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Role of E-Learning Platforms in Enhancing French Language Acquisition among French Students of Federal College of Education, Okene

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Highlights:

The study is driven by the importance of French as Nigeria's second official language and the ongoing challenges in achieving effective French language learning, despite the availability of digital tools.

It examines how e-learning platforms (Google Classroom, Moodle, multimedia resources) influence students' competence in the four core language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

The study suggests practical steps such as improving internet infrastructure, making data access affordable, training teachers in digital pedagogy, integrating e-learning into the curriculum, and creating culturally relevant digital materials.

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Abstract: This study examined the role of e-learning platforms in enhancing French language acquisition among french students of Federal College of Education, Okene. The study was motivated by the growing importance of French as Nigeria's second official language and the persistent challenges affecting effective French language learning in many educational institutions. Despite the increasing availability of digital technologies and online learning tools, many students still experience poor proficiency in French due to inadequate instructional resources, limited exposure, and ineffective teaching methods. This study shall investigate the extent to which E-learning platform such as Google classroom, Moodle, Multimedia based resources influence learners' competence in reading, writing, listening and speaking French. The study adopted a descriptive and analytical approach through the review of relevant literature, theories, and recent studies on E-learning and language acquisition. It recommended improved internet infrastructure, affordable data access, regular training for French language teachers in digital pedagogy, integration of e-learning into the formal curriculum, and the development of culturally relevant digital learning materials.

Keywords: Communication skills, Digital learning, E-learning platforms, French language acquisition

Introduction

Nigeria's language landscape is notably diverse, with hundreds of indigenous languages coexisting alongside English as the official medium of instruction and administration. Within this multilingual setting, the learning of additional languages, particularly foreign ones such as French, has often been constrained by limited resources, uneven policy implementation, and low learner motivation. These challenges have contributed to generally weak outcomes in foreign language proficiency across many educational institutions (Lawal, 2020).

French holds a strategic position in Nigeria's socio-political and economic environment. Recognised as the country's second official language, its importance is tied to Nigeria's proximity to Francophone neighbours such as Benin, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, as well as its relevance in diplomacy, regional integration, and global engagement (Ndukauba, 2020; Egwu & Dikeh, 2023).Digital platforms, including

mobile applications and virtual classrooms, provide flexible and learner-centred opportunities that can improve language acquisition through interactive content, instant feedback, and exposure to authentic linguistic materials. This development became even more noticeable during and after the COVID-19 period, which hastened the adoption of online learning tools across different levels of education (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). In Nigeria, the teaching of French as a second or foreign language within Federal Colleges of Education occupies a significant position, given the country's historical ties with Francophone neighbours and the continental mandate of the African Union to promote French as a language of wider communication (Adeyemi & Fakeye, 2011). Yet, despite decades of institutional investment in French language programmes, questions persist regarding the effectiveness of conventional classroom instruction in producing communicatively competent French speakers.

The rapid proliferation of digital technologies in the twenty-first century has opened new pedagogical frontiers, among which e-learning platforms have emerged as particularly transformative instruments (Garrison, 2011). E-learning, broadly understood as the delivery of educational content through electronic media—particularly internet-based tools—has gained increasing traction in higher education institutions globally (Anderson, 2008). Platforms such as Moodle, Google Classroom, Duolingo for Schools, and various multimedia resources have demonstrated their potential to complement and, in some cases, supplant traditional instructional methods in language teaching contexts.

Within the higher institutions of learning in Nigeria, however, the integration of e-learning into French language instruction remains largely nascent, inconsistent, and underexplored (Okonkwo & Nwosu, 2019). As a result, students often struggle to develop communicative competence in French despite policy support for its learning.

Against this backdrop, this study seeks to examine the role of e-learning platform in enhancing the acquisition of French language among french students of Federal College Of Education,Okene. Specifically, it aims to assess current learning practices, explore the availability and use of digital tools, evaluate their impact on language skills, identify existing challenges, and propose practical strategies for improvement.

