

Impact of watching French TV programs on learning French Language: a case study

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Abstract: This article discusses the impact of watching French TV programs on the development of French language learning. It presents an attempt to find the most relevant TV programs that students can enjoy and at the same time enhance their learning process. A survey has been conducted among the students of the Department of French Language and Culture at the Institute of Modern Languages, Dhaka University where 50 students participated in this study. This research has been conducted based on quantitative data as well as qualitative data by distributing a set of questionnaires to the participants. By analysing all collected data along with suggestions, the result shows a remarkable impact on French learners which can improve their French language skills within a short time. At the end of the article, some suggestions have been provided on how to select suitable and effective programs from different French TV channels to make the course more fruitful and more entertaining.

Keywords: *French Language, TV shows, native speakers, learning process, language-based skills, pandemic time, watch*

1. Introduction

French is considered to be a very vibrant international language just after English all over the world. It is the only important international language other than English to be spoken widely in all five continents. Nowadays, French is becoming the most significant and useful communicative tool in the world. In the time of globalization, the world is in our hands due to the immense development of science and technology which means that we are living in a global village. With just a click on our mobile or computer, it is possible to

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go to any part of this planet within a second. So there is no boundary to explore all around the world with the help of a communicative device through the French language which is considered to be the most widely spoken. Due to its importance and dynamism, day by day significantly increased its need just after the English Language. According to Google, approximately 275 million people speak the French Language in the world of which 80 million are native French speakers and the rest 190 million are secondary speakers. In the latest journal published by the Department of World Languages and Cultures, Rutgers University–Camden, USA where it is projected that French will be spoken by 750 million people in 2050 which will make it the most spoken in the world.

Learning a foreign language like French is a complicated process that requires a long time and huge effort, only because Bangladesh is a non-francophone country far away from France. So French learners are often in search of effective resources to find out some very useful materials to make the learning process easy and effective Albiladi et al., (2018). One of the latest techniques which are considered popular among French learners is watching TV programs regularly to develop their language skills and proficiency (Albiladi et al., 2018; Alluri, 2018; Bahrani & Sim, 2012; RAO, 2019; Thammineni, (2016). The present condition of learning French as a foreign language is not very difficult due to the availability of all kinds of resources on French TV channels as well as on the internet. In this way, the idea of boundaries has become less significant with huge sources of possibility through different modern sources such as TV, Radio, the internet, and social networking sites Aysu (2019). The mastery of a foreign language is one of the most significant challenges that a learner face during his/her learning time Kabooha (2016). That is why foreign language teachers are constantly looking for different ways to make the language learning process easier and more interesting for learners Cook (2013).

One of the most popular and interesting strategies in recent times is the variety of TV programs in the respective languages that learners also like enough and by using them effectively it is possible to develop perfect language skills in a short time. There is a lot of

research these days that support a variety of TV shows as an integral part of the language learning curriculum. Moreover, they have a lot of potential to play a significant role in improving all basic language skills such as reading, listening, writing, and speaking, as stated by Thammineni (2016); Alluri (2018); RAO (2019) and Albiladi et al. (2018). Thammineni (2016) has shown in his studies that watching all TV shows mainly develops listening and speaking skills. The various programs on French TV, as seen on TV, are also available on the internet, which can be followed regularly to improve both listening and speaking skills. For example, conversations in TV serials show how native-French speakers communicate verbally with each other in their real-life situations. Initially, it can be challenging to understand, but if one watches such programs regularly he/she can gradually improve language skills by learning many details of this foreign language. In addition to these programs, some other like documentaries, news bulletins, and travel shows are also very useful for improving language skills stated by Thammineni (2016).

2. Purpose of Study

Language is directly related to our daily life. Without language, nobody can move ahead and then get stuck in society. So if we want to live in a society, we must master the conventional language of that society. The present article has been undertaken by discussing with the students how to improve the learning process more practically by adopting other strategies besides language learning in the classroom. Regularly watching a variety of programs on French TV and simultaneously watching current news bulletins can make the language learning process easier, more interesting, and more eventful than most students have experienced mainly during the pandemic period.

