CHALLENGES OF RESEARCHING, DEVELOPING, AND ENGAGING ACTIVITIES WITH LEARNERS: A LITERARY PERSPECTIVE OF FRENCH LANGUAGE IN ODL SYSTEM

[1]Dr. Akese, Manasseh Teryima

Email: manassehteryimaakese236@gmail.com; 08101660236

Abstract

This paper has attempted to address the fundamental challenges of researching, developing, and engaging in French literary activities with learners in ODL. Some of these challenges include the complexity of multimedia integration and management, crude analytic literary strategies, poor motivation, virtual environment for effective communication. Our primordial objectives are to unveil innovative strategies for designing and engaging literary activities with learners by using more productive approaches and techniques. The paper also aims to advocate interesting literary intended learning experiences that would engage Learners in online virtual platforms for efficient literary productivity. We adopted audio-visual and analytic methods to explore literary activities and impart them to our learners. It is pertinent to note that we have adopted the multimedia theory and the communicative approach to explore different digital resources that will enhance our research, the development of learning content, and its implementation in ODL. The paper has contributed to knowledge by revealing the fundamental challenges of researching, developing learning content, and engaging learners in motivating pedagogical activities that would enhance the learning of French literature in ODL. The paper equally contributes to knowledge by exposing researchers and facilitators to diverse innovative strategies that will leverage the challenges of imparting French language literature in ODL, with a vision of self-empowerment and national development.

Introduction

The dynamism of research in human life is the navigating power for innovations in different domains of human engagement. Research is anecdote and panacea for most human problems. It is a systematic interlocked component of human intellectual properties that enables experimentations, investigations, and innovations for sustainable development. People engage in diverse socio-political, economic, scientific and technological activities to better their lot. Living in a society that is dynamic, a lot of people keep searching, experimenting, and making inquiries to bring into human existence new ideas and technological innovations that will add value to

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[1] Department Of Linguistics, Foreign and Nigerian Languages, Faculty of Arts National Open University Of Nigeria

our meaningful and purposeful existence. This constant search for innovations serves a hub for human development. Orhan Özçatalbaş (2017) stated that research triggers evident progressive measures of human development in different fields of human endeavor such as language and literature, health, education, culture, politics, cybersecurity, peace and conflict management, science and technology for human development. According to him, human development (HD) is about expanding the richness of human life rather than simply expanding the economy in which people live. Research and development (R&D) is essential for human potential and resources utilization efficiency.

This implies that research encompasses multidisciplinary activities in different spheres of life such as humanities, social sciences, natural science and technology. Philosophers, linguists, novelists, poets and, playwrights' anthropologists in the field of arts are in a constant search to add value to human existence. Companies find ways improve the quality of their products and elevate their current productive capacity. Medical doctors and the host of other medical teams are constantly searching to improve human treatment modalities

Orhan Özçatalbaş (2017) Agriculture started to witness technological changes when cultivators first experimented growing wild plants in different growing environment almost 10,000 years ago. For centuries, the technical performance of agriculture has remained the same in great civilizations. Until middle of the nineteenth century, there were no significant improvements in agricultural productivity. In the nineteenth century, the induction of new sources of power and machinery [8], the development of scientific plant breeding led by Mendel's experiments, and the development of artificial fertilizers resulted in a rapid increase in agricultural productivity, principally in Europe and North America.

French literature is the custodian of the culture of the French. It spanned centuries of different experiences in France. We have seen the crude nature of humanity in the 1st – 15th century in France and other countries in the world. Human life during this particular period was primitive, crude, and endangered by disease. Man was extremely poor because he lacked the capacity to make an adequate search for more discoveries and advancement, and as such man has been considered to life in a dark age. These centuries are characterized by aristocratic rule and dictatorship, poverty, and religious wars. The reign of Louis 14 exposed human to series of religious conflict. I6th century has been described as the period of rebirth. It is a period of intellectual advancement, discoveries, and literary development. It is a period when we experience a boost in literary activities. 17th century is a period of classicism where writers are restricted to kings 'courtyards to discourse the affairs of society and write on issues that would please the kings. In fact, literary criticism of the aristocratic rules of the king, especially Louis the 14th has been a pedigree of literary impetuosity of the period. 18th century is a period of high awareness and liberty for writers and philosophers. There are no more exigencies. Literary writers are not restricted to the literary rules of classicism that is unity of place, time and action. There is abolishment of rules of sameness and uniformity of literary productivity were abolished as a response to the dictates of the king. The 19th century was a period of scientific discoveries and literary movements like, romanticism, realism, symbolism and naturalism. 20th century creates a remarkable history of the first and second world wars which formed the basis of existentialist philosophy and the philosophy of absurdity.