Conceptual Clarifications

1. E-learning Platforms: E-learning platforms are digital systems that support teaching and learning through online technologies. They allow learners to access instructional materials, interact with teachers, and complete assessments beyond the traditional classroom. E-learning operates in two main forms: synchronous learning, which occurs in real time through live classes and virtual meetings, and asynchronous learning, which allows learners to study at their own pace using recorded materials and online resources (Hodges et al., 2020). Common examples include mobile language-learning applications, virtual classrooms such as Zoom and Google Meet, and Learning Management Systems like Moodle and Google Classroom. These platforms enhance engagement through multimedia

content, interactive tasks, and instant feedback (Bond et al., 2021).

2. French Language Acquisition: French language acquisition refers to the process through which learners develop the ability to understand and use French as a second language. It involves gradual progress from basic understanding to fluent communication and is shaped by factors such as exposure, motivation, and teaching methods (Ellis, 2021). Effective language acquisition requires the integration of four essential skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The mastery of these skills, together with vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, enables learners to communicate effectively and meaningfully in real life situations (Krashen, 2020).

3. Technology in Language Learning: Technology plays a vital role in modern language education by improving access to resources and supporting interactive learning. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) enables learners to engage with authentic materials, practise skills, and receive immediate feedback (Godwin-Jones, 2021). The main approach is blended learning, which combines face-to-face teaching with digital tools. This approach offers flexibility while maintaining classroom interaction, making it particularly effective for enhancing language acquisition in contexts such as Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on a selected theories that explain how learners acquire language and how they adopt technology in the learning process.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM): The Technology Acceptance Model explains how users come to accept and use new technologies. It identifies two key factors: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. In the context of this study, students are more likely to adopt e-learning platforms for French language learning if they find them helpful for improving their skills and easy to navigate. TAM is therefore relevant in understanding the extent to which Nigerian students embrace digital tools for language acquisition (Davis, 1989/2021). This theory provide a focused framework for understanding French language acquisition and the role of technology in facilitating it. Krashen's Input Hypothesis explains how learners naturally acquire language through meaningful exposure, while TAM addresses the factors that influence students' acceptance and effective use of e-learning platforms.

Overview of E-learning Platforms for French Learning

E-learning platforms for French learning have evolved significantly in recent years, integrating mobile technologies, artificial intelligence, and multimedia tools to support more interactive and personalised language acquisition.

Digital tools for French learning now include a wide range of platforms such as mobile applications, educational websites(Duolingo)Lingolia French,TV5 monde), and AI-powered systems(ChatGTP,Meta AI). Mobile apps provide structured lessons, vocabulary drills, and pronunciation practice, while websites offer comprehensive courses, reading materials, and exercises. More

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recently, artificial intelligence tools—such as chatbots and adaptive learning systems, have introduced personalised learning experiences by analysing learners' progress and providing tailored feedback. These innovations have shifted language learning from rigid classroom instruction to flexible, learner-centred environments (Yuen & Schlote, 2024; Ishibie, 2025)

A defining strength of these platforms lies in their interactive features. Many incorporate exercises such as quizzes, speech recognition, and real-time corrections, which actively engage learners. Gamification, through points, badges, and progress tracking, enhances motivation and consistency in learning. Additionally, audio-visual aids, including videos, podcasts, and animations, expose learners to authentic language use and improve listening and speaking skills. These features collectively make language learning more engaging and effective compared to traditional methods (Osondu et al., 2025) (*RSIS International*).

In the Nigerian context, the accessibility and usability of these platforms present both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, the widespread use of smartphones and increasing internet penetration have made digital learning tools more accessible to students. E-learning platforms allow learners to study French independently, thereby addressing limitations such as inadequate teaching resources and limited classroom time (Acheru & Chituru-Wike, 2025) On the other hand, issues such as inconsistent internet connectivity, high data costs, and limited digital competence among some learners and educators continue to hinder effective utilisation. Studies also indicate that while students show positive attitudes towards the use of ICT in language learning, the availability of necessary technological infrastructure remains insufficient in many institutions (Ajape et al., 2025)

Overall, e-learning platforms offer considerable potential for enhancing French language acquisition in Nigeria. However, their effectiveness depends largely on improved infrastructure, digital literacy, and strategic integration into the educational system.

