as "Digital Learning". In a nutshell this is the use of new technology in teaching and learning of a foreign language.

Presently we are living in an era of "connectivity" where even the kids know to handle a smart phone or a tablet. Rather they know better to use the electric gadgets than the elders. They have taken birth in an environment where technology cannot be neglected. Parents and also grandparents are eager to learn the use of technology in order to facilitate their job. Nowadays almost all of us are available on Internet. There are several ways to learn the things which will help you to memorize and to retain the information easily. These are the pedagogical supports which turns a class interesting as well as they stimulate the involvement and the communication in the class of FLE (Français Langue Étrangère). There are many applications we can make use of in our smart phones which accelerate the learning and we learn a language easily by having fun. These are the recreational activities which entice/tempt not only the youngsters but the learners of all ages. All these pedagogical and digital resources incite a learner's self-sufficiency. They become more rational and independent. With the help of these tools the teacher also learns to design a class out of the box according to the needs and demands of the learners. It helps to break the monotony of the old methods that we have been using for years in learning process of a foreign language.

Furthermore, these are the sources for all the teachers and trainers to gain/adapt the new ideas and new ways to teach and train the learners. The overview of ICT in teaching-learning process progresses / develops every year. We can

discover new applications, new mediums to improve the pedagogy of a foreign language teaching. All these supports in action, whether they are tools, instruments, equipment, machines, processes, methods, programs result from the systematic application of scientific knowledge in order to resolve practical problems.

Therefore, in this research we will try to discover all the digital resources that exist for the teaching and learning of a foreign language especially in the context of the FLE (French as a foreign language).

### 1. Why ICT in teaching FLE? Why learning through ICT is effective?

The sole purpose or objective of using ICT for teaching/learning of a foreign language is "interaction".

By using technology, the learner becomes a stakeholder of his learning (areal player) who himself uses the tools and also begins to create, to design, to develop content. That is, the product of his own knowledge.

In present days, we use the task-based approach (Approche Actionnelle) or communicative approach in teaching FLE, according to which, the learner becomes a social stakeholder and he accomplishes the tasks, related to daily life. With these approaches, the changes in existing roles and functions of a teacher can be noticed. He plays the role of a facilitator, mediator, adviser, guide, tutor, coach, resource person, and also an activity-leader. Hence, there is a great evolution in the role of a teacher. He is no longer a 'model' whom we need to look to for all the detail. He has just to select the chapter, design the tasks, know how to present the class helping learners as a guide.

ICT creates a unique virtual platform of interaction between teachers and students. This is a digital workplace which is very much recommended for educational support and continuity of learning. The learners can study both inside and outside the classroom.

This genre of learning is very effective especially in case of distance teaching. We can stay connected using technology tools and interaction becomes easier between the learner and

the teacher, even between the peers. It is a practical and More Lively approach. With technological supports, we can reuse (at home) the language we have studied in the class with different applications and activities.

The use of ICT has grown significantly in foreign language learning on a global scale. We use authentic documents in our class but with these materials we can really live virtually the culture of a foreign country.

All these digital resources are used to increase learners' motivation to learn a foreign language and to make language teaching more practical. In particular, these resources provide great opportunities for variation in teaching concerning course content, language level, working methods, etc.1

The ICT encourages learning strategies; metacognitive and socio-cognitive. (Oxford, 1990, 2004; O'malley&Chamot, 1990; Cyr, 1998). This research, inherited from the so-called "centration sur l'apprenant (learner focus)" changes the teaching style/posture that is asked to make an effort to adapt to individual differences of learners to stimulate their reflexivity on the language and how they learn. The teacher can learn more about their Learners and plays the role of a facilitator.

New technologies provide a large number of authentic resources of learning FLE. They allow to improve the exploration and to facilitate contextual understanding.

The ICT offers specially adapted materials for teaching "compréhension de l'orale" (understanding of the spoken language) in a foreign language. There is an abundance/plethora of audio or audio-visual documents. The assistance of such documents like scripts, subtitles, translation, vocabulary etc., are very useful to practice listening comprehension. Therefore, the ICT, in modern learning, is very useful and they add the opportunities to do different exercises in the classroom and also at home.

**There are many educational software available to teach and learn French language:** These are applications that we can download on our laptop, on the tablet; if not, we have access to the internet to use these links.

- More than 100 apps to use in the class.
- « La souris grise, le guide des meilleures applis pour enfants »
- 20 ludo linguistic applications.
- Applications in French – Apple Ios
- 195 bi lingual downloadable dictionary.
- Many educational software.
- « Pas à Pas » a French learning application.
- Lexique FLE- vocabulary
- Online downloadable picture books
- Memrise

#### The tools for teaching-learning of FLE

At present, we can find many educational resources for teaching any subject. An adult learner is able to find all the information himself on the internet. But a teacher is required for a child, who can help him in finding relevant resources or tools for learning a foreign language.