The objective of this article is to find out how French TV programs can positively influence the language learning process with the help of some questionnaires distributed among the learners who participated in this study. According to their primary observation, such kind of students becomes more practical and tactical in

acquiring language skills in a much shorter time. In other words, the purpose of this article is to realize the importance of watching TV to accelerate the acquisition of skills as well as the language learning process. The following 6 questions were distributed among the 50 students of FLC (French Language & Culture) who have participated in this study and the findings of our research will be explored by collecting and analyzing the given data. Here the research has been started by focusing on a specific object based on the following six questions mentioned below which will be helpful to discover our main objective as the impact of French language learning by watching TV:

Question-1(a): Do you watch French TV?

1(b): if yes, mention the kind of programs.

Question-2(a): Do you find difficulties watching such programs?

2(b): if yes, mention it.

Question-3: Do you believe that it's really helpful in the learning process?

Question-4(a): Do you find any improvement in learning French by watching TV shows?

4(b): if yes, what kind of improvement?

Question-5(a): Do you notice any changes in the learners who regularly watch TV?

5(b): mention if any

Question- 6: Suggestions, if any.

3. Literature review

Lertola (2019) suggested that over the past two decades, there has been a persistent effort to integrate the audio-video system into foreign language learning. A real example of such an activity is film or TV news which is a great source of learning a new language Akhtar (2019). Thammineni (2016) has shown through his research that the development of language learning of students through the use of different types of movies in the classroom is more effective which is not usually possible through the use of syllabus-based

lesson materials. Similarly, Alluri (2018) believes that in the case of learning a foreign language, a variety of short films suitable for students in the classroom can play a helpful role in acquiring their skills. Again, Chang and Liu (2013) said in a study that audio and video elements in relevant languages help increase students' motivation. Listening is considered to be the most important language skill Gilakjani & Sabouri (2016) although it is considered that overall language proficiency means skill on four different levels - listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

But listening is the only skill through which overall mastery over a language, including enhancing other skills, can be achieved Mertuk (2019). Again Qiu (2016) in his studies suggested that films in any language are much more effective in improving listening skills in the relevant language. According to Ahmadi(2016), when a student watches a video carefully, two different perspectives are observed - first of all, whenever a person listens to something attentively, he tries to identify or understand the sentence, and second is whether the sentence can be mastered if necessary or whether it is possible to imitate later. An experimental study conducted by Ismaili (2013) showed that all students who regularly watched videos as part of the learning materials had significantly more integrated skills development than those who used only conventional learning materials in language learning courses. Another recent study done by Liando, Sahetapi, and Maru (2018), found that those who regularly watch movies improve their listening and speaking skills at the same time but surprisingly their listening skills are much better than speaking skills. Thammineni (2016) mentioned based on the results of one of her studies that listening to native speakers helps to increase the speaking skills of learners of that language, especially fluency.

4. Methodology

This survey has been conducted among the students of FLC (French Language & Culture) at the Institute of Modern Languages, University of Dhaka. The survey has been designed with 6 questions of which some are open-ended and some closed-ended. The

questionnaire has been distributed among 50 students of BA (Hons) in FLC (French Language & Culture) and their answers have also been collected along with some suggestions. All of them willingly agreed to participate in this research study by responding to the survey and also providing their suggestions. Since we are in a time of pandemic situation therefore all the questions have been sent to the participants through email and their answers have been collected through the Google survey forms. Most of the participants appreciated this study because they continued their language learning by practicing the activities mentioned in the article while staying at home. To understand the data collected in this way, it has been presented in a chart so that an overall idea can be obtained by looking at the percentage mentioned in the picture without reading the details.

5. Discussion and Analysis

5.1. Discussion and Analysis on the findings of question 1(a) & 1(b)

The chart mentioned below (i) has been prepared with the data collected from the responses to question 1(a). Chart (i) shows that a total of 93% of learners try to watch French TV programs whereas 76.7% of them watch regular basis, 10% of them prefer to watch sometimes, 4% of them on an irregular basis, 3% of them eager to watch some specific programs on Netflix and the rest of them around 7% did not take any initiative watching French TV shows. It is clear from the chart, that according to the majority of the participants approximately 76.7% watching French programs regularly on TV is an effective way to master the language.