Role of E-learning in Enhancing French Language Acquisition

1. Improved Access to Learning Resources: E-learning platforms significantly widen learners' access to authentic French materials that are often scarce in traditional classrooms. Through digital tools, students can engage with real-life content such as French news clips, podcasts, e-books, and conversations by native speakers. This exposure supports contextual understanding and improves pronunciation, vocabulary, and cultural awareness (Godwin-Jones, 2021; Acheru & Chituru-Wike, 2025).

2. Flexibility and Self-paced Learning: One of the most practical advantages of e-learning is flexibility. Learners can study French anytime and anywhere, using mobile devices or computers. This self-paced approach allows students to revisit difficult concepts, practise repeatedly, and progress according to their individual learning speed. Such autonomy is particularly valuable in Nigeria, where classroom time and instructional resources

may be limited (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020).

3. Learners' interest. These tools also can **Enhanced Engagement through multimedia:**E-learning platforms make language learning more engaging through multimedia integration. The use of videos, audio recordings, animations, and interactive exercises helps to simplify complex linguistic concepts and sustain lter to different learning styles, making it easier for students to grasp pronunciation, intonation, and meaning in context (Bond et al., 2021).

4. Immediate Feedback and Assessment: Digital platforms provide instant feedback through automated quizzes, exercises, and corrections. This immediate response helps learners to identify errors quickly and make necessary adjustments, thereby reinforcing learning. Continuous assessment features also allow learners to monitor their progress and build confidence over time (Almaiah et al., 2020).

5. Development of Communication Skills: E-learning enhances the development of communication skills by creating opportunities for virtual interaction. Learners can participate in online discussions, video calls, and language exchange platforms, which simulate real-life communication in French. These interactions improve speaking and listening skills while fostering collaborative learning and cultural exchange (Yuen & Schlote, 2024).

Challenges of Using E-learning Platforms in Nigeria

Despite the clear benefits of e-learning for French language acquisition, several contextual challenges continue to limit its effective use in Nigeria.

Poor Internet Connectivity: Unreliable internet access remains a major barrier. Many learners experience slow speeds, frequent disruptions, or complete lack of connectivity, particularly outside urban centres. This affects participation in live classes and limits access to multimedia resources essential for language learning (Aker & Mbiti, 2021).

High Cost of Data and Devices: The affordability of digital learning is another concern. The cost of internet data and the purchase of smartphones, tablets, or computers can be prohibitive for many students. As a result, consistent engagement with e-learning platforms becomes difficult, especially for learners from low-income backgrounds (World Bank, 2022).

Digital Illiteracy among Students and Teachers: Effective use of e-learning tools requires a certain level of digital competence, which is not yet widespread. Some students and educators lack the necessary skills to navigate online platforms, utilise interactive features, or troubleshoot basic technical issues. This limits the potential benefits of digital learning environments (UNESCO, 2021).

Lack of Institutional Support: Many educational institutions in Nigeria have yet to fully integrate e-learning into their systems. Inadequate infrastructure, limited funding, and absence of structured policies for digital education hinder the adoption and sustainability of e-learning initiatives (Federal Ministry of Education, 2021).

https://doi.org/10.68071/mzd9km6r

Limited Localisation of Content: Most e-learning platforms are designed with global audiences in mind and often lack contextual relevance to Nigerian learners. The absence of locally adapted content, reflecting learners' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, can reduce engagement and make comprehension more difficult (Acheru & Chituru-Wike, 2025).