Our major concern is to address the fundamental challenges of designing and analyzing engaged literary French activities with learners in ODL. Some of these challenges include the complexity of multimedia integration and management, crude analytic literary strategies, poor motivation and engagement of learners in a convenient virtual environment. In addition, we want to consider the place of French-language literary research findings in intellectual development in online digital learning. We want to unveil the optimal huge experiences in French literary works that are sufficient for building self-confidence, developing critical thinking skills and objectivity

in learners of ODL. We shall equally consider the timeliness contributions of many literary scholars and researchers to help content developers, designers, and analytics to include prose, poetry and theatre for sustainable sociopolitical and economic development in their cognitive approach.

Statement of the research problem

The fundamental challenges of designing and analysing the engaged literary French activities with learners in ODL form the problem of this research. Some of these challenges include the complexity of multimedia integration and management, crude analytic literary strategies and poor motivation and engagement of learners in a convenient virtual environment.

Research objectives

Our primordial objectives are to unveil innovative strategies for designing and analyzing literary activities. The paper also aims to advocate interesting literary intended learning experiences that would engage Learners in online virtual platforms for efficient literary productivity. We also want to project the cognitive approach in designing French literary content that will embrace prose, theatre and poetry for the enhancement of learners' intellectual ability and sustainable socio-political and economic development for purposeful human existence.

Research methodology

We adopted audio-visual and analytic methods to unveil the designed literary activities. These methods will enable us to logically examine and analyze the challenges confronting the effective organization of learning content in French literary activities. The methods will help explore the relevance of prose, theatre and drama and their insusceptibility in ODL.

Theorical framework

We have adopted multimedia theory and literary theory to unveil digital facilities that can enhance the exploration and acquisition of knowledge of French literature in ODL. The literary theory will be the arbiter of literary conventions that will help us understand prose, theatrical works and poetry

Research approach

We have adopted the communicative approach and multimedia approach to explore different digital resources that will enhance designing and analysis of French literary works in ODL. The approaches place a premium on the use of different digital sources of information such as computers, handsets, telegrammes , videos, radios, televisions, cameras and opera that will help us to critically examine and analyze issues of French language literature in ODL.

Conceptual clarification

Challenges

Research

Research is an innovative investigation that hinges on sociopolitical, economic, scientific, and technological advancement. Research is transformative and developmental. It is key to discoveries and innovations**.**

Development

Development englobes sustainable increase and growth in different spheres of human endeavors

French language literature

ODL.

Literature review

There are inundations of commentaries, critics, analysis and discussions on the relevance and challenges of research and development in the domain of French literature in ODL system. Some of them are partially related to our topic where we can see the existing gaps in designing, developing, and engaging learners in imparted

intellectual activities that will better the lot of our students and make them useful to our society. It is from this perspective that Emmanuel Beche (2018) emphasize the need for tele programs to enhance and harness human intellectual properties in the digital age. "As Depover and Orivel (2012) and Loiret (2013a) pointed out in their studies, Open and Distance Learnings (ODLhave been developing since latter half of 1990s French-speaking Sub-Saharan Africa (FSSA). Karsenti and Collin (2013) also noted that states and universities in this part of Africa are interested in promoting these third-generation learning systems, despite their technical, socio-economic, and pedagogical deficits. If the early development of distance learnings in Africa involved only a few academic institutions such as the African Virtual University, Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar, the University Institute of Technology in Bandjoun, and the National Center for Tele-education of Madagascar; however, today close to hundred ODL systems exist. These training programs include local institutional initiatives and cooperative projects. The African Virtual University, the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, and those conducted by Indian universities through the Pan African e-Network Project and part of these international programs, thus increasing the number of ODL initiatives"