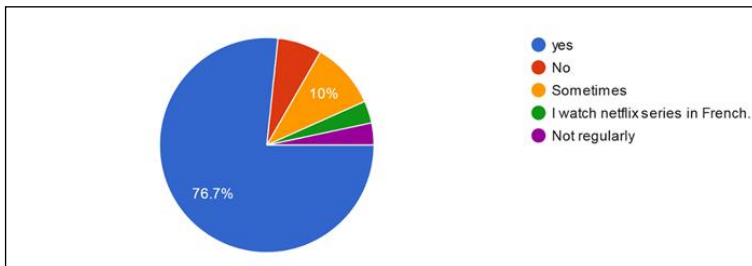


Chart No: i

Again, in response to question 1(b), they mentioned a variety of events in pursuing the French Language course with a restless mental condition because it's a completely new language for them. Those who want to get acquainted with French TV with great enthusiasm try to watch and understand different types of programs such as cartoons shows, documentaries, travel shows, fashion shows, sports shows, dramas, news bulletins, movies, and songs among which news and documentaries are a very common choice. They also mentioned separately their preferable French TV channels are as follows TV5, TV5 monde, France 24, Canal+, and France2 where they search for their favorite shows. Among the total participants of which 50% prefer to watch news bulletin, 10% cinema, 10% documentaries, and the rest for all other programs. Everyone who watches TV regularly tries to find their known words & sentences in these programs that they have already practiced in classes. According to them, it is much easier to understand in a news bulletin program than in other programs.

Many French TV channels are now more readily available than at any time in the past, mainly due to the easy availability of the Internet. The reason they spend so much time watching French TV shows with the help of the internet these days is because of the pandemic time as the classes are limited so they realized that there is no alternative to watching regular TV shows to practice the language. Having been associated with these programs for a long time now, they are trying their best to develop the language learning process on their own. In addition to saying this, they have stated some other significant points which were never in their mind before. And that is, it is not enough just to know the meaning of words or sentences in a book, but when you see something in a picture, the meaning of those things becomes more meaningful considering the situation or context. Their interest in the language is further enhanced by being able to associate with a new language outside the classroom in a short time. So we should encourage them to watch TV and engage them more strongly in the language learning process so that their course continues smoothly even during the pandemic period.

5.2. Discussion and Analysis on the findings of question: 2(a) & 2(b)

The chart mentioned below (ii) is prepared with the data obtained from the answer of question 2(a). The picture is very much clear in the chart that 66.7% of the participants found difficulties in watching French TV shows but 33.3% of them did not find any serious problem. In responses to question 2(b), participants stated that they face many problems while watching TV, one of which is that the quality of foreign channels, especially French channels is not so good compared to the popular Bengali, English and Hindi channels. The service providers mainly focus on those channels whose demand and popularity are much higher which in reality does not apply to the French TV channels in Bangladesh.

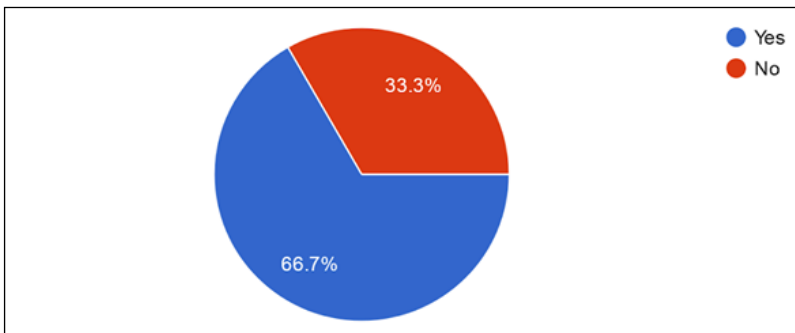


Chart No: (ii)

Again, no one is interested in French channels except a certain learner in a home. Therefore as they have little freedom, they also have fewer opportunities to watch TV for a long time. Moreover, it is very difficult to follow the way the French people speak fluently. They said that the most notable problems while watching these programs on TV are pronunciation, fast conversation, lack of vocabulary, etc. Sometimes the whole sentence is difficult to understand, but the meaning of the whole sentence can be identified by understanding a part of the sentence. They agreed that in the beginning there were many problems but gradually they are becoming more familiar with the language than before which is making their language learning process easier.

As a result, it is tedious to watch French programs for more than an hour at a time. Since the vocabulary of the new students is very low, such programs are not 100% understandable to them at the beginning but they can at least understand the context. On the other hand, 4th or 5th-year students of the French Language may understand the nuances in great detail with ease. However, they also point out that although all conversations are difficult to fully understand, what is understood is the style, fluency, and pronunciation of the French Language. It must be said that it is not possible to truly practice a foreign language using the conventional textbooks used only for the course.

