

From Virtual Cabinet to Agora-Fle, a necessary adaptation : Choices for multimedia development and tutoring activities

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Abstract

Agora-Fle is an adaptation into French as a Foreign Language of the online learning environment Virtual Cabinet, originally developed in English at Lyon 2 University by Nicolas Guichon and his team of developers (Guichon, 2006). Agora-Fle has been developed at Lille 3 University (aiming at B2-C1 level students) and belongs to the multilingual environment Cooplang which objectives are :

The development of a macro-task within an authentic scenario

The proposal of varied micro-tasks that enable the student to practice oral reception activities based on an authentic video and on two complementary audio documents
The possibility offered to the students to send their written production directly to a tutor.

These characteristics, taken from the original environment Virtual Cabinet (which is addressed to B2 students of English as a Foreign Language), are in agreement with the requirements of a self-learning context, as offered in our Language Resource Center.

Our aim is to analyze the process of multimedia development and the choices that have been necessary for a satisfactory adaptation from a language to another (more specifically from English to French) and from a specific learning environment to another (the local language centers from both universities having different manners to conceive guided self-learning).

Thus our aim is also to take into account these specificities to provide a satisfactory learning environment to the students, and to answer the following questions:

- What is the complementary role played by instructions online and by the instructions given by the tutor locally, within the context of the scenario? This role needs to be considered for future choices of multimedia development.
- How can we help the student have a balanced activity shared between oral

reception in autonomy and guided written production (the final production being handed to a tutor)?

- What kind of feedback can be provided for each step (online and at the Language Center or within the classroom?)

- What are the possible complementary activities that can be developed in addition to the ones required online for efficient language learning?

The answers to these questions will give us clues for future multimedia development. They should also indicate what are the most important steps to be followed for a satisfactory mixed learning environment, balanced between autonomous learning online and guided learning with a tutor or within the classroom.