 Omotayo Siwoku- Awi(2021) highlights the importance of French literature and the readiness of learners to engage actively in the development of learning content and activities. He stated that learners who develop a positive attitude toward the subject from the beginning will be highly motivated to conduct intensive study. While economic motivation for learning constitutes a good push, the curriculum for literature-in-French and its contents should lay emphasis on the moral and social relevance of learning. In essence, cognitive development and physiological needs should be the bedrock of language and literature programming for all levels of learners. Therefore, aspects of teaching that could create good modeling and internalization of learned concepts for practical living and personal use should constitute the centrality of the envisaged learning outcomes. While Omotayo is envisaging the aspects of teaching that would enhance the acquisition of the content, we are going to the basis to see what aspect of the literary content will be useful to the learner and which approach in ODL can we take to internalyze learning.

Helene pulker(2020) thinks that research on materials development for language teaching has long established that teachers want to have ownership of their materials (Tomlinson, 2011). This entails the validity of research and development in human life. Knowledge acquisition is facilitated through human searches and discoveries. Helene lamented the egocentric tendencies of most researchers in circulating their compatible views. Hatakka (2009) reported that teachers want to exercise their creativity and use their personal ideas to develop their materials. Using and sharing online materials present other challenges for teachers. The potential for liberal access and modification on the basis that anybody can be a contributor and a user can be problematic. Given the reach of the internet, teachers sometimes feel a sense of loss of control over their resources to people they do not know and are unlikely to meet. Teachers are generally reluctant to have their materials repurposed in ways they are unaware of. It takes time for an academic community to build a cooperative sense of trust and confidence (Comas-Quinn, et al, 2011). Our preoccupation in this research is to navigate and break the gens of ego in researchers and to ensure the exploration of optimal huge experiences in French literary works that are sufficient in building self-confidence, developing critical thinking, and objectivity in learners of ODL.

Helene pulker(2020) presents Hatakka's view on the quality of resources used that in designing learning content. Furthermore, creators and users have different views of what a resource should be and how it should be designed. Research on OER for online language teaching (Pulker, 2013) shown that some teachers look for good-quality visuals, others for materials they can easily use and adapt, and another group might consider quality to mean something directly relevant to their teaching objectives. Wiley and Gurrell (2009) reinforced the point that quality

is only meaningful in a 'context-laden encounter' (p. 19) between a specific user and a specific resource and does not have a meaning otherwise. Instead, they believed that in order for the field to progress, users must overcome the traditional expectations related to the quality of resources and should refer to 'utility' of resources instead.

Our work addresses not only pedagogical challenges of the quality of resources that are to be used in French literary works but also content validity and engagement of learners in exploring literary knowledge for critical thinking, sociopolitical, and economic transformation for the good of humanity.

Primordial roles of research in harnessing, developing and engaging intellectual activities with learners in the domain of French language literature in ODL system

Research has been an indispensable tool for harnessing optimal huge experiences in French literary works that are sufficient for building self-confidence, developing critical thinking skills and objectivity in learners of ODL. It deepens understanding, reveals new perspectives, permits critics on the effective timelines contributions of many literary scholars, and help learners to form opinions and insights into scholarly discourse, critics and appreciation of French language literature. It is from this perspective that we consider research an intellectual anecdote and a panacea for learning and transformation of human society.