5.3. Discussion and Analysis on the findings of question :3

Chart (iii) mentioned below has been prepared with the data collected from question 3. Surprisingly, all participants which means 100% of them agreed with this Question. According to them, although beginners do not understand everything, they can understand some of the words and expressions related to greetings. However, most of them are interested in following courses but later engage in TV shows as they try to find out something by watching contemporary various programs and news bulletins. Moreover, the French programs that show their way of life creates a strong sense of French in them which is impossible to comprehend by simply reading the traditional textbooks used in the classes. On the other hand, students who are a little more capable can follow these programs regularly for a certain time continuing their language practice.

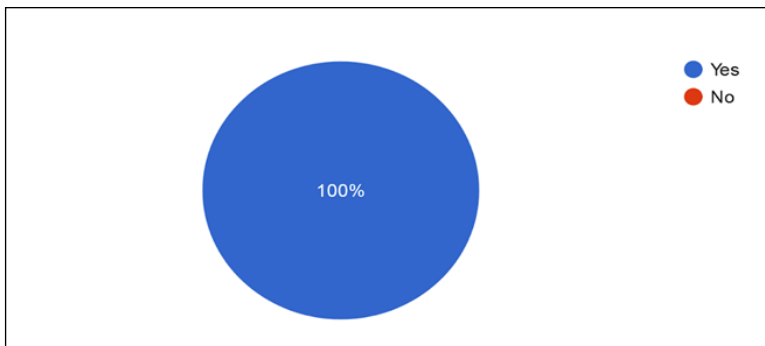


Chart No: (iii)

Through these TV programs, they can connect themselves more closely with the French Language by observing not only the listening practice but also the French-speaking posture, physical expression, fluency, and correct pronunciation which cannot be achieved just by attending the course. The most senior participants stated that if one continues to do such activities regularly, it is possible to increase his/her actual proficiency and self-confidence in a short time.

5.4. Discussion and Analysis on the findings of question: 4(a) & 4(b)

Surprisingly, all the participants agreed with question 4(a). Chart iv(a) has been prepared with the data collected from the responses to question 4(a). They have realized that language learning will be easier and more interesting if one can understand the life and culture of French people. It can only be possible by watching French TV programs.

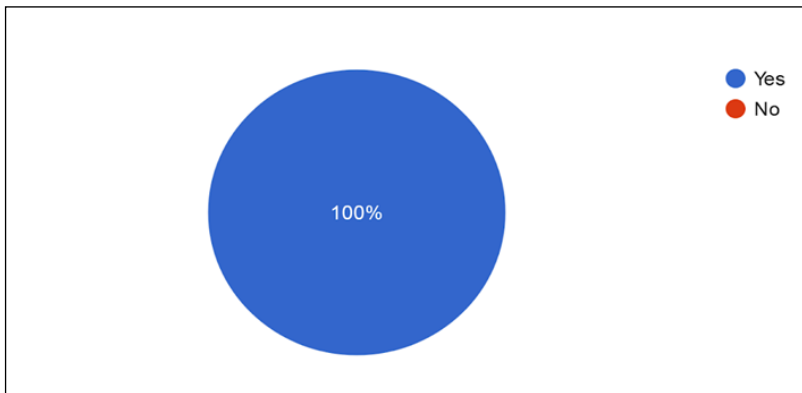


Chart No:iv(a)

Another chart iv(b) mentioned below has been prepared with the data obtained from responses to question 4(b) where the views of the participants have been reflected clearly. They have truly a positive view on different developments by watching TV programs fortunately no one disagreed with this particular question.

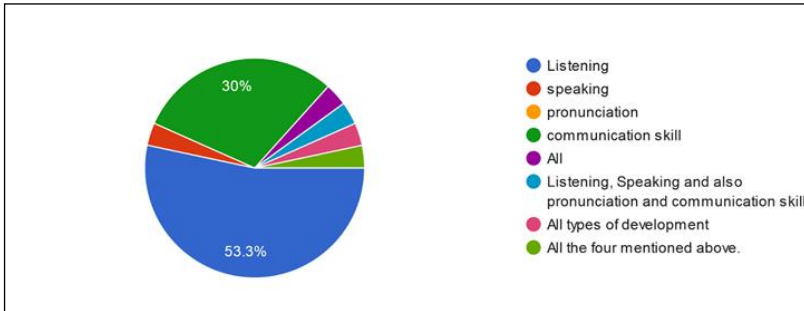


Chart No:iv(b)

For this question, the majority of them approximately 53.3 % believed in the development of listening. Again 30% considered the development of communicative skills. The remaining 16% of participants noticed a variety of developmental perspectives such as pronunciation, speaking, listening, and so on. According to them, it is very much clear that the most expected skills are listening and communication because without these two skills there is no alternative to verify instantly one's linguistic competency anywhere and in any situation.

