

# Development of French Learning Module for Visually Impaired Learners

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## ABSTRACT

This research attempts to investigate the development of French learning module for A1 level of CEFR for visually impaired learners. This module is devoted to facilitating French listening and speaking competency. The research is conducted by using the Research and Development (R&D) method where twenty visually impaired students from eight universities in Bandung were involved as participants of the study using purposive sampling. The data were collected through need analysis questionnaires and assessment sheets. The findings showed that the participant needed teaching material in braille equipped with audio documents to minimize the obstacles found when learning French using other learning resources also to maximize the sense of hearing and the sense of touch that are very relied on for visually impaired learners to learn something. Furthermore, the module was developed in accordance with the results of the needs analysis and was assessed by experts. From the results of this assessment, this module obtained an average percentage score of 91% that could be interpreted as "very good" category which means eligible to use. The users were also satisfied with the results of the final module. This research should contribute to help and to facilitate visually impaired learners for learning French at A1 level of CEFR.

**Keywords:** *Development, French Learning Module, visually impaired learners*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

For visually impaired person who want to learn a foreign language will need special teaching tools and forms for learning a language, both a learning model, methods, strategies, learning techniques and teaching material. A teaching material plays an important role in a learning process, both for a teacher and for students. According to Iskandarwassid and Sunendar (2008, p. 171), "teaching materials are packages of information that students must learn through comfortable learning". Magdalena et al. (2020) also stated that a teaching material needs to be made in accordance with instructional principles because it will be used by teachers and students to help and support the learning process. The teaching material must be adapted to the characteristics and needs of students in order to easily accessed by learners with certain physical disabilities, in this case visual impairments. They have to replace the function of sight with other senses that enable them to obtain the same information and experiences as their peers without visual impairments. In this case the most

likely senses are tactile and auditory, although it is possible that they can also optimize the function of smell and taste function (Mardiyati, 2016).

For Indonesians, learning French requires more effort because of many differences between Indonesian and French. Both in terms of grammar, writing rules and pronunciation. As said by Mutiarsih, et al. (2009, p. 2) that "The first simplest difficulty for someone who studies French is the difference in pronunciation in Indonesian and French". The results of research by Rudianingsih, Mulya and Nugroho (2002) also stated that respondents who were students initially felt quite shocked by the difficulty of grammar and pronunciation of French which has special rules that are quite difficult to pronounce for beginners, coupled with the influence of their mother tongue. Specifically, the development of the French learning module is devoted to the learning of oral communication skills, which are listening and speaking skills. Therefore, the teaching of pronunciation must be part of the French language class as a foreign language because the teaching of pronunciation is a prerequisite in

mastering two language skills, which are mastery of listening and speaking (Léon in Mutiarsih et al., 2009).

The facts above become challenge in teaching French for visually impaired students, especially in terms of the development of French learning module in braille that come with the audio document for learners who have visual impairments. In this regard, we formulate these following research questions: How to develop a suitable French learning module for visually impaired learners? and how do the visually impaired learners respond to the French learning module in A1 level that have been developed?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In Indonesia, and in many non-*francophones* (French speakers) countries, French is known as foreign language or more recognized as FLE (*Français Langue Etrangère*/French as foreign language). FLE teaching refer to Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in implementing the whole teaching-learning process, from design to evaluation. Conseil de l'Europe (2018) divide learners' level into three main categories: basic user (A1 and A2), independent user (B1 and B2) and experienced user (C1 and C2).

This study focuses on developing French learning module of A1 level of CEFR for visually imparted students. Grandmangin (2003, p.169) explained that "module is the part of a learning or training program which has been divided into several units corresponding to a skill to be acquired and which is combined with other units. Each module taken in isolation constitutes a specific objective and can also be assessed in isolation". So, the module developed in this research is a French learning module that come with audio documents to support listening and speaking French learning.

Regarding the A1 level of CEFR, Perrot (2019) explains in more detail that the students' global competence of communication in A1 level is as follows: (a) can understand some familiar and everyday expressions used in very recurrent communication situations as well as very simple statements aimed at satisfying certain concrete needs of social life and can produce some of them; (b) can identify himself and answer questions concerning, for example, his nationality, age, place of residence, school and possibly, himself ask questions of this type to someone; and (c) can participate in ordinary interaction, at least in particular, by means of simple utterances (cantered on one or two words) while also using his first language or other acquired languages

providing appropriate teaching materials. Therefore, due to the unavailability of suitable French learning modules for visually impaired learners in Indonesia, the researchers are interested in doing the research regarding if the interlocutor speaks slowly and clearly and is cooperative and benevolent.