Research in the domain of literature hinges on human and societal needs of existence. These include among others, social justice, human liberty, tolerance, good governance, patriotism, loyalty, and self-commitment to duty for the good of mankind. Through research scholars, critics, authors and philosophers have provided their input on issues of human existence in French literary works. For example, Jen-Paul Sartre projects human freedom and liberty into his existentialist philosophy. He says human beings are inherently responsible for making their choices in human life and to equally bear the consequences of their deeds. Elijah akinbode(2023) Freedom is a necessary prerequisite for living, as most existentialists emphasized. A prominent existentialist, Sartre, fully appreciated the importance of freedom in helping humans lead authentic lives. In his philosophical magnum opus, Being and Nothingness, he boldly contends that human beings possess absolute freedom, meaning they are not determined by external factors or pre-existing essence and are therefore responsible for creating their own meaning and purpose in life. Admittedly, Sartre claims that human freedom is likened to responsibility. He proposed the notion of freedom and responsibility as a moral compass to lead an authentic existence. Albert Camus develops philosophy unveils the futile search for meaning in human existence. Ambrose Tochukwu A. Ignatius N.O, (2020). A man is a being whose uniqueness lies in the fact of his constant search for the meaning of his existence, in the bid to answer the question "why I am existing". Unfortunately, from the perspective of Camus, humans have not been able to understand the finality of their being and the objective meaning of human existence.

ODL is a catalyst for ensuring authentic existence through different digital resources. If Open Distance Learning is designed to meet up with the human aspirations for purposeful existence, then there should be a need for constant research and development of learning activities will break down the stereotype attitude and pulldown syndrome for a better society. Stereotype attitude and pulldown syndrome render the world absurd. Camus' philosophy of absurdity and Antoine Saint-Exupery's philosophy of human engagement should be imparted to ensure authentic existence of man in the world that is full of vices. Learners should be engaged in discussions on issues of human existence, absurdity of human life, human responsibilities and commitments, moral decadence, and social justice. Videoconferencing, webinars, and group discussions on Facebook and WhatsApp chats can be instrumental in this capacity.

Research enhances the novelty of literary works. As society is not static, human thoughts, actions, and deeds are also dynamic in nature. Through research, French literary writers include the ideas of depositing ethical values of life in human beings, such as justice, equity, honesty, tolerance, loyalty and patriotism, in their quest for

knowledge. In this perspective, Camus brings into human conscience the power of revolt in human struggles in the absurd word. A man can say yes to what he finds beneficial to mankind or no to human agony. Shaungular(2010) states that the rebel can only find reasons within himself and, not from without. It is the feeling that "I'm right" and establishes a borderline where crossing this borderline is a "no." It is amounting to wanting to remain silent. Note, it is not *tolerating* it, but literally *wanting* it. Camus states: "With rebellion, awareness is born" (p. 15). And with this rebellion, he will take on this value (even though it's from within) and live for it. Perhaps he will even die for it. With rebellion, it's a shift from descriptive to normative; before there is ethics, there is rebellion. Before there's politics, there is rebellion. Before there is *value*, there is rebellion. The rebel *finds* something to value in order for that thing to *be* valuable. It is imperative to note that these ideologies are to be reflected in our content development at various levels and periods of facilitation to meet global standards. ODL is a network system for imparting knowledge, irrespective of geographical location. It is therefore necessary for literary activities in French to have content validity so that they can be shared with the compatible views of scholars. Well-planned and imparted knowledge of French literature gives learners a sense of value judgment and branding of character for self-esteem and nation building.

It is pertinent to note that research provides an enabling environment for new ideas that emanate from the existence knowledge and enhances the development of learning content to address existing gaps in the dynamic world. Literary writers navigate issues of humanities and project future human society to avoid future occurrences of horrible scenes. Through research, French literary philosophers have developed theories and diverse philosophies that encompass human existence, the absurdity of human life, realism, truth and Marxism after first and second world wars. Freud and Hegel focused their message on issues of truth in human life. Jacques Lacan, Alan Sheridan (1991) reflect on Hegel's notion of truth. Truth for him must be absolute, all-embracing, rational, and circular. The Real is Rational. For Freud, too, it was rational, but he kept one foot in the natural sciences. For M.Lacan Freud would be qualified as the Hegelian sage who revealed to us the Truth but with a certain amount of dross that needed to sweep away. Truth is an integral part of human ethical values. Developing French literary activities in ODL must evolve around issues of human life that can give the learner an in-dept understanding of their human conditions and ethics to enhance justice and tolerance for a better society. There should be a picturesque practical demonstration of the learning content to enhance concrete reasoning and comprehension. This can be done through videoconferencing. For instance, the pictures of the first and second world wars showing bombing and, destruction of lives and properties among the aligns of France and Germany should be incorporated in the learning content in order to reflect the reality of what formed the philosophy and ideologies of many writers in French literature.