- Babble
- Bussu
- Leaf
- Duolingo
- Hi Native
- Anki App

- Tiny cards
- Innovative language
- Rosetto
- Triplingo
- Hello Talk

#### Online learning platform

- (www.ciep.fr)
- Partajons
- Radio France Internationale (RFI)

#### Educational Resources

- **Parlonsfrançais, c'est facile:** An web portal for diffusing French cultural in abroad. Interesting videos are available on this site regarding French art, movies, literature, cuisine, tourist places with the conversation of French natives.
- **Les Zexperts:** Educational blog for all FLE trainers.
- **Centre européen pour les langues vivantes:** To promote the modern languages teaching in Europe.
- Shared documents for the Professors of French department, teaching Under Graduate in the Universities: <http://www.aidenligne-francais-universite-auf.org>.
- Centre collégial de développement de matériel didactique. Le CCMMD.
- Fle.fr – as « Cartable connecte ».
- Edu FLE- a collaborative website for FLE students and teachers.
- Le café pédagogique - for French teachers of all disciplines.
- Françaisenligne - this site for French students aims to support in the process of self training.
- LinQ- this is a language learning platform that integrates linguistic contents (audio/text) and vocabulary learning aids (dictionary, exercises,).
- **Wordchamp:** A vocabulary-based language learning platform, where it is possible to create and share word lists and exercises.
- **Babbel:** Babbel is an online language learning system. It offers a website as well as an app for smartphones and tablets (iOS, Android, Windows Phone) intended for paid language learning. Fourteen languages are currently offered: Dutch, Danish, English, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Brazilian, Portuguese, Russian, Swedish, Spanish and Turkish.
- **Palabea:** It is a quite new social community but has many useful tools to learn languages. More than the usual mail exchange and chats Paleba gives the possibility of sharing files, documents, exercises, create classrooms, offer yourself as a teacher (getting paid for it), shares medias and a forum. And more, one can subscribe to Real Language Schools.
- **Cito:** a search engine for educational resources of FLE, many online French learning exercises and class activities available on this site.
- **Le Plaisir d'apprendre:** the site made by CAVILAM of Vichy (France), offers a large number of teaching materials to use in the classroom, all kinds of multimedia resources: songs, short films, radio shows, course internet, etc.
- **Franc-parler:** The educational site of the teachers of OIF (Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie)

that offers testimonials from assistants and French speaking readers and their advices to gather information and to glean documents before setting out for France.

#### For teaching

- **Forums:** The Forums are also a good virtual platform for sharing and exchanging the ideas, where one can ask questions and answers those of others.
- **Francoparler:** <http://francoparler-oif=org/espace-collaboratif//forum-htm/>
- **Groupe FLE sur yahoo:** <http://fr.groups.yahoo.com/group/fle>
- **Campus FLE Éducation:** this social network brings together the teachers of FLE whowant to share their professional practices.

#### For the class

- **E-twinning:** this is a European school exchange programme, which will help you to develop school exchange projects and to set up, if you work within the European Union.

#### Other tools

- 7 jours sur la planète
- Apprendre le français avec TV5 MONDE. (Learning French using TV5 MONDE)
- Enseigner le français avec TV5 MONDE. (Teaching French using TV5 MONDE)
- Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Français (FIPF)

#### Interactive whiteboards TNI and TBI

Interactive digital table (Le TNI - Tableau Numérique Interactif) refers to the device generally including

1. A white board
2. A pair of computer
3. Projector
4. Optical pen
5. Stylus recognition system

It is therefore possible to project all kinds of documents (texts, images, videos, animations, slide shows) and interact with these documents directly on the board.

(<http://www.cndp.fr/crdp-dijon/Tableaux-Blancs-Interactifs-TBI-ou.html>)

#### Digital Textbooks

This is a great evolution in learning the French language. You can find several online manuals. These are available for free, you just need to register on the site and then you can read chapters, do activities online. Chapters of these manuals have been divided into several parts like

1. Beginning of the chapter
2. Text and pictures
3. Story
4. Glossary
5. Written expression
6. Citizen journey
7. Summary
8. Reading and seeing

Although most of these textbooks are for school students but it can be a real fun for the learners of elementary level of any age.

Therefore, this exploratory type would be very useful for the teacher and also for the learners. For the digital textbooks please refer to <http://www.lelivrescolaire.fr>.

We can also find other digital textbooks on ENT – Espace numérique de travail. Refer to: Eduscol digital news.

#### ENT–Espace Numérique de Travail (Digital Work Space)

Sometimes also called “e-binder/electronic schoolbag”, is an exchange platform that brings together all members of an Educational community of a school or University, and their spokespersons in academies and communities. This is a virtual extension of an institution which is reachable at any time.

