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Using ChatGPT and Gemini to Dispel Doubts about French Pronunciation: A Case Study

Usando ChatGPT y Gemini para despejar dudas sobre la pronunciación de la lengua francesa: un estudio de caso

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ABSTRACT

Previous research findings have revealed concerns regarding the presence of inaccuracies in language models' (LMs') output and regarding the treatment of nuances in the same type of output in educational contexts. The extent to which a version of ChatGPT and a version of Gemini provided inaccurate and unnuanced information concerning the pronunciation of the target French words of this paper, namely, six and dix, was explored, and to this end three prompt types and a benchmark were used. The results of this exploratory case study showed that Gemini's responses were less inaccurate than ChatGPT's, and that Gemini covered cases that relate to the pronunciation of the parts of speech that are present in the benchmark more often. These findings led to reflections on the convenience of tackling the limitations of using LMs as if they were regular reference works that can dispel doubts about French pronunciation in French as a second language courses for adults where pronunciation is taught. It also raised reflections on the importance of comparing LMs' output concerning French pronunciation with information about French pronunciation as presented by reliable sources.

Keywords: accuracy; ChatGPT; French as a second language; Gemini; nuances; pronunciation.

RESUMEN

Existen estudios que han revelado preocupaciones acerca de la presencia de imprecisiones y acerca del tratamiento de matices en la salida de modelos de lenguaje (ML) en ámbitos educativos. En este caso se exploró la medida en la que una versión de ChatGPT y una versión de Gemini aportaron información imprecisa y sin matices en relación a la pronunciación de dos palabras francesas: six y dix. Para ello se emplearon tres tipos de instrucciones y un punto de referencia. Los resultados de este estudio de caso exploratorio mostraron que la salida de Gemini fue menos imprecisa que la de ChatGPT y que Gemini trató casos que están relacionados con la pronunciación de las categorías gramaticales que están presentes en el punto de referencia con más frecuencia. Estos resultados permitieron al autor reflexionar sobre la importancia de discutir las limitaciones del empleo de ML como si fueran obras de referencia que pueden resolver dudas sobre la pronunciación del francés en cursos de francés lengua segunda para adultos en los que se enseña dicha pronunciación. También motivaron la reflexión sobre la importancia de comparar las salidas de ML sobre la pronunciación del francés con información proveniente de fuentes fiables.

Palabras clave: precisión; ChatGPT; Francés lengua segunda; Gemini; matices; pronunciación.

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Introduction

While surveying general French as a foreign language (FFL) textbooks for adult learners that were published in France at the end of the twentieth century or at the beginning of the present century and that were meant to be used internationally, I observed the importance of the presence of pronunciation topics in contemporary FFL teaching. The significance of the role of pronunciation in the teaching of French to adult speakers of other languages is also reflected in a Canadian program of study of French as a Second Language (FSL) for adults that I shall describe briefly in the next paragraph.

The study program of FSL of the Common Core Basic Education Program for adults of the Government of Quebec consists in two sets of courses. The first set is composed of three pre-secondary French courses, whereas the French courses that belong in the first stage of secondary school are in the second group. Henceforth, I shall describe the former courses, which deal with simple predictable everyday situations that adults may be involved in while living in Quebec (Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, 2007, p. 2). In the description of these three pre-secondary French courses, it is explained that the emphasis is on speaking comprehension and interaction, as well as on pronunciation. Indeed, therein, writing is expected to support speaking (Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, 2007, p. 2). Furthermore, this stress on speaking in general and on pronunciation in particular is reflected in the descriptors of the three pre-secondary French courses: each of these descriptors contains segmental features, e.g. vowel sounds, and suprasegmental features, e.g. intonation (Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, 2007). The teaching of pronunciation in these three courses should not go unnoticed not only because of the phonetic content that is present in the above-mentioned descriptors, but also because of the linguistic background of the students who attend them.

