

## Introducing the “New Media” into the Nigeria Anglophone French Class: The Talking Pen, The Talking Book as a Case Study

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### Abstract

*Recent technological advancement has made it possible to develop several new effective methods of easily impacting knowledge and widely transmitting useful information to the end users Alabi (2010). Various educational researches have shown that using varieties of teaching and learning activities that fully engage students in the learning process are most likely to boost educational effectiveness in the language classroom. This paper introduces one of the several New Media Technologies in vogue; the talking pen and the talking book”. It also examines the prospects and possible challenges that may evolve in using the talking pen talking book while adoptable and effective solutions are suggested to improve future implementation.*

**Keywords:** Media, Talking pen, Talking Book and French Class.

### **Definition of Concepts:**

**Media:** This is the main means of communicating with large numbers of people for example television, radio and newspapers, public address systems, use of headphones and connectors linked with laptop among others.

**The Talking Pen:** this is a new technological devices produced with the ability to produce sounds, record voices, play MP3 devices, could be electrical-power-charged, and so on which is designed to be used for teaching and learning activities.

**The Talking Book:** The talking book is fully illustrated and interactive audio-visual book and talking posters that provide expert assistance to teachers and of course, engage learners. The resources are to help advance teaching and learning activities, hence, to help advance teaching education.

**French Class:** this is a group of people taught the French is the language spoken in France, in many European countries and many groups of people around the globe including some West-African neighboring countries that share borders with Nigeria.

### **French Language Class**

The French language class is a class where the teacher communicates officially with the learners in French. Teaching and learning activities are carried out in French language. Learners are encouraged to use the language at all-time both in oral and written productions.

### **Introduction**

Oniyide (2002) observed that the successful teaching and learning of French as one of the foreign languages in Nigeria and other Anglophone communities cannot be satisfactorily done within the four walls often classroom without an efficient, constant and adequate use of a multimedia device. Many of these French students are coming in contact with the language for the first time in their cities. For this reason, Benderson (1983) explained that language was a set of habits, or learned behaviours and that students should be exposed to spoken language long before they are exposed to writing this was thought to produce the natural sequence in which children acquire their first language. The above assertion was supported by Okafor (2008). According to him, “it is necessary for learners to start getting exposed to the target language at an early stage if it is to become permanent and an efficient tool of learning at higher levels of education.”

Despite the strong admonitions given earlier on the need to expose foreign language adult learners to hearing the target language being used by natives or experts, James (1998) sounds a warning bell that; “if you force to speak too early in a foreign language course, they become over monitored they become too conscious that they must speak well and spend too much time formulating answers that will be grammatically perfect. In his opinion therefore, James (1998) concludes that “a person who spends considerable periods of time watching and actively listening to correct usage of a given target language (in this case here, French) will definitely learn it faster and more productively”. Hence, the necessity to adopt and constantly making effective use of multimedia in our language classes. Oguegbune-Okwuene (2008) when enunciating the role played by Multimedia in enhancing French language education in Nigerian Secondary Schools, made reference to the 1999 edition of Hutchinson Encyclopedia where multimedia was defined as a computerized method of presenting information by carefully combining audio and video components, using text, sound and graphics, which are interconnected between the computer and the user.

According to him, multimedia learning is the exposure of the learner to various activities for the achievement of specified behavior. The above submission agrees with what Alabi (2010) said. In his view, he observed that educational researcher have shown that developing teaching strategies that actively engage students in the learning process, such as the use of cooperative and experiential learning exercises, most often than not, increase the academic performance of students with diverse backgrounds, and learning styles leading to more positive attitudes about learning.

### **Introducing the Talking Pen and the Talking Book**

The Talking Pen, Talking Book and Talking Posters are the Mavis Computel’s fully illustrated and interactive audio-visual devices aimed at providing experts assistance to teachers of various subjects and of course, an effective means of actively engaging the learners. The producers have painstakingly followed the NERDC curriculum in the development of each Talking Book. Likewise, the Mavis pen enabled is highly technically made and it is multifunctional in nature. By using the pen, the user only needs to “Tap, hear and learn” useful information pre-recorded by experts in the language. The function of the pen has become the slogan in my language class. In my French language class during my lectures, when I proclaim “Mavis Pen enabled students give the chorus; “Tap! Hear!! And Learn!!!!” Hinged on my personal use, the user/s only need to tap on specified portion of the book to hear pre-recorded voices

of French language native speakers and or experts in the French language pronouncing words, phrases or sentences where the Anglophone users can learn the correct and effective usage of their foreign language either during classes or when they are being used privately.