Thus, while e-learning platforms offer promising opportunities for enhancing French language acquisition, addressing these challenges is essential for achieving meaningful and inclusive outcomes. To mitigate these barriers, several solutions are proposed. First, government and telecommunications providers should collaborate to expand broadband infrastructure and subsidise internet data costs, particularly for students in underserved areas. Second, institutions should invest in affordable digital devices and establish shared computer laboratories to improve access. Third, capacity-building workshops should be organised to enhance digital literacy among both students and educators, equipping them with the skills to navigate and maximise e-learning tools. Fourth, educational authorities should develop and fund the creation of locally relevant French language content that reflects Nigerian cultural and linguistic realities. Finally, clear institutional policies on e-learning integration, supported by adequate funding and technical infrastructure, are necessary to ensure sustainable adoption across schools and universities.

Opportunities and Prospects

E-learning for French language acquisition in Nigeria is not only challenged by infrastructural and pedagogical constraints; it also presents significant opportunities that can transform language education if properly harnessed.

Increasing Mobile Phone Penetration: One of the most promising developments is the rapid increase in mobile phone usage across Nigeria. Smartphones have become widely accessible to students, making it easier to engage with language learning applications, online dictionaries, and virtual classrooms. This growing mobile connectivity supports informal and continuous learning beyond the classroom, thereby strengthening exposure to French language input (GSMA, 2023).

Government Policies Supporting Digital Education: Recent educational reforms in Nigeria increasingly recognise the importance of digital learning. National frameworks promoting ICT integration in education encourage the adoption of e-learning platforms at all levels of schooling. These policy directions create a supportive environment for embedding digital tools into language instruction, including French, thereby enhancing teaching effectiveness and learner engagement (Federal Ministry of Education, 2022).

Integration with Formal School Curriculum: There is growing potential for e-learning platforms to be systematically integrated into the formal French language curriculum. Blending traditional instruction with digital resources allows learners to reinforce classroom teaching through interactive exercises, multimedia content, and independent practice. This integration supports a more learner-centred approach and helps bridge gaps in instructional time and resources (UNESCO, 2023).

https://doi.org/10.68071/mzd9km6r

Collaboration with International French Institutions: Partnerships with international organisations such as the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)* and French cultural centres provide additional opportunities for Nigerian learners.

The above discussed opportunities suggest that with strategic investment and collaboration, e-learning can play a transformative role in improving French language acquisition among Nigerian students.

Recommendations

In view of the findings and discussions, the following recommendations are made to enhance the effectiveness of e-learning in French language acquisition among French students of Federal College of Education, Okene:

1. Government and private stakeholders should work towards reducing the cost of internet data and improving broadband infrastructure across Nigeria.
2. French language teachers should be regularly trained and retrained in the use of digital tools and e-learning platforms.
3. Educational authorities should formally embed digital learning activities into teaching schemes, assessment methods, and instructional planning to ensure consistent use across institutions.
4. There is a need to develop culturally relevant and locally adapted French learning materials that reflect the Nigerian context.

Conclusion

This study has examined the role of e-learning platforms in enhancing French language acquisition among Nigerian students. It is evident that e-learning offers significant benefits, including improved access to authentic learning materials, flexible self-paced study, increased learner engagement through multimedia resources, and opportunities for real-time communication practice. These advantages make digital platforms particularly valuable for supporting French language learning in a context where classroom resources are often limited.

The study also highlights important implications for education policy and practice. There is a clear need for stronger integration of e-learning into the Nigerian educational system, particularly within language curricula. Policymakers are encouraged to prioritise digital infrastructure development, affordable internet access, and teacher capacity-building in ICT and digital pedagogy. For classroom practice, educators should adopt blended learning approaches that combine traditional instruction with digital tools to enhance learner participation and competence.

However, challenges such as poor internet connectivity, high cost of data, digital illiteracy, and limited localisation of content continue to affect effective implementation. Addressing these barriers is essential for maximising the benefits of e-learning in French language education.

For further research, it is suggested that future studies should explore comparative effectiveness between traditional and e-

learning-based French instruction, examine learners' attitudes across different educational levels, and investigate the impact of specific AI-driven language tools on French proficiency in Nigeria. Such studies would provide deeper insights into how digital learning can be optimally harnessed for improved language outcomes.

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