The modules developed in this research are intended for learners with visual impairments. What can be said by visually impaired is people with low vision and who is blind. Frederickson and Cline (2009, p. 519) explained about low vision end blindness as follows: "*The person can read at 6 m what a normally sighted person can read at more than 18 m. At the more severe end of this range, they will require low-vision aids and special text. Blind. The person can read at 3 m what a normally sighted person can read at 60 m or more. Eligible for registration as blind. Special teaching methods and materials will be required*".

In learning for the blind and visually impaired, a teacher must make certain modifications to the learning process. The necessary learning modifications include internal modification (modification of the physical potential of visually impaired learners itself, a case of modification which adapts to the rest of the learner's vision, his posture / body position) and an external modification (modification of things outside himself with obstacles visions such as tools / media of learning, teaching materials, the way teachers present learning, facilities and infrastructure and other things) (Mardiyati, 2016).

## 3. METHOD

The research is conducted by using the Research and Development (R&D) method where twenty visually impaired students from eight universities in Bandung were involved as participants of the study using purposive sampling. The criteria of this purposive sampling are as follows: (1) having visual impairments; (2) currently studying or completing their higher education at one of the public or private universities in Bandung; and (3) have studied foreign languages, at least English. This method has 10 steps of research. However, in this research we only carried out 7 of the 10 steps, which are identifying potential and problems, collecting data, making product designs, validating product designs, revising product designs, testing product viability, and producing products.

The data is collected from needs analysis questionnaire, French textbook assessment sheet and

module evaluation sheet. This questionnaire contains 12 questions and consisted of six questions with multiple choice and six open questions. The need questionnaire aims to find out: respondents experience in learning a foreign language, the difficulties encountered in learning a foreign language and how to overcome them, the advantages and disadvantages of learning resources that they usually use in learning a foreign language, the difficulties that they encounter as a blind person in using learning resources foreign languages, what learning sources they expect, their response to learning French, their response to the procurement of printed learning resources in this digital era and their responses regarding the organization of French learning for the visually impaired and using teaching materials in print.

French textbook assessment sheet used in this study was the assessment issued by National Education Standards Agency (2014) which are then filled in by the experts. This assessment sheet consists of assessment of (a) content eligibility (learning material coverage, accuracy of learning material, up-to-date learning material, implementation of pragmatic rules, attractiveness); (b) presentation eligibility (presentation technique, presentation support, learning presentation); (c) language eligibility (accuracy of use of Indonesian language, communicative, suitability with the development of learners) and (d) audio document eligibility (supporting learning function, recording technical quality, truth of substance, clarity of instructions). Module evaluation sheet filled out by users consisting of content eligibility and presentation as well as assessment of module accessibility and audio documents.

Furthermore, the module design is printed in two versions, which are: in printed version and in braille version. Then, its eligibility is assessed by two experts. The first expert is a professor of French Language Study Program and a professor of Special Education Study Program in one university in Bandung. The results of the module feasibility assessment by experts and users were determined by the assessment criteria using a percentage scale calculation of ten.

#### **4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

According to the need's analysis questionnaire findings, it is found that the first skill they want to learn in learning a foreign language is the listening and speaking competency. This is since these two skills can help them in international mobility, for example in

understanding verbal information in public places and can expand relationships by interacting with strangers. However, difficulties that they usually encounter in learning foreign languages are especially in listening and speaking skills are: They only understand a small part of the whole topic of conversation and they are also confused in responding to conversations spontaneously. So, to overcome these difficulties, the most solution they do is learn from sources such as printed books or online learning sites and discuss with friends.

There are two main choices that they like as a type of learning material for them to learn a foreign language, which are (a) Printed teaching materials, such as printed books or modules; and (b) Video watch service providers, such as YouTube. Respondents who chose point A explained that the advantages of printed books or modules are that they contain complete explanations and they also know the writing of a word or phrase. However, it is difficult to find a foreign language learning module in Braille writing. Respondents who choose point B explained that learning a foreign language from YouTube has the advantage of being easily accessed, each YouTube channel has various ways to explain diverse and interesting subjects, so the learning process becomes more enjoyable. However, if the teacher uses more visual media than verbal explanation, person with visual impairment will find it difficult to follow.