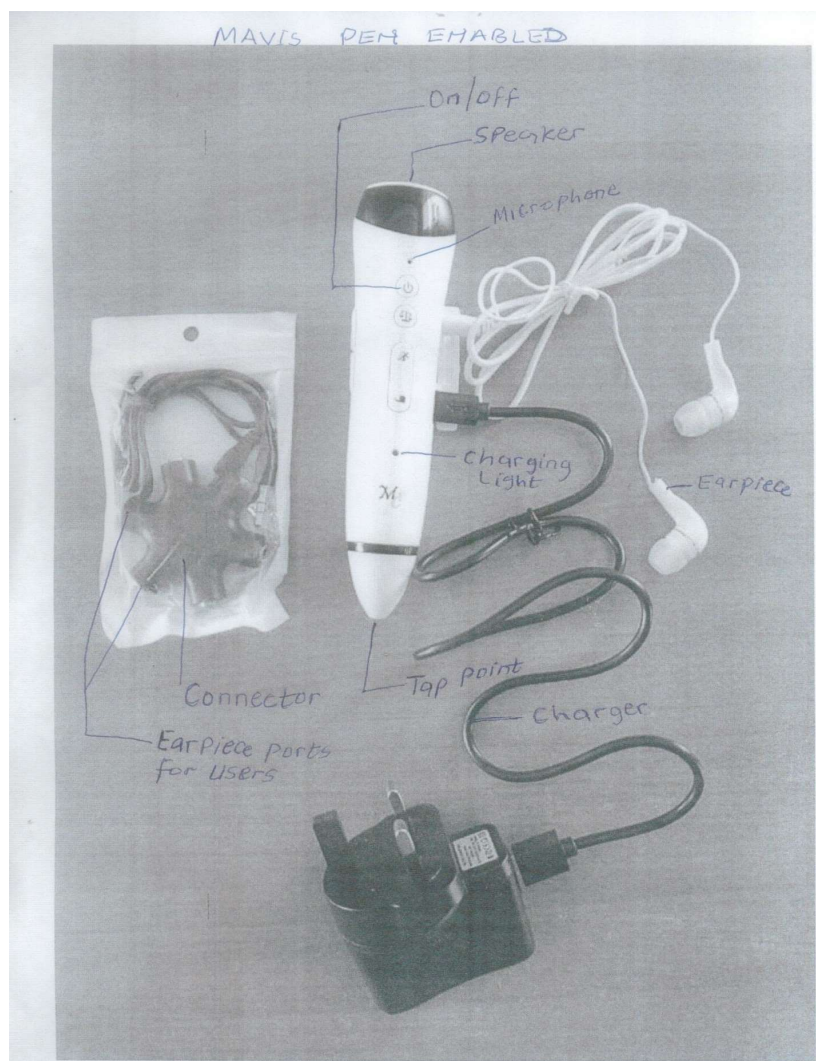


Figure 1: Mavis Pen

### Connector device

The connector device is meant to be used for a relatively large class or a group with the aid of earpiece for each user. The connector has five ports where the earpieces can be fixed. With the aid of the connector, ten different learners can be taking together at once. Ten students can use only one pen and one book conveniently.

**The Talking Book:** The Mavis Computel Ltd. Talking books cover almost every subject conceivable that are taught in educational learning and learning environments either for private or cooperative uses. The book in consideration is Book 1, English to French.

On the front cover is a portion that is circled and inside is written “Tap here to recognize book”. This is where you touch with the ball of the pen and do as if you place a sign “to get access to the content of the interactive fully illustrated book. The book contains (62) sixty two pages and primarily prepared for English-speaking language learners who are learning French in the Anglophone learning environment. The Book consists of twenty (20) different lessons and it also contains Games and Exercises with songs for learners to enjoy and learn while singing.

#### Pictures in the Book

On page 1 of the book, the first picture of utmost importance to us is found very close to figure “1” on the left hand side-A picture of the head of a man. This is the Instructor who gives information about what activity is to be observed. He introduces the users to the content of each aspect of the book. He plays the role of a teacher in a French language class.