It is a set of online tools that accumulates information and allows remote access of digital resources. This term is commonly used in colleges, high schools and the Universities in France to indicate a virtual portal.

Some web applications (LMS) which allow distance learning (FOAD) can also provide similar services to a digital workspace.<sup>2</sup>

LMS-Learning Management System

FOAD-Formation Ouverte à Distance (Open Distance Training)

#### Social Network

To teach a foreign language, new media and social networks gradually spread into the education world. Learners are able to get in touch with community teachers on social networks with the aim of promoting spoken and written skill of learners, as well as collaboration and intercultural exchanges. Nowadays, everyone has accounts on social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp etc. through which people can have informal interaction. Normally, we follow the communities which seem interesting to us on all these networks. There already exists many groups, pages, communities to learn and improve the French language. Some teachers create their own social networking groups and they perform several language tasks. Through the social networking sites, we can culturally and physically interact with the persons staying a long distance away.

#### The flipped classroom

A flipped classroom is an instructional strategy and a type of blended learning which aims to increase student engagement and learning by having student complete readings at their home and work on live problem-solving during class time. It moves activities, including those that may have traditionally been considered homework, into the classroom. In a flipped classroom, students watch online lectures, collaborate in online discussions, or carry out research at home while engaging in concepts in the classroom with the guidance of a mentor. It is also called as inverted classroom or inverted pedagogy. In other words, learners must study their lessons at home, so that the activities become more tangible for them. During the learning hours, these learners can do applications-based exercises and research.

#### The importance of recreational activities in teaching of a foreign language

In order to teach/ learn a foreign language, nowadays we commonly use the communicative or task-based

approach. For which, we must design and present our classes with some activities that not only break the monotony of daily learning but also encourage the active participation in the classroom.

**First we need to understand what is “Recreational Activities”**

Recreational activities are something fun-related game which is recreational and entertaining.

Most learners know how to use a mobile phone (smartphone) and its applications. So, we can play language games in the class that can improve knowledge and the relationship between the learner and the teacher.

**Classification of recreational activities:**

- Play on words (word game / semantic and cultural games) – these games can develop the phonetic, semantic and also cultural competence.
- Comics stripes / cartoons – they develop oral skill and

- allow transposition into a written version.
- Teaching French language through songs, proper accent, poems and prosody.
- Playful texts-- these texts develop reading skills.

Websites and applications dedicated to language games according to the levels and needs of learners are also found, such as: goose games, hangman, crossword puzzles, mixed words, music note etc. There are also games and MCQ based exercises on the different topics. These are the free games through which you can test your knowledge sitting at your home. You will be able to improve your language skill and you can learn their culture and civilisation by having fun.

**The advantages and disadvantages of ICT**

There are a lot of benefits of technology in education. We’re going to discuss them in two parts, for a learner and also for a teacher.

Table 1

For a learner	For a teacher
▪ Learners can express themselves individually	▪ Assess by other means
▪ Foster continuity	▪ Promoting pedagogical continuity
▪ Learning outside the classroom	▪ Ease the correspondence between teachers and learners
▪ Self-assess or be assessed differently	▪ Updating educational resources
▪ Knowing how to search for information	▪ Increase resources
▪ Developing a critical eye	▪ Save time in class
▪ Appreciating learner’s work	▪ Adopting different pedagogies.

**Challenges in teaching through ICT**

Technology makes teaching and learning easier, but we must first of all, see what works and what doesn’t work in teaching in different situations. Integrating ICT in the classroom is a very good approach but it owes a lot of preparation in the class facilitator.

Lack of digital infrastructure makes it difficult to use ICT in teaching of languages. Despite of having enough resources and the teachers being enthusiastic, French books cannot be always replaced with the digital resources especially in Indian schools and in the Universities. There are several aspects that the teacher must consider before preparing her lesson, learner’s problems such as personal, family related, financial, emotional, cognitive, Social, etc. There are other things he has to look after, such as the modality, the level, available resources, prior knowledge, Administration of the organization. All of these points are very important before we use the digital tools in our classroom.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, we would say that while technology plays an important role in teaching/ learning a foreign language, the ICT is a very useful support that helps to improve almost all skills, they expand opportunities to design a very interesting class with fun and entertainment, we can use the innovations in teaching methods that encourage interaction in the classroom, but they cannot replace the teacher. The role of teacher has become more important here because he has to design/conduct the class with this technology by considering that learner do not misuse all these teaching tools. He really needs to see that technology works well with its target audience.

In addition, teachers who use ICT in the classroom with the aim of more practical teaching, must first of all be well

trained. They must also learn to teach from these resources. Getting acquainted in teaching with modern pedagogy is also a long and complex process that requires a good training. They themselves must master all these concepts before practicing them in their classes. Therefore, the teacher must be able to overcome contextual, cultural, institutional, social, psychological difficulties by managing time to optimize the integration of ICT into the classroom.

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