

# INTERACTIVE ICT ASSESSMENT OF LINGUISTICS SKILLS IN FRENCH

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**Abstract:** *Within this paper, we propose to present the advantages and limitations of using Wondershare Quiz Creator during the French class, an application that allows to easily create interactive Flash-based questionnaires for computer-assisted instruction and assessment. Given the multitude of advantages of using these educational programs, we believe that teachers need training in their use of ICT for education, not only on terms of technical, but especially regarding the pedagogical plan*

**Key words:** *French, assessment, ICT tools.*

## 1. Introduction

ICT facilities offer new ways of teaching-learning-assessment in languages, therefore, for the efficient use of modern means of evaluation, it is recommended to teachers to participate in ICT training programs, which are not only about providing basic ICT skills, but about pursuing a broader set of competencies oriented to the current interactive and collaborative technology, such as Web 2.0, e-Learning.

## 2. Objectives

Within this paper, we propose to present the advantages and limitations of using Wondershare Quiz Creator during the French class, an application that allows to easily create interactive Flash-based questionnaires for computer-assisted instruction and assessment. This application is designed for teachers, researchers and evaluators. The application allows easy and effective ways to assess knowledge and get valuable opinions. The application easily enables publishing flash questionnaires issued on the web in order to be accessed from anywhere, and test results can be automatically sent by email to the evaluator for tabulation. Such persons do not need to be evaluated in a certain place in order to perform the test.

## 3. Material and Methods

The application has been checked in the French language classes supported by a group of 28 students, junior level, throughout the school year 2014-2015.

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## **4. Results**

### **4.1. Application Description**

Among the main features that the application enables, there is the opportunity to individualize with animation every type of question, which allows the use of up to 9 different types of questions with animation to make the test more attractive and the possibility of publishing the questions online and restricting access to these if desired. The system also allows the addition of individual scores on each question and individual scores on each answer to the question if the question allows multiple possible answers. At the end of the questionnaire, the application automatically displays a report on the number of questions that were answered correctly and survey results if in the questionnaire there are just questions that the system can directly calculate the score. The application can be configured to automatically send a report via email to creator of the test whenever someone solves the questionnaire.

### **4.2. Tests Features**

Tests can be configured for user training, but also for his testing. In the training phase, the test can be configured so that the user can try several times to answer the same question even if the answers will be remixed every time. After each question, the instructor can provide through text messages some hint for the user so that he can understand the context and the idea presented in the question. These messages can be written based on user response, such that they can be customized depending on what the user understand about that question. When posting a question, the instructor can provide the user (by sound or image) or by text writing, a short essay explaining the theory to that question. In this context, in the training phase, the user can see first the question, and then read the documentation. Thus, training is centred on each subject and each user can only deepen topics that he had not known, responding to the known correctly and can move on quickly.

The application allows also the creation of tests to assess the user where, for each question, it is given only once chance to respond, without more tests. It can be configured so that for each question is allowed a maximum period of time in which to respond, where, if the timer expires, it will automatically go to the next question, considering that it was not the right answer to that question.

### **4.3. Creating a Questionnaire**

The application allows opening and creating new questionnaires. Regarding the creation of new questionnaires, they can be created entirely with QuizCreator application and by importing questions from an Excel file. During the development of the questionnaire, the application displays helpful information so that its use is as easier as possible.

### **4.4. Types of Questions**

The application allows the use in the test, up to 10 different kinds of questions in a very broad category, allowing the use of questions to answer true / false, questions that can be

answered with one or more answers. It is also possible to create questions that the user can respond with his/her own text (essay). Questions can be created where the user should arrange answers. Questions are presented in an easy to use and intuitive interface making test solving appealing and interesting.

In the next part of this paper, we will present all these types of questions. For each question, there can be added facilities of sound, image and editing equations. Most types of questions allow the specification of the correct answer so that the outcome of the evaluation can automatically be calculated.

- *True / False*

To insert such a question click on the “Questions” and select “True / False”.

Questions true / false are used when the statement (question) has two options (answers) only one being correct. The test creator must specify which of the two answers is correct. For this type of question, the score can be calculated automatically if the answer is correct or not.

