

# REIMAGINING FRENCH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LITERACIES IN NIGERIA: LEVERAGING AI- ASSISTED LITERACY DEVELOPMENT AND PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATIONS

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## Abstract

*The increasing presence of artificial intelligence (AI) in our daily lives is transforming the way we communicate, learn, and interact with each other. In the field of French language teaching, AI offers both opportunities and challenges for developing language literacies. This presentation explores the intersection of AI and French language teaching, examining how AI-powered tools and platforms are reshaping the way we approach language instruction, assessment, and literacy development. The potential benefits and limitations of AI-driven language learning, including personalized learning, automated feedback, and the role of human teachers in an AI-mediated classroom will be discussed. Additionally, the study will consider the implications of AI on French language literacies, including the emergence of new forms of digital literacy, multimodality, and critical thinking skills. The goal is to spark a conversation about the future of French language teaching and literacies in an AI age, and to explore ways to harness the power of AI to French language learning and teaching. The study investigates how technology can enhance French language learning, improve teacher effectiveness and promote cultural understanding. With a focus on personalized learning, adaptive assessments, and intelligent writing assistants, it discusses the benefits and limitations of AI-powered tools in enhancing French Language learning outcomes. It also highlights the need for teacher professional development and effective integration of AI-powered tools into French Language teaching. Recommendations were made for policymakers, teachers, and researchers with the aim of harnessing the potential of AI-assisted language learning to improve the language proficiency and cultural understanding in Nigerian learners. By leveraging AI-assisted literacy development and pedagogical innovations, we can enhance French language teaching and literacies in Nigeria and promote linguistic and cultural competence in a rapidly changing world.*

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, French Language Teaching, Literacy Development, Pedagogical Innovation.

## Introduction

French language education in Nigeria has a rich history, dating back to the colonial era.

The introduction of French to Nigeria had primarily educational and cultural goals. However, following the 1961 Yaoundé convention, which recommended that the Second European language be viewed not only as a medium of communication between English-speaking and French-

speaking African nations, but also as a universal language with broader purposes, which, when combined with English, the first European language, would allow Africa to communicate with other nations across the globe. It was introduced as a secondary subject in Yaoundé Conference (1961). It was suggested at the meeting that French be taught and studied as a subject in schools throughout Anglophone Africa, which includes Nigeria. It is essential

for everyone to acquire the skills of reading, writing, understanding, and speaking French. However, in order to convey an idea, the language can be interpreted in various languages by interpreters (Olaseinde & Olaseinde, 2024)

Thus, moral instruction was spread throughout the world through the use of the French language. Therefore, French language instruction must be mandated at least through the S.S.S. level if Nigeria is to advance. Nigeria will undoubtedly advance among other countries in the social, economic, technological, political, and cultural domains through the use of the French language. In order to stay up to date with the nation's daily happenings, one must possess a solid command of the French language. It has helped the country thrive by providing the entire world with a variety of information through the mass media. Every day, French-language information on social, educational, economic, technological, and political issues is provided, enabling a global sharing of essential knowledge. This led Adesola (1990) to argue that in addition to literature works that highlight aspects of French culture, students studying the language should read a lot of informational texts. *The Contribution of French Language to Nigeria's Development: Based on French periodicals and newspapers, as well as consistent radio listening* (Olaseinde & Olaseinde, 2024)

It is impossible to overstate the value of learning French. Commentaries must be delivered in French because, even in sports, all international sporting events acknowledge the value of the French language. Furthermore, of the sixteen nations that make up West Africa, only five speak English, with the remaining nations speaking French. Because of this, international organizations like the United Nations, ECOWAS, OAU,

and others use French as a medium of communication with people around the world, fully aware of the vast number of French-speaking people on the planet, allowing them to benefit from their wealth of technological experience. The Nigerian government will greatly benefit from French technology advancements if her educational strategy mandates French language instruction in all levels of education (Olaseinde & Olaseinde, 2024)

Despite its importance, French language teaching in Nigeria faces challenges, including inadequate resources, outdated methods, and a shortage of qualified teachers. To address these challenges, innovative approaches are necessary to improve language learning outcomes. Recent advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) offer a promising solution. AI has the potential to enhance French language teaching and literacies in Nigeria by providing personalized learning experiences, automating assessments, and enhancing teacher effectiveness. This thesis explores the potential of AI to improve French language education in Nigeria, promoting linguistic and cultural competence in a rapidly changing world.