The phonological system of the first language of the students who attend the above-mentioned pre-secondary courses may differ from that of the French language in several respects. A case in point is the contrast between the French language and the Spanish language as far as silent letters are concerned. A simple example will illustrate this case. The *Vitrine linguistique* website of the *Office québécois de la langue française* shows that if the French numeral determiner *six* is used before the consonant *m*, the second consonant of *six*, namely *x*, is silent. This site gives the following example: *Six mignons chatons* (*six cute kittens*), where *six* is pronounced /si/ before *mignons*. In Spanish, however, the second consonant of *seis* (*six*), namely *s*, in *seis maravillosos gatos* (*six marvelous cats*) is normally pronounced. Fundamental differences between the pronunciation of the French language and the pronunciation of the Spanish language like this one can be considered in courses where FSL teachers are familiar with the pronunciation of the Spanish language. Moreover, since some Spanish speakers who attend the FSL courses in question have already studied English as a second/foreign language, aspects of the pronunciation of the English language may also come into play. For this reason, I shall elaborate on this case a little further below.

The distinction between the pronunciation of the French word *six* and the pronunciation of the Spanish word *seis* (*six*) also applies to the English language: *Six* in *six marvelous cats* is pronounced /siks/, i.e. the last consonant of *six*, namely *x*, is pronounced. For this reason, it can be claimed that to a learner whose first language is Spanish, who is taking any of the pre-secondary courses that have just been mentioned, and who has already studied English, the French phonological context that I have just described may sound more mystifying than to a learner who speaks only Spanish.

Teachers who are keen on enquiring into the phonological aspects of the French language that speakers of other languages may find challenging can make use of various electronic sources to delve into the intricacies of French pronunciation in class. These sources include online dictionaries, websites, and blogs. Nonetheless, research has shown that the use of language models (LMs) has become increasingly popular in adult education in recent years. However, LMs have been reported to present instances of inaccurate information. Furthermore, it has been observed that nuances can be omitted from the information provided by LMs in their exchanges with their users. Owing to the situation that the phonological system of the French language may differ from that of some of the students' first language, e.g. Spanish, in many respects, to the possibility that LMs can now be used in addition to other electronic sources to clear up doubts concerning this system, and to the fact that these models may provide inaccurate or unnuanced information, the objective of this paper is the following: To explore the extent to which a version of two popular LMs, namely *ChatGPT* and *Gemini*, may provide unnuanced and inaccurate information concerning the complexity of the pronunciation of two French words, namely, *six* and *dix*. I will also reflect on the pedagogical implications of the results of this exploration for the teaching of pronunciation in FSL courses for adults. This will be done by prompting these two LMs using three different types of prompts, and by comparing and contrasting the information provided by these two LMs with that appearing on the *Vitrine linguistique* website. This website and the methodology will be described in the following section.

Methodology

As explained in the introduction, the aim of this paper is to find out the extent to which a version of *ChatGPT* and a version of *Gemini* may provide unnuanced and inaccurate information about the pronunciation features of two French words and to reflect on the pedagogical implications of these findings. The versions of *ChatGPT* and of *Gemini* that were inspected were free and were available on the web at the time this study was conducted. Furthermore, the use of either version did not require logging into a user's account. The browser that was used in this study was *Google Chrome*.

Even though there has been interest in the use of electronic tools to teach French (Ishibie, 2025; Korell & Albrecht, 2025), I have not found any studies that analyzed LMs' text output that intended to elucidate the nature of French pronunciation (which by no means is an indicator that those studies do not exist). Therefore, a methodology that would allow the researcher to provide relevant data had to be designed and, as a result, the following plan was thought out.

Step one: Prompt types

It was decided to conduct a series of enquiries in which the user, in this case the author, asked each LM for information about the pronunciation of the target words. After each enquiry, the browser was closed. As advanced in the introduction, three types of prompts were employed. This was done for two reasons.

The first reason stems from the following aspect of using AI. In a discussion on the impacts of transformative artificially intelligent tools, Dwivedi et al. (2023) argued that one of the challenges for industry is the notion that "the outputs from a generative AI system depend on the prompts it is given" (Dwivedi et al., 2023, Section 4. 4. 1. 11.). As a result, I have decided to use different types of prompts. Indeed, this decision was thought to bring about diverse findings concerning the range of information *ChatGPT* and *Gemini* may provide in the

process of elucidating details regarding the complexity of the pronunciation of the French language.