Introduction: After a user has gained entry to the contents of the book, for instance, on page one, when you touch the head of the instructor at the left hand side, you hear the following explanations: “In this lesson, we are going to learn how to greet people in French. Tap on the pictures of the head of the instructor to hear the lesson in English and French. tap on the writings to hear the greetings in French only,”

The sentences inside boxes: the entire book serves as a chalk board or interactive white board where the classwork is normally written for pupils and adult learners to see, to learn the correct orthography. The word and sentences are both written in English and French Languages. The instructor pronounces the words first in English giving opportunity to easily grasp what the aspect under coverage is all about- that enables the teacher to build on the previous knowledge of the learners. Then comes the French version. The teacher first pronounces the word in French for learners to hear how it is rightly pronounced. He expects them to imitate how he has pronounced the word, and on their own, do likewise.

### **Other Pictures in the book**

The pictures in the book serve to boost learner’s understanding of the topic being treated; it is very easy for learners to understand a concept when he hears the sound and see pictures that explain or represent what was voiced out. This point of view agrees with what Adeniji, (2006) observed. According to her, visual literacy refers to a group of vision competences a human being can develop by seeing and at the same time having and integrating other sensory verbal and learning experiences.

**Songs in the Language Class:** Various songs are included in the lessons of the book. The objectives are to allow learners listen to songs in the target language, which of course they might have known the version before. Merely hearing and listening to the tunes of the songs quickly remind them how they have been singing the songs in their own languages. Such instance promotes good understanding, quick and permanent retention of the knowledge acquired within a short time.

It is not only children that love songs, the adult learners also enjoy good and educative songs. Songs are one of those strategies the teacher uses to impart worthwhile knowledge in his learners. It motivates learners well to participate actively during and after the lesson. It makes the classroom becomes more interesting allowing both teacher and learners to participate actively. Hence, the lesson becomes more learner-centered. Mallo (2017) corroborates the above submission that effective use of songs as a means of encouraging active communication in the target language leads to teaching and learning success. His view is that: “L’utilisation des methodes correctes, va ameliorer et motiver l’efficacite dans l’enseignement et l’apprentissage de la langue francaise qui aboutira a la performance maximale des apprenants”.

**Class activities:** during the lesson, it is expected that the teacher keep his students busy with various activities- such as classwork, group work, questions and answers, drills, debates, just to mention a few, that will call for active participations of not only the gifted learners but also motivating the involvements of the slow learners. In the book “The Talking Book” English to French, Book 1, that serves as our term of reference, the authors have tactically included various activities in which if any serious learner undergoes, the rate at which they learn, master and begin to effectively use the language will dramatically improve.

**Possible challenges:** As promising as the Talking Pen Talking Book seems to appear in promoting effective teaching and learning of a given subject, it could still be faced with some challenges.

**High cost:** Being a new device, the cost of production might bring the selling price per unit quantity higher than expected. It may be convenient for school authorities and other corporate bodies to afford buying the gadgets at high prices and in large quantities whereas, for individual, the purchase becomes impossible or very difficult especially for the less privileged.

**Scarcity of technical know-how:** The gadget is very sophisticated which must be handled carefully. In case of damage or malfunctioning, it should be repaired carefully by competent operators. Considering the high costs of level of sophistication and usefulness of the devices, it's expedient to handle it with caution.

**Poor handling of the Talking book:** It is pertinent to reiterate that the book must be carefully handled while using it such that the front hard cover gets damaged, it becomes difficult if not impossible to access the content of the book by making use of the Talking Pen. If the Pen cannot be used with the book, a learner can still learn from reading the book but only on the orthographical level without being able to enjoy and learn from the accompanied pronunciation activities which invariably determines the level of competence of the language users.

**Lack of familiarity for use:** if the user is not well trained on how to use the device, many useful time will be wasted trying to use it. Proper training on how to use the device for personal and corporate use must be used

## **Conclusion**

The role played by effective use of new media in teaching/learning activities cannot be overstressed. When a competent teacher handles effectively any of the multimedia devices to teach his subject in the class, teacher's tasks become less energy sapping, class become more interesting and stated objectives are more easily and satisfactorily achieved. It is expected that if the aforementioned warnings are critically observed vis-a-vis teacher's interaction with the Talking Pen, Talking Book, the levels at which the foreign language learners will perform well will drastically improve. The paper therefore appeals to the various school authorities to procure the talking pen, Talking Book in large quantities for use to teach the subjects and most especially, French language subject as a foreign language.



Learners are also encouraged to maximize the technological advancement that has resulted in the production of many useful teaching/learning equipment that can be used for self-learning to help them become more competent and resourceful in the society.

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