

TEACHING FRENCH THROUGH DIGITAL NETWORK

Ioana BUD^{a†}

Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Letters, Baia Mare, Romania

Abstract

This article aims to address the methods of teaching-learning a foreign language (in the present case French) through social networks. In a continuous development, the foreign language teacher must adapt to the Alpha generation and meet their expectations, hence the need to analyze the didactic dimension of Social Media. Foreign language teaching is approached here from a dual perspective: identifying a theoretical framework, updated in the context of AI, followed by concrete examples, applicable and tested in FFL classes using Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube and based on the model proposed by Nonaka and Konno, following the way in which the teacher-student relationship is currently metamorphosing.

Keywords: social networks; active learning; virtual space; multimodal text;

Introduction

The omnipresence of social networks in daily life is already evident, with the result that education and digital technology must be interdependent. In fact, this aspect is not at all new, because the education-digital relationship has been at the center of the concerns of educationalists since the 1970s. In the French-speaking world, research teams in this field (*MOCAH of LIP6*[‡], Sorbonne University, and *Kiwi of Loria*) (Giraudon, 2020:16) have tried to examine the challenges of digital technology, and to see how these new technologies constitute a vector of educational transformation.

* Corresponding author:

E-mail address: Ioana.BUD@campus.utcluj.ro

[‡] MOCAH specializes in the use of AI-based technologies, [Équipe : MOCAH - Modèles et Outils informatiques Centrés Apprentissage Humain](#), while Kiwi of Loria is a Lorraine computer research laboratory, www.loria.fr.

Literature Review (Theoretical foundation)

In the online *Larousse dictionary* "e-learning" is defined as follows: "Learning method requiring the use of multimedia and providing access to interactive training on the Internet." [§] This new way of learning requires the existence of four factors: the learner, the device (computer, laptop, tablet, and interactive white board), and the platform. Traditionally, distance education began with correspondence courses, where students and teachers

interacted via mail. Since the 1990s, teaching has been expanding online, opening up new opportunities for both teachers and students. Nowadays, any device can be used as an educational platform, transforming learning methods. Engeström analyzes the dilemma of authenticity in the digital environment: "Reference to 'real life' implies that there is something that is not real, that is, artificial. But what in this world is not artificial made or modified by humans? There is no such pristine domain of untouched nature." (Engeström, 2009:20) In practice, it is considered to be a mixture of formal and informal learning. The teacher only needs to reflect on the learning situations that can emerge, intentionally or not, from an online device and the communicative and interactional frameworks that it offers, formal or informal. In 2013, Jean-François Grassin conducted a study on the integration of a digital social network within a university department teaching French as a Foreign Language in France, with the aim of identifying the conditions for the actualization of its potential as a support for learning. He concluded that students used social networks only in an educational way, responding to the instructions given, and not as in the case of *Facebook*, for example, used as a social network: "There is disappointment, but the students differentiate between *Facebook*, the social network that most use for social purposes, and a social network for learning. They seem to recognize the usefulness of both, in different spheres that can also be porous." ^{**} (Grassin, 2013- 65).

There are various methods of distance learning (or teaching), some of which are already deeply integrated into the education sector. Let us consider a few forms of this type of learning:

1. *Videoconferencing* - Instructors frequently use videoconferencing to deliver their lessons live. This approach is suitable for both individual student instruction, in a private lesson, and for an entire class;

[§] « Mode d'apprentissage requérant l'usage du multimédia et donnant accès à des formations interactives sur Internet. », <https://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/e-learning/10910399>, online access july 16 2025.

^{**} « La déception est là pourtant les étudiants font la différence entre Facebook, le réseau social que la plupart utilise pour des usages sociaux et un réseau social pour l'apprentissage. Ils semblent reconnaître l'utilité des deux, dans des sphères différentes mais qui peuvent aussi être poreuses », [Un réseau social pour le FLE. Quelles perceptions et quels usages de l'apprenant ?](#), online access september 02 2025.

2. *Synchronous learning* - allows students to learn simultaneously and at a similar pace (often in the same location), while the instructor is located remotely. Videoconferencing or teleconferencing is often used to connect teachers and learners;
3. *Asynchronous learning* - this is a less interactive format, but also less restrictive for the learner. Rather than delivering live lectures, students are assigned learning tasks to complete within a set timeframe. They therefore engage in independent study;
4. *Self-paced courses* - offer even more flexibility;
5. *Scheduled online courses* - adopt a synchronous teaching method and require students to be present at a specific, pre-specified website at the required time (as is the case with a webinar, for example). Unlike other, more restricted types of synchronous courses, this one offers students worldwide the opportunity to connect and interact online.
6. *Computer-based courses* - these are taught in a synchronous teaching format and are usually held at set times in a dedicated computer room. This format is frequently offered by brick-and-mortar institutions that already have all the necessary equipment.
7. *Blended learning* - allows students to attend the same lessons at the same time, although, some of them are in the classroom while the others attend remotely.

In order to identify how social networks can become an effective tool for teaching / learning French, the research will be based on the Spiral Knowledge Creation Model developed in 1995 by Nonaka and Konno.

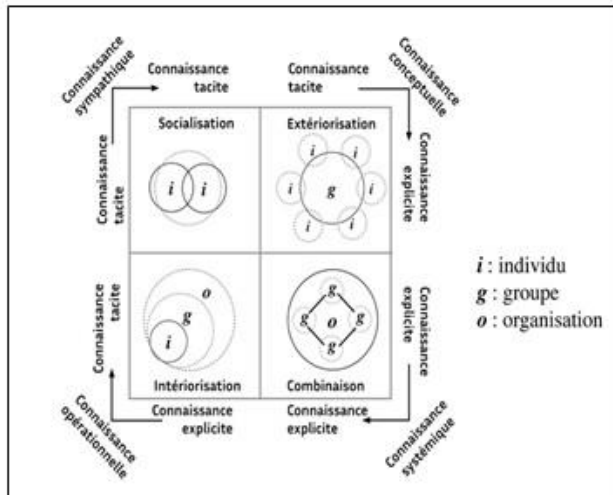


Figure 1. Model of spiral knowledge creation [Nonaka&Konno-1998]
translated by Heutte [Heutte-2014].