The second reason lies in the following experience. I have observed that the learners who attend the lessons of the above-described FSL program for adults may use different strategies to request information. These are yes-no questions such as *does the verb appeler belong in the first group of verbs?*, open-ended questions with implicit information such as *when do you double the l in the verb appeler?* (the speaker already knows the consonant *l* may be doubled in the conjugation of this verb), and open-ended instructions such as *tell us about the differences in use between the French prepositions dans and en*. Two instances of each type of strategy were formulated in this research. Indeed, the actual prompts used in the present study were:

Do native French speakers pronounce the letter x in the French word six?

Do native French speakers pronounce the letter x in the French word dix?

When is the letter x silent in the pronunciation of the French word six?

When is the letter x silent in the pronunciation of the French word dix?

Give me a detailed description of the pronunciation of the French word six.

Give me a detailed description of the pronunciation of the French word dix.

Step two: The benchmark

In order to find out the extent to which *ChatGPT* and *Gemini* may provide unnuanced and inaccurate information about the pronunciation features of both the target French words, an external source needed to be selected to act as a benchmark. In the introduction, it was explained that this exploratory study would be carried out by comparing and contrasting the information provided by a version of two LMs with that appearing in the *Vitrine linguistique* website. The reason why this website was selected is the following: It gives a detailed description of the pronunciation of the French words *six* and *dix*, and it was launched by an institution that provides linguistic tools and services in the geographical place where the above-mentioned FSL program was conceived and has been taught. This place is Quebec and the institution is the *Office québécois de la langue française*.

Step three: Itemization

Once the prompts had been formulated and the benchmark had been selected, it remained to decide what aspects of the pronunciation of the target words would be considered to delve into the accuracy and nuances of the output provided by the LMs.

The *Vitrine linguistique* site makes an extensive description of the pronunciation of the French words *six* and *dix*. Throughout this paper, I will strictly refer to this description, i.e. I shall not tackle nuances about the pronunciation of the target words that are not covered in this description. This site explains that these words can be pronounced in three different ways. These are /si/ and /di/ (the *x* is silent), /siz/ and /diz/ (the *x* is pronounced /z/), and /sis/ and /dis/ (the *x* is pronounced /s/). The choice of pronunciation will depend on the linguistic context.

If *six* or *dix* are numeral determiners and they are followed by a consonant or an *aspirated h* (*h aspiré* in French), they are pronounced /si/ or /di/. Then, in *dix bateaux* (*ten boats*), *dix* is pronounced /di/. If *six* or *dix* are followed by a vowel or a *silent h* (*h muet* in French), then they are pronounced /siz/ or /diz/. A case in point is *six animaux* (*six animals*), where *six* is

pronounced /siz/. The *Vitrine linguistique* site explains that, in all the other contexts, /sis/ and /dis/ prevail, but goes on to add that these are not exclusive. The site shows that it is the case of pronouns, nouns and ordinal adjectives.

The *Vitrine linguistique* site shows that when *dix* and *six* are pronouns, they are pronounced /dis/ and /sis/ respectively. For example, in *j'en veux six* (*I want six*), *six* is pronounced /sis/. It adds that when they are nouns, they are pronounced in the same way: In *appuyez sur le six* (*press number six*), *six* is pronounced /sis/. Nonetheless, there is an exception. In *dix pour cent* (*ten percent*) and in *six pour cent* (*six percent*), the *s* can be silent. In the case of *six*, for instance, the resulting pronunciation can be /sipursã/ or /sispursã/. When *dix* and *six* are ordinal adjectives (the *Vitrine linguistique* site says this is when they belong in a series), they can be pronounced /dis/ and /sis/ respectively. However, the *Vitrine linguistique* site shows two exceptions. *Dix* and *six* can be pronounced /di/ and /si/ respectively before a month starting with a consonant or /diz/ and /siz/ respectively before a month starting with a vowel. Therefore, in *le dix mai* (*May 10*), *dix* can be pronounced /di/ or /dis/, and, in *le six avril* (*April 6*), *six* can be pronounced /sis/ or /siz/.

Based on the description that was provided by the *Vitrine linguistique*, nine items were kept to compare and contrast the *Vitrine Linguistique's* data and the LMs' output and, as a result, to examine the extent to which the LMs would provide unnuanced and inaccurate information about the pronunciation features of the target French words. These items were: determiners followed by a consonant, determiners followed by a vowel, determiners followed by an aspirated *h* or a silent *h*, pronouns, nouns in general, nouns followed by *pour cent*, ordinal adjectives in general, ordinal adjectives followed by a month starting with a consonant and ordinal adjectives followed by a month starting with a vowel.