- *Multiple Choice*

Allows to add questions that have multiple answers of which only one is correct. This type of question allows the addition of up to 9 possible response options. To add a question type “Multiple Choice” for the current test, the editor clicks on the “Questions” and selects “Multiple Choice”.

- *Multiple Response*

Allows editing questions that have multiple possible answers. This type of question is similar to the question above, only it allows to specify multiple answers to a question. In the “Correct” column, all the right answers for the question will be specified. If it chooses to score the response, it can be specified for each correct answer the score to be achieved by the candidate, if it is chosen the option of answer to the question, the score will be granted only if there are chosen all the answers marked for that question.

- *Fill in the Blank*

This question enables typing the text of the question and all its possible answers, if there are several answers. The user will be presented only the question, then in an EditBox, he will specify the response that he considers correct. In this case, during the assessment any alternative response will not be given. If the text entered by the user will coincide with one of the accepted answers (specified by the instructor while creating the question), it will be marked as correct answer to the question, otherwise it will be marked as wrong answer.

- *Matching*

This type allows the introduction of the question that usually requires to match different items. In the “Enter the items” section, on columns there are introduced the variants as they should be matched by the user. During the runtime of the questionnaire, the texts in the second column are mixed, and the user using the mouse and the drag-and-drop facility, can rearrange and fit them as he considers they are correct. In this type of question, a different score for each correct match can be specified.

- *Sequence*

An ordering type question requires from the user to arrange the elements specified in reply to a question, in the order required by the question. This type of question allows the introduction of a maximum of 9 elements in the correct order, following that when question will be displayed to the user, this order will be changed randomly. In this type of question, the score can only be per question, not on each correct answer. Thus, the correct response will be scored only if all of the sequence is in the correct order.

- *Word Bank*

A question type filling in missing word allows creating queries with some words missing where the user can choose words and phrases as answers to the question of a set of possible answers.

- *Click Map*

A question “Click Map” requires the user to click on the right areas of an image. There can be specified up to 9 correct zones by rectangles or other round shapes. Points will be awarded only when all areas were correctly selected.

During the test, the user, using the mouse, can specify the area(s) he considers correct. He will have to put on the image as many areas as there are required. Above the image displayed, the user will have information (graphically) about the number of areas he needs to find to that question.

- *Short Essay*

A short “Short Essay” question is a question that requires the user to write a short essay in the text field provided. For this type of question, points cannot be awarded, nor can the correct answer be specified. For this type of question, after the test, the instructor will have to analyse the answers to these questions and to point out properly. Once he has answered the question, the user can receive an essay by reference in the field where usually so far it was specified whether the answer was correct or not.

- *Blank Page*

This option does not insert a question into the test, but a blank page can be inserted before a category of questions where the instructor can specify how he wants to be answered the following questions or to give an example for the person assessed to better understand how the test supposes to continue.

#### **4.5. The Publication of the Questionnaire**

After editing the questionnaire, there is the possibility of publishing it in different ways for different users. The questionnaire can be converted into an executable application and can be distributed as executable file, it can be published to the web and it can be accessed online or it can be saved in Word or Excel files.

The publication in QMS (Quiz Management System) – the management of questionnaires system is a host-ing online system built to collect, manage and analyse test results. This system is specially developed for QuizCreator and requires registration. After registration, users can quickly get real-time reports on statistics of test, answers, scores and participants in the test.

Web Publishing lets you save the questionnaire as a web page on a computer and making this page on a web server in order to access and solve the test online. Following this command, it will be generated a SWF file containing questions and a html file that can be accessed on the web. In this window, you can set in the “Send results to quiz taker's e-mail address” the instructor's email address at which to automatically send the results of the quiz.

Other options for publishing the test are: the ability to create an executable file for that test or to save it in a file Word or Excel for Office package which can then be accessed, modified, solved or reconverted to file for the application. This is useful when we want the transmitting of the questions to a supervisor that can correct the text of the questions, so that they are clearer, but there is not installed the application to change the questions.

## **5. What Pedagogical Situations?**

Before a course sequence: students explore the theme of the lesson, take stock of what they already know about the topic. WQC allows preparing the introduction of new concepts.

During a course sequence: students have at their disposal a variety of media. WQC allows students to progress at their own rhythm, to see video or listen to a sound as many times as necessary.