AI can enhance French language teaching and literacies in Nigeria by providing innovative, effective, and personalized learning experiences that improve language proficiency and cultural understanding.

This study aimed at exploring the intersection of AI and French language teaching, examining how AI-powered tools and platforms are reshaping the way we approach language instruction, assessment, and literacy development. The potential benefits and limitations of AI-driven language learning, including personalized learning, automated feedback, and the role of human

teachers in an AI-mediated classroom will be discussed. Additionally, the study will consider the implications of AI on French language literacies, including the emergence of new forms of digital literacy, multimodality, and critical thinking skills.

### **Methodology**

This study is a descriptive cross-sectional study. The information is obtained at a point in time and it described the occurrence of the event at a given point in time. The study used a secondary data in achieving its objective using a case study approach. The data were analyzed citing six (6) different instances of AI assisted learning projects in Nigeria.

### **Literature Review**

French language education in Nigeria has a long history, but it faces numerous challenges. The language is taught in schools, but the methodology is often outdated, and the curriculum is overloaded (Adegbija, 2004). The methodology that has been adopted for a long time is still in vogue despite educational and technological changes overtime. The curriculum is also too loaded at all levels of educational training, which makes it complex to learn.

There is a shortage of qualified French teachers, and the few available are not adequately trained (Bamgbose, 2001). The reason why learning French is no longer supported in schools is that French teachers have become not demanded for. Due to the government's approach, a lot of educators and parents believe that acquiring and imparting French is a squander of time. The number of candidates enrolling in French language courses at universities and colleges of education is declining, and those that do are faced with a variety of challenges, such as a dearth of instructional aids, a glut of dilapidated

classroom supplies, and social unrest resulting from political unrest (Olaseinde & Olaseinde, 2024). Learners' motivation and interest in French language learning are also dwindling (Osisanwo, 2005) as most learners are no longer motivated to learn French language. The pupils give their language studies little to no attention, which eventually affects their ability and competence in the language. This kind of thinking has made a lot of French graduates jobless and deterred a lot of Nigerians from picking up the language. Additionally, it goes against the perception that parents and young Nigerians in Nigeria have that studying French is a subject that will not lead to a brighter future. In addition to the aforementioned, French language faces the challenge of contemporary technological facilities (Olaseinde & Olaseinde, 2024)

Recent studies have highlighted the need for innovative approaches to address these challenges. AI-assisted literacy development and pedagogical innovations offer promising solutions. AI can enhance language learning through personalized instruction, automated assessments, and intelligent tutoring systems (Chapelle, 2000). AI-powered tools can also support teachers in lesson planning, material development, and student evaluation (Warschauer, 2006).

In Nigeria, AI-assisted language learning is still in its infancy. However, research has shown that AI-powered language learning platforms can improve learners' language proficiency and motivation (Adeyemi, 2020). Moreover, AI-assisted literacy development can enhance learners' reading and writing skills (Okebukola, 2018).

This literature review highlights the need for innovative approaches to French Language education in Nigeria. AI-assisted literacy development and

pedagogical innovations offer promising solutions to address the current challenges in teaching and learning French in Nigeria.

### **Benefits of AI-assisted Language Learning:**

AI-assisted language learning has improved language learning tremendously: learners now have access to conversation and language practice anywhere. There could be a virtual conversation partner, in which a person is sitting alone in a room speaking with a smartphone or computer, with a chatbot or virtual assistant responding in the target language. It could be a globe with speech bubbles connecting different parts of the world, representing learners practicing languages with native speakers or AI assistants worldwide.

Presently, a laptop in a coffee shop where a person is sitting with a laptop opened and engaging in a language learning session with an AI-powered platform could be used. A mobile device with language exchange app, where a person is holding a mobile device and is using a language exchange app to practice with an AI assistant or native speaker, showcasing the convenience of language learning on-the-go is available. Many self-study with AI guidance in which a person is studying alone with an AI-powered tool providing real-time feedback, suggestions, and corrections, emphasizing the personalized support of AI-assisted language learning .are here with us.

All these are flexibilities, conveniences, and personalized supports that AI-assisted language learning can provide to enable learners to practice and improve their language skills anywhere and anytime.