The findings obtained from this exploration made it possible to reflect on the pedagogical implications of using LMs as if they were regular reference works when teaching the pronunciation of the French language in FSL courses addressed to adults in the program described above or in similar FSL programs.

Limitations

The present paper reveals a series of limitations. The main limitation resides in the small size of its data. Indeed, the pronunciation of two words was discussed, and, in total, twelve exchanges were carried out. On the other hand, since the nature of this paper is reflective, this small exploratory case study made it possible to delve into the problems of using LMs as reference works when teaching and learning the pronunciation of the French language. Nonetheless, it is herein that lies another limitation: in this study, LMs were regarded as reference works, i.e. as static entities that provide uniform content in response to the same prompt. This contradicts the possibility that in different sessions LMs' output may respond to the same prompt differently. However, it is because this study is the author's first attempt at experimenting on the use of LMs to elucidate the main points of the pronunciation of the target words, that it has been regarded, aside from its reflective nature, as an exploratory case study. The fact that the findings of this case study agreed with previous research findings concerning LMs' output (as shown in the next section) helped to reduce the extent of the second limitation.

It could also be argued that, owing to the pedagogical dimension of this paper, the absence of FSL learners' views on the use of LMs can be another limitation. Nevertheless, it has to be considered that, as explained in the introduction, the author's intention was to explore the extent to which a version of *ChatGPT* and a version of *Gemini* may provide unnuanced and inaccurate information concerning the complexity of the pronunciation of the target French

words and to reflect on the pedagogical implications of this exploration. Consequently, these reflections are expected to consider issues that should come in useful in the design of studies that are to evaluate FSL learners' use of LMs in the future.

Results

The features of the pronunciation of *dix* and *six* that were covered by *Vitrine Linguistique* and also by the target LMs will be displayed in the tables that follow. In so doing, the following abbreviations will be used. *C* means *consonant*, *V* means *vowel*, *hA* means *aspirated h*, *Sh* means *silent h*, *Adj.* means *adjective*, *C*Month means *month starting with a consonant*, *V*Month means *month starting with a vowel*, *x* means *there is a reference to this case*, *xH* means *there is a reference to this case but with hallucinations*. While discussing *ChatGPT*, Rane et al. (2024) explained that the term *hallucination* refers to inaccuracies or confidently incorrect responses (p. 76).

Prompt type one

Do native French speakers pronounce the letter x in the French word *six*?

Do native French speakers pronounce the letter x in the French word *dix*?

Table 1. Information stemming from prompt type one.

Case	Six		Dix	
	ChatGPT	Gemini	ChatGPT	Gemini
Determiner followed by C	x	x		x
Determiner followed by V	x	x		x
Determiner followed by hA or Sh	x	x		x
Pronoun	xH	x		x
Nouns in general	xH	x		x
Noun + pour cent				
Ordinal Adjs in general	xH	x		x
Ordinal Adj + CMonth				
Ordinal Adj + VMonth				

Neither *ChatGPT* nor *Gemini* used the parts of speech tackled by *Vitrine linguistique*; nor did they add any other. However, they presented cases that can fit in *Vitrine linguistique*'s parts of speech. For example, *Gemini* said that the *x* of *six* and *dix* is pronounced /s/ when these words are alone or at the end of sentences. As regards the latter, according to *Vitrine linguistique*'s parts of speech, this can be the case of pronouns (*j'en veux six*; *I want six*), nouns (*le numéro dix*; *number ten*) or ordinal adjectives (*l'activité six*; *activity six*).

The following omission is also worth mentioning. Both *ChatGPT* and *Gemini* mentioned the *silent h*, but neither mentioned the *aspirated h* in their explanations. In addition, there was an inaccuracy in the discussion of *six* by *ChatGPT*. It said that when *six* stands alone, it is pronounced /sis/. However, an example where *six* was not standing alone was given to illustrate this case: *J'ai six pommes* (*I have six apples*). As regards the discussion of *dix*, *ChatGPT*

indicated it meant *ten* and referred to French, which showed it was referring to the target word. Nonetheless, at that point it displayed a series of significant hallucinations. First, it was reported that the pronunciation of *dix* per se was /di/. Second, it was claimed that “the ‘x’ in French often acts as a silent letter at the end of words, particularly when it follows a vowel or when the word is in its singular form” (*ChatGPT*). It was then argued that there is a plural form of *dix*, which is pronounced /deks/.

