

Project Year

2005

Project Team

Pascale De Souza, Faculty, Language Department, School of Advanced International Studies; Liana Bianchi, Student, International Studies, School of Advanced International Studies; Eric Lob, Student, International Studies, School of Advanced International Studies; Brooke Harris, Student, International Studies, School of Advanced International Studies; Andrew Carney, Student, Computer Science, Whiting School of Engineering

Project Title

French for Students of International Affairs: Creating Our Own Database of Interviews

Audience

Students enrolled in the French Program at the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS)

Pedagogical Issue

While most students enrolled in the French Program face no major difficulties with reading and writing skills, and speaking is practiced at length during class time; listening remains a challenge for some students.

Solution

This project enabled us to generate our own audio data bank with documents pertinent to students' interests and suitable for the practice of listening skills within the parameters of the French program and French proficiency exam.

Technologies Used

HTML/Web Design, Courseware (WebCT development), Digital Audio

Project Abstract

While most students enrolled in the French Program face no major difficulties with reading and writing skills, and speaking is practiced at length during class time; listening remains a challenge for some students. This project will enable us to generate our own audio data bank with documents pertinent to students' interests and suitable for the practice of Listening skills within the parameters of the French program and French proficiency exam. The graduate students working on this project will be asked to select material and topics likely to remain pertinent for at least 2 years (for example: AIDS-related issues, environmental problems, energy-related projects, enduring conflicts) Given our past expertise with working on Internet-based audio documents, preparing questionnaires for students, and drafting Listening Proficiency Exams, we anticipate this project to remain highly viable for several years. We will start evaluating the impact of the documents prepared through class work during the fall of 2005 and select one interview for the December 2005 Proficiency Exam. The project will unfold along the following lines: Three or four US students who are native or near-native speakers of French will:

1) Record a series of audio interviews of francophone speakers on various topics pertaining to the francophone world and its role in international relations today. Interviewees will include current SAIS students and faculty (a lawyer from Montreal, an Oxfam representative from Quebec City, a Belgian graduate of Louvain university, a French adjunct professor and World Bank advisor on economics, a Cameroon specialist in inter-cultural dialogue), SAIS graduates currently employed at the World Bank and other international institutions, cultural and business attachés from various francophone countries to be interviewed in their embassies. The following countries will be represented: Africa: Algeria, Morocco, Mali, Burkina-Faso, Ivory Coast, Senegal, DRC, Rwanda; Europe: France, Belgium, Switzerland; North America/Caribbean: Canada, Haiti; Middle East: Lebanon.

2) Gather additional material/information such as interviewee's picture, business card, a brief biography and full clearance of all copyrights to Johns Hopkins University.

3) Prepare a series of questions for each interview.

A video of Pascale De Souza's presentation (time=5:43) is available here:

http://mfile.akamai.com/7111/mov/streams1.nts.jhu.edu/~jhumedial/cer/tfvideos/9_french_full.mov