Research encourages innovation and significant reduction of risk in human life to inform suicide. This study timelines the contributions of many literary scholars and researchers to help content developers, designers and analytics to include prose, poetry and theater for sustainable sociopolitical and economic development in their cognitive approach. The three literary genres allow researchers to delve into the challenges of human life to reduce risk and foster development for the good of humanity. Risk designates danger and, calamity in human ventures and engagements. Risk is another impediment to duty and sociopolitical engagement in the works of Antoine de Saint-Exupery. This can be seen in the situation where most characters of Antoin are afraid of their responsibilities. In *Courrier sud,* Antoine presents the risk encountered by pilots and their crew in the process of delivering their currier services from France- America. Their flights crash and hook in the sand. Suis-je ou injuste ? je l'ignore. Si je frappe, les pannes diminuent. Le responsable, ce n'est pas l'homme, c'est comme une

puissance obscure que l'on ne touche jamais, si l'on ne touche pas tout le monde. Si j'étais très juste un vol de nuit serait chaque fois une chance de mort (37).

This research unveils attitudes and provides room for literary criticism with a vision of curbing crime and promoting peaceful coexistence among people, as well as national unity. Edward Baugh (1978) has pointed to the fact that political radicalism is a merely fashionable attitude, unless it is accompanied by profound insights into the experimental nature of arts and science. The diagnosis of human character through human search gives insight into human mystery that allows us to form opinions and perception about fundamental issues of good and evil. Just like Eugène plots evil in Balzac's novel, Old Goriot: Madam, I have unwittingly planted a danger into Mme. De Restaud's heart; unwittingly-therein lies my offence, said the student of law, whose keen brain had served him sufficiently well for he had detected the biting epigrams that lurked beneath this friendly talk. You continue to receive, possibly you fear, those who know the amount of pain that they deliberately inflict, but a clumsy blunderer who has no idea how deeply he wounds is looked upon as a fool who does not know how to make use of his opportunities, and everyone despises him (1963:62) exploring human characters of indignation and gratitude which are platforms of good qualities of human life are consolidated factors of peaceful co-existence. We discovered this in the attitude of Mme de Beauséant. Mme de Beauséant gave a law student a glance, one of those glances in which a great soul can mingle dignity and gratitude. It was like a balm to the law student, who was still smarting under the Duchess's insolent scrutiny, as she had looked at him as an auctioneer might look at some article to appraise its value (1963:62). The inclusion of such attitude in the developed content, as prescribed in the NUC program, can rebrand the character of learners in ODL for good moral upbringing.

Challenges of researching, developing and engaging literary activities with learners in ODL

There are multiple challenges that hamper the process of researching, developing and engaging French literary activities with learners in ODL academic system. These impediments include among others, complexity of multimedia integration and management, crude analytic literary strategies, poor motivation and poor virtual environment for effective communication.

 Different sources have shown that the technological complexity of learning process in ODL is a fundamental challenge of analogue scholars and learners who are not responding to the current wave of the fourth industrial revolution where technology facilitates and sustains human intelligence. The analogue nature of most facilitators and leaners in ODL limits the capacity of reaching, developing meaningful intended learning experiences and engaging learners in literary discussions through zoom and videoconferencing. Video script writing and processing and recording in French by English language monolingual staff render most efforts and objectives of the packaged activities abortive. The complexity of multimedia integration and poor management pose the problem of inadequacy in innovation and engagement of most learners of French literature in oral literature, in terms of songs, proverbs, plays and fables. Patricia Arinto (2016) states that the complexity "of integrating pedagogical frames and ICT tools with the other knowledge frames needed to design productive learning tasks" (p. 621) for teaching specific disciplinary knowledge. Siemens (2007) has referred to the curatorial role of teachers in networked learning, which requires expertise in the subject matter to be able to select, annotate, and showcase resources to enable the learners who explore them to engage with the subject matter and develop an understanding of the key concepts of the discipline. At the same time, "[the] curatorial teacher acknowledges the autonomy of learners" so that "instead of dispensing knowledge, he creates spaces in which knowledge can be created, explored, and connected" and learners' "freedom to explore is unbounded" (Siemens, 2007, n.p.).