Prompt type two

When is the letter x silent in the pronunciation of the French word six?

When is the letter x silent in the pronunciation of the French word dix?

Table 2. Information stemming from prompt type two

Case	Six		Dix	
	ChatGPT	Gemini	ChatGPT	Gemini
Determiner followed by C	x	x		x
Determiner followed by V	x	x		x
Determiner followed by hA or Sh	x	x		x
Pronoun	xH	xH		xH
Nouns in general	xH	xH		xH
Noun + pour cent				
Ordinal Adjs in general	xH	xH		xH
Ordinal Adj + CMonth				
Ordinal Adj + VMonth				

As in the previous section, there were no references to the parts of speech appearing in the table, but cases that can belong in those parts were presented. Similarly, there were references to the *silent h*, whereas there was no mention of the *aspirated h*. *ChatGPT* explained that when *six* stands alone, it is pronounced /sis/, but, again, gave an example where *six* was not standing alone to illustrate this case: *Il a six chats* (*He has six cats*). As regards the description of the pronunciation of *dix* by *ChatGPT*, there were no references to the contexts presented by *Vitrine linguistique*. Furthermore, a hallucination that is similar to the one that was identified in *ChatGPT*'s description of *dix* in the previous section was observed: A distinction between the singular form and the plural form of *dix*. *ChatGPT* indicated that the former is /dee/ and the latter is /dees/. Nonetheless, *ChatGPT*'s description at this point was very interesting because it showed what it meant by the plural form of *dix* by means of the following example: *Dix-sept* (*seventeen*).

An important difference from Table 1 will be highlighted. Table 2 shows that there are hallucinations in *Gemini* too. *Gemini* argued that the letter *x* remains silent when *dix* is at the end of a sentence, and that “just saying ‘dix’ on its own would sound like ‘dee’” (*Gemini*). Finally, as against Table 1, there was a similar inaccuracy in *Gemini*'s description of *six*. Indeed, it said that the letter *x* is silent at the end of a sentence or phrase.

Prompt type three

Give me a detailed description of the pronunciation of the French word six.

Give me a detailed description of the pronunciation of the French word dix.

Table 3. Information stemming from prompt type three.

Case	Six		Dix	
	ChatGPT	Gemini	ChatGPT	Gemini
Determiner followed by C		x	xH	x
Determiner followed by V		x	x	x
Determiner followed by hA or Sh		x	x	x
Pronoun		x	x	x
Nouns in general		x	x	x
Noun + pour cent				
Ordinal Adjs in general		x	x	x
Ordinal Adj + CMonth				
Ordinal Adj + VMonth				

As in the last two sections, there were no references to the parts of speech appearing in the table, but cases that can belong in those parts were presented.

Gemini showed no hallucinations and now referred to both *aspirated h* and *silent h*. Indeed, it provided a detailed description of the pronunciation of *dix* and *six* in the following contexts: When said alone or at the end of a sentence, before a word beginning with a consonant or an *aspirated h*, and before a word beginning with a vowel or a *silent h*.

ChatGPT, by contrast, claimed that the pronunciation of *six* is /sis/, but gave no clues about when this occurs. It described the pronunciation of each letter, and hallucinated in the key notes when it discussed the intonation of this monosyllabic word, namely *six*, without providing any context. Indeed, it argued that “like most French words, the intonation tends to be a little more even, without the dramatic rise and fall that can characterize English pronunciation” (*ChatGPT*). In the description of *dix*, however, *ChatGPT* described the three cases tackled by *Gemini*, but made no reference to the *aspirated h*. Moreover, there was one instance of hallucination when it was claimed that the pronunciation of *dix* is /dis/ before a consonant, and the example *dix pommes (ten apples)* was given.

The next section will discuss these findings.