Most of them have emphasized the importance of acquiring other language-based skills, especially body language, positional gestures, expression, self-confidence, the most common expressions of daily life, and in the end an overall ability of the latest relevant language. They believe that language is always changing with time but no change is noticed in the textbooks that are taught in the class every year. So, the kind of French Language they find by watching TV shows is very real, changeable, lively, and active. Nowadays they observed that in language learning books they don't find any dialogues or situations related to the pandemic period, but on TV there is always various information about the pandemic situation which greatly helps in developing French skills in today's reality.

5.5. Discussion and Analysis on the findings of question :5(a)

With the data obtained from responses to question 5(a), a chart (v) has been prepared below which reflects their views of them. In response to question 5(a), a large number of students stated that

90% of participants regularly watch TV. Therefore, some visible differences between them and others are easily observed. As a result of watching TV regularly, they master some special words and expressions in different situations, which are not usually found in books. As a result, they can easily manage themselves confidently when faced with such a situation. Since they have already seen such situations on TV, strong self-confidence works in them during class activities.

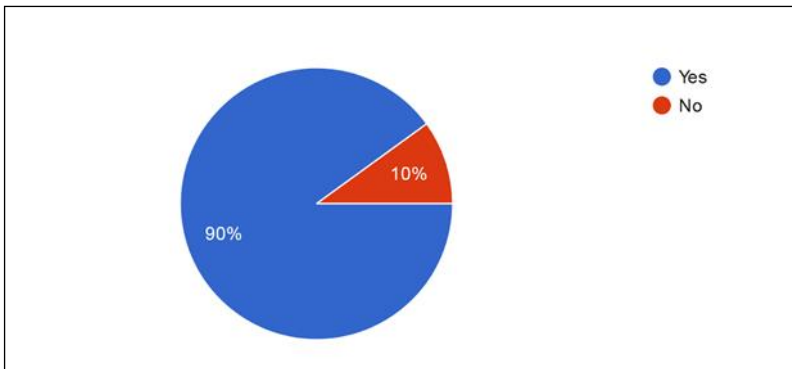


Chart No: (v)

Later when these students were faced with class activities related to these situations, their ability to explain in simple and natural language without any hesitation is remarkable. This is why it is often seen in every French class that when a student is asked a question, the other students in the class refer to one of them as a good French learner and request him/her to answer. It is later surprisingly discovered that he/she is a student who regularly watches French TV programs or listens to radio programs to improve his/her language skills. That means they have admitted that some of them have acquired good French language skills by watching TV regularly with their interest. Unfortunately, only 10% said that watching different TV programs is not the main thing but regular classes are much more useful. However, it is found that most of these students have no interest or experience in learning a foreign language. Majority of them decided to pursue higher education in French Language & Culture as they could not get admission in the subject

of their own choice through the university entrance examination. Before coming to the university, they had no plans to study French. As a result, they do not realize how important it is to develop language skills by watching various TV programs in the respective language. Moreover, they tend to follow their classmates studying in other departments of the university and accordingly considered that regular classes are sufficient. During presentations in the class, students often notice that some of their classmates have a strong fluency in French. After searching about these class performances, it is surprisingly discovered that they regularly watch French programs on TV. Finally, they recognized that French proficiency is not only enough to attend regular classes but also to watch French TV programs occasionally, even if not regularly.

5.6. Discussion and analysis of the suggestions provided in question:6

Among all the given suggestions some are presented here which are most useful and practical where the view of the participants has been reflected. They told us that during this longtime pandemic period when staying at home for a long time allowed them to discover new experiences. Some of them used the benefit of staying at home by watching regular French programs to keep practicing. It is an entirely new experience for them to watch programs on television to practice foreign languages in their place.