 Crude analytic literary strategies and approaches hinder the rapid discoveries of innovative strategies and approaches in the development of learning content and engagement of learners in optimal productive French

literary activities in ODL. The incompetence of most facilitators, especially the adjoined lecturers from traditional institutions, who lack rudiments of online teaching, in the current wave of information and communication technology, most at times throw learners in French literature off-balanced in ODL. The negative effect on our students is poor performance, unnecessary delays and confoundment. Jackson K. Edward (2019) Again, in US, where it is anticipated that distance education technology is widely used, the learners reported being frustrated, confused and their interest in learning was reduced due to the lack of experience in technology applications in ODL. Challenges related to technology, are reported as computer vision syndrome, finger joint pain, backaches, headaches, and dizziness due to occasional long periods of computer use to compensate for limited access (Mushi, 2001). Multimedia mediated approach is relegated and as such, narrow down the scope of online research, development of activities and engagement.

Patricia Arinto (2016) considers computer illiteracy of most facilitators as a challenge that limits the scope of innovations in Open Distance Learning System. She stated that distance education is mediated by course materials in different forms and as such, she felt the challenge is in the teacher's understanding such mediation and then using media as an agent, the teacher's agent, to execute the content. Most of them tend to blame the university for not providing them the needed training to have proper orientation of the job before engaging into the task of researching, developing the content and engaging learners of French literature in literary pedagogical activities.

Poor motivation of researchers, content developers as well as facilitators in engaging learners. This inferred challenge is a strong factor that is influenced by the galloping inflation in most developing countries. Poor economy of such countries where these institutions are located has constituted a financial constraint. There is a limited financial allocation to ODL institutions. This affects the ability to purchase the necessary online digital resources that will cater for the basic needs of facilitators, learners, erudite scholars and support staff, particularly at the multiple study centres. There is tight financial budgets for research work. Researchers are constrained to carry out their institutional based research with a very low morale and passion. As part of their responsibilities, lack of proper financing and motivation result to a good number of abandoned or uncompleted research works. The ugliest part is that most of the findings and recommendations are dumped, and as such, making the exercise a brain-drain syndrome. French literature remains relatively stagnant as there is no significant change from the existing philosophical knowledge of the then philosophers like Kierkegard, Sartre, Proust, Apollinaire, Karl Max, and Voltaire in the current wave of rapid digital transformation.

Poor virtual environment for effective communication hampers the pragmatic involvement of learners in the planed intended learning experiences. Most of our study centres lack good electrical system and good network for effective academic activities. It becomes increasingly difficult to engage learners in well-developed intended learning experiences.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It is evident from our research analysis that the process of researching, developing and engaging learners in literary French activities is hampered by certain factor such as complexity of multimedia integration and management, crude analytic literary strategies, poor motivation and poor virtual environment for effective communication. Research that is a tool for innovations and transformation is ironically considered by many researchers to be a brain-drained syndrome, due to poor motivation and poor financing of the research works. The most challenging issue is the non-implementation of the most research recommendations that would have been a panacea to most of our sociopolitical and economic problems to fast-track development. With other inundation of technical hitches and poor virtual environment, it is really difficult to engage learners of French literature in

certain literary pedagogical activities effectively. Financial constraints, official and leisure times are really competing with the study time and interest of our learners.

We therefore remark that instructional related gargets such as computers and good internet network system should be made available at all study centres for efficient research, valid content development and pragmatic engagement of learners of French literature in literary creativity. Convenient virtual environment should be enhanced to abridge the communication gap between learners and facilitators, and as such equip learners with competent and self-motivated learning skills. More media support team should be recruited and given regular ICT training to enhance research process, development of valid content and delivery as well as engaging activities with learners. The paper equally contributes to knowledge by unveiling research as a catalyst for leveraging the challenges of imparting French language literature in ODL, with a vision of self-empowerment and national development.

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