Discussion

In a study “on students’ perceptions, including their acceptance and use of AI chatbots, particularly ChatGPT versus Gemini in the context of Egyptian higher education” (Sobaih & Abu Elnasr, 2025, p. 129), the authors found out that during the in-depth interviews all participants found both *ChatGPT* and *Gemini* valuable. Nonetheless, the majority not only found *Gemini* more valuable and more accurate in text generation but also found it gave up-to-date information (Sobaih & Abu Elnasr, 2025, p. 135). In a comparative analysis of *Gemini*

and *ChatGPT*, Rane et al. (2024) explained that *Gemini* accessed more up-to-date information, whereas the knowledge cutoff of *ChatGPT* was around late 2021 (p. 74). The authors also asserted that “*Gemini* holds a significant edge in delivering factual information owing to its seamless integration with Google Search” (Rane et al., 2024, p. 71). This edge was reflected in the present study: In the three prompt types, *Gemini* described cases that are related to the pronunciation of *six* and *dix* and that can apply to the parts of speech appearing in *Vitrine linguistique*, whereas *ChatGPT*, by contrast, described these types of cases only in relation to the pronunciation of *dix* in prompt type three, and the pronunciation of *six* in prompt types one and two. Indeed, this reveals that *Gemini* covered more ground than *ChatGPT* when dealing with the target pronunciation of *six* and *dix*.

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that, as explained in the *Methodology* section, the information LMs present can also depend on the users’ prompts, hence the decision to use three different prompt types while conversing with the target LMs in this paper. I believe that using different prompts can also be an interesting strategy to enquire into a LM’s ability to convey nuances in a given field. Rane et al. (2024) argued that there are discrepancies in the way *ChatGPT* and *Gemini* deal with linguistic nuances. The authors went on to add that “*Gemini* occasionally surpasses *ChatGPT* in deciphering intricate prompts” and that the fact that *ChatGPT* may falter suggested “*Gemini* possesses a slight advantage in nuanced language parsing, especially in dense, protracted exchanges” (Rane et al., 2024, p. 72). In the present study, even though three different prompt types were employed, neither of the LMs dealt with the following cases: Nouns followed by *pour cent* or ordinal adjectives followed by months starting either with a consonant or a vowel. Indeed, it is worth noting that the description given by *Vitrine linguistique* provides more examples, and is more complete than any of the LMs’ answers in terms of nuances. For example, *Vitrine linguistique* refers to *aspirated h*, whereas only *Gemini* made reference to this item, and only in prompt type three. In addition, *Vitrine linguistique* also categorizes its information according to the parts of speech *six* and *dix* belong to, which gives a more comprehensive view of the complexity of the pronunciation of these two words than the mere fact that their pronunciation may vary depending on whether they are followed by a consonant or a vowel. However, it can be highlighted that *Gemini* was superior to *ChatGPT* where nuances were concerned since *Gemini* depicted different cases of the pronunciation of *six* and *dix* in the three prompt types whereas *ChatGPT* failed to do so.

In addition, a relationship between the presence of nuances in LMs’ prompts and the accuracy of the information presented by these models has been established. Limna et al. (2023) discussed a sample of higher education teachers’ and students’ views on the use of *ChatGPT*. Limna et al. (2023) presented several interesting findings. In their study, it was reported that errors in the data used to train *ChatGPT* could result in inaccurate responses. It was also reported that *ChatGPT*’s responses stemmed from pre-programmed algorithms that could hinder these responses from explaining the nuances of a question or topic (Limna et al., 2023, p. 69). In my study, inaccuracies were observed in the shape of hallucinations in both *ChatGPT*’s and *Gemini*’s output.

So far, it can be claimed that the present discussion has certainly raised interesting pedagogical notions that can apply to the use of digital technology in FSL teaching to adults. Indeed, since the advent of freely available LMs, the discussion of the benefits and challenges of their use in teaching contexts has gathered momentum. To illustrate this point, the following study may be cited. Sullivan et al.’s (2023) use of content analysis to inspect 100 media articles about *ChatGPT*’s disruption in higher education showed almost “half of all articles (n=45) contained some discussion of how *ChatGPT* could be incorporated into teaching” (p. 35). Interest in this topic has also been reflected in language teaching in particular.

