

Attitudes and Perception of Students towards French Language in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu

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Abstract

This study examined the attitudes of students towards learning of French language in the federal polytechnic Damaturu. A total number of 50 students from ND II and HND II students from department of Office Technology and Management (OTM) constitute the sample for this study. The research adopted descriptive survey type and a self-modified questionnaire was used to found information from the students. The study also revealed that French language is not relevant to their profession this bring influence on the students' attitude to French language. The study further revealed that students doesn't read another material to improve their French language. Office Technology and Management Department should have counselling unit to encourage students in studying of French language and the significant of French language in relation to secretarial profession. The school authority may wish to take students for excursion to a certain French environment to watch and see by themselves the significant of French language.

Key words: Students; French, language; Attitude and perception.

I. Introduction

French is one of the world's major languages. It is a main or official language not just in France, but in parts of Belgium and Switzerland, in Monaco, in parts of Canada – notably but not only in Quebec – as well as being widely spoken in north and west Africa, Lebanon, and parts of south-east Asia, particularly in former French colonies. It is an official or a main second language in 55 countries worldwide, and is reputed to be the foreign language which is most widely used in international communications, after English. Almost 300 million people speak French as their native language or as a second language.

French language is an international Language. According to Emordi [2013:3], French language is the 11TH most spoken language in the world. It is one of the most important romans languages, outnumbered only by Spanish and Portuguese. French language is an official language or administrative language in several communities and organisations of the world like European parliament [EP], United Nations [UN], United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], North Atlantic Treaty Organisation [NATO], World Health Organisation [WHO]. African organisations like Economic Community of West African State [ECOWAS], African Union [AU],

Until the early twentieth century, French was the language of diplomacy, and one of the two main languages of international negotiation; today it is one of the six official languages of the United Nations, and one of the two official languages, with English, of the International Postal Union, of the International Olympic Committee, the International Red Cross, and other organisations and as well as many other sub-regional organisations which Nigeria is a member of that give the language pride of place.

Nigeria, being a west African country is surrounded by a number of Francophone countries Viz Chad republic in the North-east, Benin republic in the South-west, Cameroun in the East and Niger republic in the North-west and North-east regions respectively. The Economics Community of West African State which Nigeria is a part of her 12 members state out of 16 speaks French language. In actual fact, French language is the official language of the formidable body. One of the major aims of the ECOWAS is to write and govern the economic affairs of its sixteen-member state. [Araromi 2009:5].

According to Adejo (2006) states that irrespective of the criticism melted out to the position of Abacha in making French as the second official language in Nigeria, the decision is a welcome development and it is a pointer to the fact that French has come to stay and it is a language that will serve as an instrument of unity and a tool for global partnership among nations of the world. He further states that French language is considered a blessing to Nigeria and Nigerians in general.

II. Statement of Problem

The Students in the polytechnics study French language as one of their major cause from ND I- HND II level in OTM Department. Their attitude toward the teaching and learning of the language depends on their perceived importance and benefits of French language in this era of globalization. Attitude and perception of students studying French in the polytechnic towards the teaching and learning French language has not been surveyed before, thus it is of relevance to investigate the perception and attitude of the students towards the teaching and learning of the language.

III. Research Questions

- i. What are the attitudes of students towards the learning of French language in OTM department?
- ii. What are the level of ND II and HND II student's attitude towards French language?
- iii. Are there any vital differences among the students' attitude to French language?
- iv. Does the school type i.e. (polytechnic) affect the attitude of students towards the learning of French language?

Attitude

There are a lot of definitions of attitude, Myers (2013) defines attitude as a favourable and unfavourable reaction of someone toward a certain object or someone which is shown through one's beliefs, feeling, and intended behaviour. It is also a favourable and unfavourable evaluative reaction toward something or someone.

An attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related. (Gordon, 2022)

An attitude is a dispositional readiness to respond to certain institutions, persons or objects in a consistent manner which has been learned and has become one's typical mode of response. (Frank, 2022).

An attitude denotes the total of man's inclinations and feelings, prejudice or bias, preconceived notions, ideas, fears, threats, and other any specific topic. (Thurstone, 2022)

A tendency to react favourably or unfavourably towards a designated class of stimuli, such as a national or racial group, a custom or an institution. Attitude is the manner, disposition, feeling, and position about a person or thing, tendency, or orientation, especially in mind. (Anastasi, 2022)

Maxwell O. et al (2013) suggests that four aspects of classroom persuasion should be considered in an attempt to change students' attitudes and beliefs. These aspects include;

- i. . The learners should be actively involved in the learning content.
- ii. . Students need to struggle with complex materials and reach their own conclusion.
- iii. . The classroom enrolment should be of change or novelty.
- iv. . Students should be aware of their attitudes towards language and culture.