A majority of the participants, approximately 80%, have provided different suggestions many of which are of the same type. They said, mainly 4th year and 5th year students, watching TV programs directly or indirectly can improve their skills in different aspects of the language such as pronunciation, expression, vocabulary, and fluency which they have been able to realize due to their long-time experience in the French Language. Again, 50% of participants agreed that watching television regularly means practicing listening and talking. They also think that it is difficult to get proper results in time if the work is not done with serious attention. Not only just

watching TV but watching such programs one must take note of at least 5-10 new words every day and identify at least a few new sentences. In this way, if you practice regularly, it is possible to get an effective result which is impossible to achieve by doing regular classes. According to a large number of students, programs like news bulletins have been put on the list of top favorites because learners are already familiar with contemporary issues so it is much easier to understand watching such kinds of programs on any topic.

In addition, approximately one-third of them felt that students should choose programs that would have English subtitles. However, they added that YouTube has a lot of language - learning videos and subtitled short films that are impossible for all sorts of television programs. 20% of them feel that television programs, as well as radio programs, are of good quality, whereas the sound recording quality of radio programs is very good. But listening to a radio program requires a lot of attention to the language whereas on TV since everything is visual, one can infer a lot from the language even if one does not fully understand the language.

At the same time, many of them expressed the importance of discovering their favorite programs, otherwise, such a linguistic practice cannot be performed regularly by force. Again 60% of the students believe that it is most effective to watch TV by identifying the programs according to their skills which can be scheduled for at least half an hour daily.

They have already been able to gain a lot of experience by watching French programs on various TV channels. They understand that watching these programs irregularly is not very beneficial, but provides much more positive results by watching them on a regular basis for a period of time. They find that the TV5 World channel is highly effective because it offers a variety of programs. They also mentioned that when a particular program is chosen to watch, it should be followed consistently for an appropriate and effective outcome.

6. Suggestion & Conclusion

This article offers a detailed analysis of the opinions and suggestions of French students on the effects of television on the development of French learning. A large number of them are watching TV programs and practicing the language. The main reason for this is that French classes are now running on a limited scale and at the same time listening practice is being somewhat neglected as the semester duration has been reduced. This study strongly supports the use of television shows for learning French and the simultaneous improvement of skills. This is a study that combines qualitative research with quantitative research to present a fruitful discussion on how TV programs can positively influence language learning. And then some appropriate suggestions are given below.

Looking at the results obtained from the collected data, it is comprehended that TV programs can be considered as input to increase proficiency in French. However, these programs directly affect the development of students' language skills, especially listening and speaking skills. Based on the survey in this article and the student's answers to various questions, we suggest that by watching French TV programs they have the opportunity to observe the gestures and accents of native French that help them speak French in different situations with confidence. As a result, a huge change in their fluency can be observed when communicating in French. As they gradually realize their skill development, their interest in these programs is increasing day by day. Since such programs are visible, even if the language is not fully understood, there is no difficulty in understanding the context or situation. While watching such programs one should take note of new useful words, expressions, and sentences to use when needed. By watching such programs, they can directly learn the correct pronunciation and the way that the native speakers speak. By

watching these programs, one can understand not only the meaning of the conversation but also the differences between the culture of the French and their own culture, which helps to understand the context of a situation.

Thus, when these subjects are associated with language practice, they are strongly motivated which plays an important role in developing their language skills. These events are fun as well as entertaining. These programs are not to be considered only for language learning but also for entertainment which cannot be found in any classroom textbook. Most of them said that they may not have a friendly relationship with everyone in the class, but they can build up a close friendship by watching some of their favorite shows. This means that such students are very confident and do not hesitate to interact with other classmates. Moreover, the news bulletin is a little different from all other programs. By watching these regularly, it is possible to develop a special vocabulary of current affairs with the help of which a student can acquire the ability to speak on any topic at any time.

Finally, it can be assumed with great confidence that this paper would motivate everyone who learning French and also play a role in involving everyone in such activities. It is necessary to organize a special practice class where each student has to present a topic on a specific day in the class that they have already seen on TV. Such kind of practice works plays a strong role in keeping the students connected with the real French culture and life. Talking to them, it is assumed that those who watch TV regularly have an attitude of boldness, courage, fluency, and self-confidence which cannot be expressed in words but can be perceived. Therefore, in one sentence, it may be said that there does not seem to be any dynamic alternative source such as television programs in language learning.

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