Learning could be done at an affordable cost, by way of a split-screen

image with traditional language learning method through private tutor and language school. We now have high price tag and an AI-assisted language learning platform with a significantly lower cost which could be a coin with a padlock, symbolizing the cost savings of AI-assisted language learning with a caption like "Unlock language learning without breaking the bank", a globe with a dollar sign or a piggy bank, representing the affordable cost of AI-assisted language learning, making language learning accessible to people worldwide, an image highlighting a free trial or demo of an AI-assisted language learning platform which allows learners to try before committing to a paid subscription, a comparison of the costs of an AI-assisted language learning subscription versus traditional language learning methods that showcases the long-term savings of AI-assisted learning. All these make AI-assisted language learning affordable and makes it an attractive option for those who want to learn French as a new language without incurring high costs.

AI-assisted language learning technology enhances pronunciation and listening skills in which a speech bubble with sound waves emanating from it could represent the improvement in speaking and listening skills through AI-assisted language learning. The speech bubble could contain a simple sentence or phrase in French language, with a few words highlighted to indicate correction or improvement with a caption such as "Speak with confidence, listen with clarity", a small microphone icon could be placed near the speech bubble that provides instant feedback on pronunciation and a pair of headphones or earbuds nearby for listening comprehension exercises. Above all, there could be subtle background texture resembling sound

waves or a soundboard that reinforces the focus on audio and spoken language skills. These all give learners the confidence to communicate effectively in French language.

Apart from the aforementioned, AI could help teachers in their teaching-related tasks, improves translation task, enhances listening activities, provides native-like communication environment for students, strengthens reading and writing skills and encourages positive development among practitioners.

### **Limitations of AI-assisted Language Learning:**

This great feat is not without limitations, we have many learners without reliable access to high-quality teaching who are being forced to default to technology-based teaching in a globe with unequal Wi-Fi Signal strengths, representing unequal access to reliable internet connectivity or high-quality teaching. Some areas have strong, full-bar signals, while others have weak or no signal. Some students have small laptop or tablet in the foreground with which they are trying to access language learning resources online, but maybe unable as a result of poor internet connectivity.

On the other hand, many students have few scattered language learning materials leading to limited access to good teaching methods. There are areas where learners with poor internet connectivity or limited access to quality teaching are forced to rely solely on technology-based solutions, this advertently hinders their French language learning progress.

Above all, AI has prioritize certain types of language use over others or AI is carrying messages about a language use that excludes certain group of people.

### **AI-Assisted Development**

### **Literacy**

Literacy Development is not left out of the impact of AI –Assisted Technology. AI-powered tools now provide personalized language learning experiences tailored to individual learners' needs and abilities. The pathway of this AI-powered tools could be lined with various learning modules, exercises, and activities, each labelled with specific skills or topics in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation where AI-powered signposts along the way direct the learner to the most suitable modules, based on their current level and progress, learning style (visual, auditory, interactive), strengths and weaknesses, goals and interests, for adjustments to be made as the learner progresses to ensure that the pathway remains tailored to their evolving needs.

Concisely, AI-powered tools can create a personalized language learning experience, adapting to each learner's unique needs, abilities, learning style, while guiding them along an optimized learning pathway.

AI-Assisted Literacy Development can also come in form of adaptive reading materials adjusted to learners' reading levels and interests, interactive listening exercises with AI-generated audio or video content, real-time feedback and assessment on learners' comprehension and pronunciation, AI-assisted writing and speaking tools, AI-generated writing prompts and feedback on grammar, syntax, style, speech recognition technology for pronunciation practice and feedback. Intelligent tutoring systems (ITS) also provide one-on-one support and guidance while natural Language Processing (NLP) enables AI-powered tools to analyze and understand language inputs with accurate feedback on assessment.