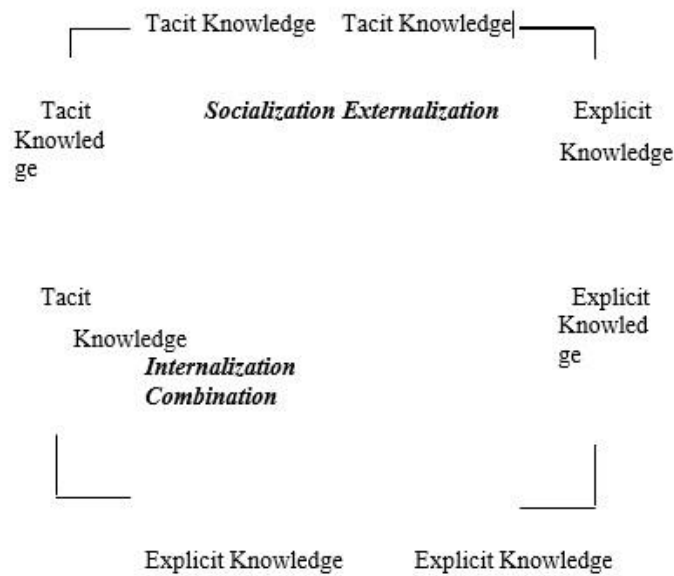


Figure 2. Nonaka's four modes of knowledge conversion

Methodology

To better understand how we can teach French through social media, I shall take a concrete example: a FLE course that uses Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.

Classroom Topic: *French-Speaking Europe*

Level: A2-B1.

Textbook: H. Augé, M.D. Cañada Pujols, C. Marlens, L. Martin (2004), *Tout va bien 1*, Paris, Clé International Publishing. This lesson appears in Unit 2, *Rhythms of Life*, in the French Culture and Civilization section, page 45.

a) Socialization – students are informed that in two weeks, they will have to find out about French-speaking countries around the world, using information from authentic French-speaking accounts: influencers, vloggers, comedians, tourism groups on Facebook, Instagram, etc. They are also asked to change their minds, information on their WhatsApp group. The pragmatic aspect of this activity also aims to familiarize students with the French language as spoken by native speakers, with different accents, idiomatic expressions, or patois.

b) Externalization: In this step, we move from the tacit (involving aspects concerning customs, observed habits, etc.) to the explicit. During the FLE class, students talk about what they have discovered about the given topic: French-speaking country, geographical location, information about the most important cities, tourist destinations, customs, regional languages, personalities, etc. The teacher asks the learners to organize themselves into groups, choose a French-speaking country, and create a video about that country, playing the role of travel guides. Similarly, each group must choose a representative expression for the chosen country, or a custom and explain it (for example: Ramadan in Algeria.) In this way, they will transform implicit knowledge into prior explicit knowledge.

c) Combination (Explicit-Explicit) – each group will have to upload their presentations to their common high - school groups, in order to create a common database with the subject of La Francophonie. In this way, linguistic knowledge is constructed in an organized manner.

d) Internalization (Explicit – Tacit) – we organize a French-speaking café, where we invite other colleagues to learn about various circuits in French-speaking countries. Each group presents what they have worked on, also putting these presentations on their YouTube account.

Discussions and conclusions

Thanks to this activity, the learner will be at the center of the teaching, the learning being interactive and multimodal, giving each student the opportunity to use their skills: making videos,

gathering information, making subtitles, etc. And everything happens in a fun way, in a less restrictive framework. Thanks to digital technology, students have access to information resources in various formats and at any time. In addition, they develop cross-curricular skills in a flexible educational environment. The teacher must, however, ensure that everything is in line with the pedagogical intention when proposing tasks to the students to solve using social networks, because the pedagogical aim takes precedence. Only in this way will technology remain at the service of pedagogy.

Bibliography:

- Engeström, Y. (2009). *From Learning Environments and Implementation to Activity Systems and Expansive Learning*, In *Actio: an international journal of human activity theory*, 2, 17-33, [02_YRJO.indd](#).
- Giraudon, G. Guitton, P. Romero, M. Roy, D. Viéville, T. (2020). *Éducation et numérique, Défis et enjeux [Education and digital technology. Challenges and issues]*, In *Livre Blanc Paris : Inria N° 04*. hal-03051329v2.
- Grassin, J. –F. (2013), *Un réseau social pour le FLE. Quelles perceptions et quels usages de l'apprenant ?*, 10-2, <https://doi.org/10.4000/rdlc.1588>.
- Heutte, J. (2014) : « Persister dans la conception de son environnement personnel d'apprentissage : Contributions et complémentarités de trois théories du self » [*Persisting in the design of one's personal learning environment : contributions and complementarities of three theories of the self*]. STICEF (sciences et technologies de l'information et de la communication pour l'éducation et la formation) In *Les Environnements Personnels d'Apprentissage : entre description et conceptualisation [Personal Learning Environments : between description and conceptualization]* fhal-02133528f.
- Nonaka, K., Takeuchi, H. (1995). Nonaka's Four Modes of Knowledge Conversion. In *The Knowledge-Creating Company. How Japanese Companies Create the Dynamics of Innovation*, Ney York: Press.