Several findings about the difficulties they encounter as a visually impaired learner in learning foreign languages are as follow: there are still very limited braille books for learning foreign languages. As solution, if they use printed books, they must scan them first and then read them using their computers with the help of a screen reader program or they need help from others to read for them. But when learning through online sites, sometimes not all menus or symbols are read by screen reader programs. Therefore, they expect learning resources that can make them learn independently and maximize the sense of hearing and touch they rely on to learn. They also suggested that foreign language learning for beginners should begin with the introduction of alphabet letters in the foreign language.

Other findings revealed that 85% of respondents agreed with the holding of teaching materials in the form of braille modules and audio documents for learning foreign languages. It can minimize the obstacles that often occur when a visually impaired students can learn independently. 95% of respondents are also interested in learning French, and they also agreed to use braille

modules and audio documents as teaching material in learning French.

Based on those findings, the researchers design teaching materials in the form of braille modules and audio documents based on the needs analysis results above. The module is devoted to listening and speaking skills and is intended for visually impaired learners. Because this module is intended for beginner level French language learners, the preparation of the material in this module is guided by the basic competencies level A1.1 outlined in the CEFR. In this below, researchers describe the parts of the module.

In opening section, consists of a cover page, introduction, table of contents and table list. Learning activity section divided into five chapters, where each chapter consists of chapter titles, learning objectives, learning contents, vocabulary lists, exercise, grammar columns and audio transcription. Each material consists of several submitters. In each sub material there are listening activities. After studying the material in all chapters, learners can measure their ability in basic French by working on the questions contained in the *Bilan* (Evaluation) sheet. *Bilan* section is divided into six parts consisting of five parts for listening skills and one part for speaking skills. The forms of tests provided consist of completing tables, completing sentences, limited entries, true-false and verbal descriptions. The maximum score that must be achieved for each skill is 25 points, so the total score on this *Bilan* is 50 points. So, the learners can correct and evaluating their learning outcomes by looking at the answer key page. The answer keys for practice questions in each chapter and for *Bilan* questions are provided.

In the end of module, there is also conjugation table, glossary and bibliography. The conjugation table page presenting conjugations for verbs that must be known by learners at the A1 DELF level which consist of the time of present (*présent*), past tense (*passé-composé*) and future tense (*future proche*). The glossary aims to help learners find explanations of the words or terms used in this module. And the bibliography contains the identity of the source books and links from internet sites that are references in writing the module.

Regarding the audio support for listening, the documents are packaged in the form of compact disk (CD). This audio document is useful for facilitating learners in listening skill. Furthermore, the module design is printed and then its eligibility is assessed by two

experts. The first expert assessed the eligibility of the module in the printed version. After has assessed the content eligibility, presentation eligibility, language eligibility and eligibility of an integrated audio document modules, this French learning modules at A1 level for visually impaired learners are declared to be suitable for use.

On the other hand, next expert assessed the modules in the braille version which included evaluating the presentation eligibility and eligibility of an integrated audio document modules. From the results of the assessment, we obtained a percentage score of 92% for the presentation eligibility to be included in the "very good" category and the percentage of audio document eligibility score of 90% which is also included in the "very good" category. So, the average percentage gain from the two aspects of the assessment was 91% which falls into the "very good" category.

Finally, we would like to know the responses of the respondents to the French learning modules that have been developed according to their needs. From the results of the questionnaire needs, we obtained 17 or 85% of all respondents who agreed with the development of a braille module with audio documents as a source of learning French. Next, we gave the assessment sheets and modules that have been printed in braille along with the audio document to the respondents. The assessments given by the respondents included assessing the eligibility of the contents and presentation and assessment of the eligibility of the accessibility of modules and audio documents. From the results of the respondents' assessment, an average percentage score obtained from both aspects of the assessment of 93% was included in the "very good" category.

In addition to giving their assessments, the respondents also provided criticisms and suggestions for the module, such as they still need the guidance of a teacher for more optimal learning, and it is recommended that the contents and examples of sentences in the material could be accompanied by an Indonesian translation

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results, we can conclude that a French learning module for visually impaired learners should only offer one objective: oral communication, either comprehension or production. In terms of physical presentation, this module must be written in Braille and

provide materials, such as integrated audio documents, that can help them to minimize obstacles during learning process, and at the same time to maximize their sense of hearing and touch in learning something. In order to fulfil the CEFR criteria for A1 level, this module could offers several topics: French alphabet, greeting sentences, asking for news, saying thank you, getting to know each other, family members, numbers, time and leisure activities. The learners' perception about this module is also positive where they put a correct score on the evaluation sheet.

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