Above all, AI-Assisted technology enhances literacy skills, improves language proficiency, personalizes learning experiences, increases learner engagement and motivation, make efficient assessment and give open access to high-quality educational resources

### **Limitations of AI-Assisted Literacy Development:**

As good as AI-assisted technology is, it is not without its own limitations on literacy development, according to Olayiwola & Ogundele (2015), AI-Assisted technology could lead to: over dependence on technology, limited human interaction, potential biases in AI-generated content, need for high-quality training data, ensuring learner privacy and data security

### **AI-Driven Pedagogical Innovations**

In the area of pedagogy, much innovation has taken place, as we now have AI-powered teacher support systems, lesson planning tools with personalized learning objectives, automated grading and feedback system, intelligent curriculum development and mapping, intelligent tutoring systems (ITS), personalized feedback and assessment, adaptive learning pathways and recommendation, real-time student performance analysis and prediction, AI-driven virtual learning environments, immersive language learning experiences, interactive simulations and games, virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) applications, teacher professional development in AI-assisted language teaching, training programs for effective integration of AI-powered tools, workshops on AI-driven lesson planning and curriculum design and coaching on using AI-generated

feedback and assessment data, just to mention a few.

### **Features of AI-Driven Pedagogical Innovations:**

AI-Driven Pedagogy has some outstanding features that makes it superior to the traditional method of teaching and learning such as: Natural Language Processing (NLP) for lesson planning and feedback, Machine Learning algorithms for adaptive learning and assessment, Data Analytics for student performance tracking and prediction, user-friendly interfaces for teachers and students, virtual and augmented reality technologies for immersive learning, AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants for student support, data analytics and visualization for teacher professional development and online communities and forums for teacher collaboration and sharing

### **Benefits of AI-Driven Pedagogical Innovations:**

The benefits of AI-driven pedagogical innovations could not be quantified, as it enhances teacher efficiency and effectiveness, personalizes learning experiences for students, helps data-driven decision making for teachers and administrator, provides scalable and cost-effective educational solutions, enhanced language learning outcomes, increased teacher confidence and competence. AI-assisted teaching improves student engagement and motivation, personalizes professional development for teachers with scalable and cost-effective teacher training solutions.

### **Case Studies and Samples of AI-Driven Pedagogical Innovations**

AI-Driven Pedagogical Innovations in Nigeria includes:

1. "French for all": It is an AI-powered language learning

platform implemented in Nigerian schools, resulting in improved language proficiency and student engagement.

2. "Naija Français": A mobile app using AI-driven chatbots to teach French language and culture to Nigerian learners, with over 10,000 downloads and positive user reviews.
3. "French Connect": An AI-assisted language exchange program connecting Nigerian learners with native French speakers, fostering linguistic and cultural exchange.

Case studies of such includes:

1. Lagos State Government's "E-Learning Initiative": which implemented AI-powered learning platforms in public schools, resulting in improved language learning outcomes and increased access to quality education.
2. "Smart Classrooms" in Abuja's Government Secondary Schools: an AI-assisted language learning tools that enhanced student engagement and academic performance, with a 25% increase in student pass rates.
3. University of Lagos with "AI-Powered Language Lab": AI-driven language learning tools and virtual reality simulations improved language proficiency and learner motivation, with a 90% satisfaction rate among students. Are all case studies and examples that demonstrated the potential of AI-assisted language learning in Nigeria, to show how it can enhance language proficiency, student engagement and access to quality education.

## Conclusion

AI-assisted language learning has the potential to enhance French language teaching and literacies in

Nigeria. Personalized learning, adaptive assessments, and intelligent writing assistants are some AI-powered tools that can improve language learning outcomes. Above all, teacher professional development and effective integration of AI-powered tools are crucial for successful implementation.

## Recommendations

- ✚ Policymakers should invest in infrastructure and teacher training to support AI-assisted French language learning.
- ✚ Policies and guidelines should be developed for effective integration of AI-powered tools in French language teaching.
- ✚ French teachers should embrace AI-assisted language teaching and participate in professional opportunities. They should also collaborate with AI developers to design and implement effective AI-powered tools.
- ✚ Researchers should conduct studies on the effectiveness of AI-assisted French language learning in Nigerian contexts and investigate the potential of AI-assisted language teaching for other languages in Nigeria.

## Future Directions:

- AI-powered tools tailored to Nigerian learners' needs and contexts could be developed.
- The impact of AI-assisted language learning on learners' linguistic and cultural competence could be investigated.
- The potential of AI-assisted language teaching for other languages in Nigeria could be explored.
- Collaboration between Nigerian and international researchers, ducators, and AI developers to advance AI-assisted language learning could be fostered.

By addressing these recommendations and future directions, Nigeria can harness the potential of AI-assisted language learning to enhance French language teaching and literacies, ultimately improving learners' language proficiency and cultural understanding.

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