However, the factors that influence learners' beliefs or attitude varied from researchers to researchers. The family and home background as determinants of learners' beliefs and attitudes. Dias (2000) The relative effect of the learners' individual differences such as personality on the learners' attitudes to foreign language learning. (Rifkin, 2000)

The same conclusion after he conducted a study on the relationship between the attitude of students towards corruption and their behavioural intention to corrupt in the future. The study found that there is no correlation between their attitude toward corruption and their behaviours. Though they agreed that corruption is morally bad but such perception does not lead them not to corrupt in the future. They still corrupt because everybody is doing it. (Abun, et al.2020)

Attitude has three components, they are cognitive, affective and conative or behavioural components. These three components are interrelated; one can affect others. The cognitive component of the attitude refers to the beliefs and thoughts related to the attitude object. Affective component has something to do with the feelings or emotions of the person toward the attitude object. Lastly is conative components are related to the way how a person behaves towards the attitude object.

IV. Methodology

In order to study the attitude and perceptions of students towards French language. A questionnaire was developed with 15 items designed to measure students' attitudes and perceptions towards learning of French language. A three (3) points Likert scale with agree; disagree and undecided, was used from main items. The questionnaire survey methodology was preferred because it is suitable for empirical research, the method offers greater anonymity to the informants and the data collected through the method is easily quantifiable. The questionnaire was prepared by the researcher adapting ideas from instruments of previous researchers.

The questionnaire was administered upon a sample of ND II – HND II students at Federal polytechnic Damaturu. The sample was selected randomly from circuit of ND II and HND II students. The choice of ND II and HND II students was based on the fact that they have studied in their first year of study.

V. Data Analysis and Result of Findings

The data analysis here presents the result of findings on the attitude and perception of students towards French language in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu. The summary of data analysis is obtained through research questions, 50 questionnaires were administered and all were retrieved for analysis through percentage.

TABLE 1: Distribution of respondents based on having French language in their course of study.

Having French language in their course	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Agreed	16	32%
Disagreed	32	64%
Undecided	2	4%
Total	50	100%

From the table 1 above,16 respondents that is (32%) agreed with having French language in their course of study and 32 respondents that is (64%) disagreed with the French language in their course of study while 2 respondents that is (4%) are undecided. From the table, greater percentage of the respondents disagreed with having French in their course of study.

TABLE 2: Distribution of respondents based on whether they read French language notes regularly.

Reading of French language note regularly	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Agreed	13	26%
Disagreed	32	64%
Undecided	5	10%
Total	50	100%

From table 2 above,13 respondents that is (26%) agreed with reading French notes regularly and 32 respondents that is (64%) disagreed with reading French notes regularly and 5 respondents that is (10%) are undecided. From the table, greater percentage of the respondents disagreed with reading French notes regularly.

TABLE 3: Distribution of respondents on whether they read French notes when Exams is approaching.

Reading French notes when exams are approaching.	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Agreed	16	32%
Disagreed	34	68%
Undecided	0	0%
Total	50	100%

From table 3 above, 16 respondents that is (32%) agreed with reading French notes when exams are approaching and 34 respondents that is (68%) disagreed with reading French notes when exams are approaching and 0 respondent is undecided that is (0%). From the table, greater percentage of the respondents disagreed with reading French notes when exams are approaching

TABLE 4: Distribution of respondents based on reading another material to improve their French language.

Reading another material to improve French language.	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Agreed	15	30%
Disagreed	33	66%
Undecided	2	4%
Total	50	100%

From table 4 above, 15 respondents that is (30%) agreed with reading another material to improve their French and 33 respondents that is (66%) disagreed with reading another material to improve their French while 2 respondents that is (4%) are undecided. From the table, greater percentage of the respondents disagreed with reading another material to improve their French.

TABLE 5: Distribution of respondents based on learning French language is a waste of time and money.

Learning French language is a waste of time and money	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Agreed	22	44%
Disagreed	23	46%
Undecided	5	10%
Total	50	100%

From table 5 above, 22 respondents that is (44%) agreed with learning French language is a waste of time and money and 23 respondents that is (46%) disagreed with learning French language is a waste of time and money while 5 respondents that is (10%) are undecided. From the table, greater percentage of the respondents disagreed with learning French language is a waste of time and money.

TABLE 6: Distribution of respondents based on reading French language notes to pass exams.

Reading French language notes to pass exams	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Agreed	32	64%
Disagreed	17	34%
Undecided	1	2%
Total	50	100%

From table 6 above, 32 respondents that is (64%) agreed with reading French language notes to pass exams and 17 respondents that is (34%) disagreed with reading French language notes to pass exams while 1

respondent that is (2%) is undecided. From the table, greater percentage of the respondents agreed with reading French language notes to pass exams.

TABLE 7: Distribution of respondents based on listening to French media stations at their leisure time.

Listening to French media stations	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Agreed	12	24%
Disagreed	33	66%
Undecided	5	10%
Total	50	100%

From table 7 above, 12 respondents that is (24%) agreed with Listening to French media stations and 33 respondents that is (66%) disagreed with Listening to French media stations while 5 respondents that is (10%) are undecided. From the table, greater percentage of the respondents disagreed with listening to French media stations.