In the end of course sequence: after the research activities, exchange, problem solving, students are asked about specific points, allowing to structure the knowledge, which is called formative assessment. WQC is a knowledge structuring tool.

Students should return their acquired knowledge: they respond to questions proposed by the teacher - summative evaluation. WQC is a knowledge measurement tool. Students explain or transfer their assets to other students: they construct a questionnaire for their classmates. WQC allows students to structure their learning by reinvesting in the proposed questions.

### **5.1. Arguments for Using WQC**

Its use is simple, even for the less experienced with computers. The questions are presented in an easy to use and intuitive interface; which makes the test attractive and interesting. For each question, you can add the facilities of sound and image.

Most types of questions allow to specify the correct answer, so we can automatically calculate the result of the evaluation.

The individual work rhythm of students is respected.

The interest for students and parents: This software allows students and parents to follow in detail the skills to rework a priority; since it is possible to turn each item into a hyperlink to a help site on the respective skill.

The additional remarks, made in a dedicated frame, often emphasize the possibility to catch up, hence the motivating character to see progress (for students) or the ability to better track (for the parents).

### **5.2. Difficulties of using WQC**

The main difficulty is to create items that are sufficiently rich, authentic and appropriate to the level of the student, implementing not only linguistic content, but also cultural elements.

## **6. Conclusions and Discussion**

These benefits are relatives, according to objectives and people taken into account: teachers, students, social actors ... or even computer equipment manufacturers, software developers and others. But we must realize that technology, as useful and exciting as it is, still depends on the more or less good use that the users will make. The illusion of the "miracle method" profitable everywhere and for all, may indeed cause some damage.

The integration of ICT in the educational system has also resulted in many cases a reversal of perspectives, and even priorities. Here it is a definition of integration as it was proposed by Bourguignon (1994, p. 19-20): "By integration, we mean any insertion of the technological tool, during one or more sessions in a global pedagogical sequence, the objectives have been clearly determined. For each phase, the implementation modalities

are explained in terms of prerequisites, objects, completing the task, evaluation, so that the whole is a coherent educational system.” For Mangenot (2000, p. 40), “integration (of ICT) is when the computer tool is effectively in the service of learning.”

ICT offer only new tools to actors in education - language learning, and their success is only a phase following many other innovations and changes in the history of language teaching. It is undeniable that the intensive use of ICT in languages didactics – we cannot ignore - causes rebalancing different vectors of learning in relation to the language, in relation to the world, compared to subjects, and obliges new pedagogical approaches.

As for how to use the new ICT technologies, Lebrun (2004, p. 17) says: “The importance of information, of technical and educational support to teachers is a priority as the technologies catalyse an education reform. Without this, the new technology allows to best reproduce the old pedagogies. In other words, it is appropriate to say that if teachers are not trained in these technologies, in many cases, they may simply perpetuate traditional teaching methods using a new medium.”

ICT have many advantages for assessment:

- Increasing student motivation. The evaluation frightened students and can cause some stress for some of them. The lure of computers may well trigger some students to increase their practice but also a pleasure to practice. Students want more to practice for the pleasure of handling computers.

- Time savings in the management of the course. Classes include an average of thirty students. Evaluation may well take a long time. To save time, the teacher can use the ICT. It is a time saving that can be reinvested to students benefit.

- The immediate knowledge of the result. With ICT, the knowledge of the result is immediate, and the teacher can control in real time and it obviously makes more sense for student learning. The immediate knowledge of the result will enable the teacher to intervene immediately with the student. In addition, the software can make more concrete the result of the student through charts, comparative tables etc.

- Make the student responsible for their learning: The student will be able to choose different strategies for growth through the use of ICT. The student will thus be in self-assessment. Teachers can adopt devolution of education strategy. It seeks to make student independent.

The use of evaluation software makes students most attentive in education by increasing their motivation, their attention, and their interest.

The study also pointed out that the effectiveness of teaching and learning always requires good interaction between teachers, students and educational tools.

Given the multitude of advantages of using these educational programs, we believe that teachers need training in their use of ICT for education, not only on terms of technical, but especially regarding the pedagogical plan.

Other information may be obtained from the address: [alinaiftime@yahoo.com](mailto:alinaiftime@yahoo.com)

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