TABLE 8: Distribution of respondents based on liking to speak French fluently.

Liking to speak French fluently	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Agreed	22	44%
Disagreed	24	48%
Undecided	4	8%
Total	50	100%

From table 8 above, 22 respondents that is (44%) agreed with liking to speak French fluently and 24 respondents that is (48%) disagreed with liking to speak French fluently while 4 respondents that is (8%) are undecided. From the table, greater percentage of the respondents disagreed with liking to speak French fluently.

TABLE 9: Distribution of respondents based on practicing the acquired knowledge in French language.

Practicing the acquired knowledge of French language	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Agreed	23	46%
Disagreed	27	54%
Undecided	0	0%
Total	50	100%

From table 9 above, 23 respondents that is (46%) agreed with practicing the acquired knowledge of French language and 27 respondents that is (54%) disagreed with practicing the acquired knowledge of French language and 0 respondent is undecided that is (0%). From the table, greater percentage of the respondents disagreed with practicing the acquired knowledge of French language.

TABLE 10: Distribution of respondents based on feeling comfortable if it is time to learn French.

Feeling comfortable when it is time to learn French	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Agreed	21	42%
Disagreed	22	44%
Undecided	7	14%
Total	50	100%

From table 10 above, 21 respondents that is (42%) agreed with feeling comfortable when it is time to learn French and 22 respondents that is (44%) disagreed with feeling comfortable when it is time to learn French while 7 respondents that is (14%) are undecided. From the table, greater percentage of the respondents disagreed with feeling comfortable when it is time to learn French.

TABLE: 11 Distribution of respondents based on difficulty in understanding French when spoken in the classroom.

Difficulty in understanding French in the classroom	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Agreed	18	36%
Disagreed	31	62%
Undecided	1	2%
Total	50	100%

From table 11 above, 18 respondents that is (36%) agreed with difficulty in understanding French in the classroom and 31 respondents that is (62%) disagreed with difficulty in understanding French in the classroom while 1 respondent that is (2%) is undecided. From the table, greater percentage of the respondents disagreed with difficulty in understanding French in the classroom.

TABLE 12: Distribution of respondents based on importance of learning French to achieve ambitions.

Learning French language is significant to achieve ambitions	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Agreed	17	34%
Disagreed	25	50%
Undecided	8	16%
Total	50	100%

From table 12 above, 17 respondents that is (34%) agreed with learning French language is significant to achieve ambitions and 25 respondents that is (50%) disagreed with learning French language is significant to achieve ambitions while 8 respondents that is (16%) are undecided. From the table, greater percentage of the respondents disagreed with learning French language is significant to achieve ambitions.

TABLE 13: Distribution of respondents based on improvement of French vocabulary.

Improvement of French vocabulary	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Agreed	32	64%
Disagreed	17	34%
Undecided	1	2%
Total	50	100%

From table 13 above, 32 respondents that is (64%) agreed with improvement of French vocabulary and 17 respondents that is (34%) disagreed with improvement of French vocabulary while 1 respondent that is (2%) is undecided. From the table, greater percentage of the respondents agreed with improvement of French vocabulary.

TABLE 14: Distribution of respondents based on French language is difficult to learn.

French language is difficult to learn	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Agreed	25	50%
Disagreed	24	48%
Undecided	1	2%
Total	50	100%

From table 14 above, 25 respondents that is (50%) agreed with French language is difficult to learn and 24 respondents that is (48%) disagreed with French language is difficult to learn while 1 respondent that is (2%) is undecided. From the table, greater percentage of the respondents agreed with French language is difficult to learn.

TABLE 15: Distribution of respondents based on French language needs less effort to learn than other subjects difficult.

French language needs less effort to learn than other subjects	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Agreed	16	32%
Disagreed	31	62%
Undecided	3	6%
Total	50	100%

From table 15 above, 16 respondents (32%) agreed with French language needs less effort to learn than other subjects and 31 respondents (62%) disagreed with French language needs less effort to learn than other subjects while 3 respondents that is (6%) are undecided. From the table, greater percentage of the respondents disagreed with French language needs less effort to learn than other subjects.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Office Technology and Management Department should have counselling unit to encourage students in studying of French language. The significant of French language in relation to secretarial profession.
2. The department should have library that has French textbooks, audio and video cassette in relation to their courses.
3. French teachers should use play way and oral method of teaching within the classroom.
4. The school may wish to take students for excursion to a certain French environment to watch and see by themselves the significant of French language.
5. More awareness and strong measures can be taken by the department to influence the attitude of the students towards French language.

CONCLUSION:

The research finding reveals that majority of the students investigated are positively disagreed with French language as a course in their study. The study also revealed that French language is not relevant to their profession this bring influence on the students' attitude towards French language. French teachers should encourage students to study French language.

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