Hong's (2023) discussion on the impact of *ChatGPT* on foreign language teaching and learning is a case in point. Hong (2023) argued that "as the technology matures, it can be anticipated that novel investigations will arise pertaining to the capacity of the technology and its impact" (p. 42). It can be argued that the same situation holds true for other LMs. As shown below, the concern about LMs' capacity to tackle nuances in language teaching has been one of the interests of research into these models. A possible explanation for this is the following. In an evaluation of the reliability of *ChatGPT* and *Google's Bard* "in understanding and rating the difficulty or complexity of topics for writing assessment" (Khademi, 2023, p. 76), Khademi (2023) explained that this evaluation supports the hypothesis that the human workforce outperforms machines in tasks such as translation and language comprehension because of semantic and pragmatic nuances (p. 79).

In a study on "the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools on students' independent writing skills, specifically in preparing for the IELTS test in Iran" (Karimi & Qadir, 2025, p. 143), for instance, the following observations were made. Both students and educators highlighted "the disadvantages of AI tools in grasping the context and finer details associated with various forms of writing" (Karimi & Qadir, 2025, p. 149). Evidently, finer details of different forms of writing should convey the particularities of each form and, as a result, potential slight differences between them. This concern about the treatment of detailed information was also present when Karimi and Qadir (2025) found out that AI's feedback was regarded "as bland and lacking recognition of subtle context" (p. 150). It can be claimed that the identification of the lack of subtleties or nuances in artificial intelligence tools should be an important part of language programs aimed at adults.

When discussing the use of translation to teach reading comprehension of English text, for instance, Lombardo and Pérez Albizú (2023) proposed an activity in which the students compared their translations with the one generated by *Google Translate*. The authors argued that this would enable the learners to be familiar with the limitations of automatic translations and to analyze their precision critically (Lombardo & Pérez Albizú, 2023, p. 92). The findings of my paper also lead to the importance of identifying the lack of subtleties or nuances in artificial intelligence tools. This is because the LMs have not been able to grasp some of the finer details (Karimi & Qadir, 2025, p. 149) of the pronunciation of the French words *six* and *dix*. Three cases in point were nouns followed by *pour cent*, ordinal adjectives followed by a month starting with a consonant and ordinal adjectives followed by a month starting with a vowel. As a result, it will be suggested that the limitations of using LMs as reference works to learn the nuances of French pronunciation be tackled in FSL courses for adults, and that learners be trained to look at LMs' output concerning this pronunciation with a critical eye. To this end, they should be trained to use a range of reliable electronic sources such as specialized websites and blogs. Indeed, the comparison of the content of reliable sources with LMs' output may allow FSL learners to assess the accuracy of the latter. Other research has come to similar conclusions, though not necessarily in the field of FSL.

Torun and Ozer Sanal (2025), for instance, looked into university students' and academicians' opinions about the use of generative artificial intelligence in higher education. Torun and Ozer Sanal (2025) observed that the students participating in their study argued for having access to a wider range of sources with a view to obtaining accurate and detailed results when searching for information (p. 76). An important aspect of nuances, it can be claimed, is accuracy. This is because unnuanced information may result in inaccuracies. Let us go back to one of the pronunciation cases cited above. When *six* is a noun, it is pronounced /sis/. However, if the learners are not aware of the exception where *six* can be pronounced /sis/ or /si/, namely

in *six pour cent*, they may come to the conclusion that the pronunciation /si/ in this context is wrong, i.e. they may arrive at an inaccurate conclusion.

The issue of the accuracy of LMs' output has also been approached in terms of misinformation in connection with the use of artificial intelligence in adult education. *ChatGPT*, for instance, has been reported to have problems with the generation of misinformation (Firat, 2023, p. 59). In Firat's (2023) investigation into scholars' and PhD students' perceptions of the use of *ChatGPT*, some participants pointed out the importance of evaluating the content generated by artificial intelligence critically (p. 60). To this end and in order to overcome the potential presence of inaccurate information in *ChatGPT's* information processing, it has been suggested that this LM's output should be fact-checked by students and that higher education should tackle the issue of evaluating artificial intelligence generated content critically (Rasul et al., 2023, p. 48). Indeed, in this particular case, the comparison between the information provided by the target LMs and that present in *Vitrine linguistique* made it possible to inspect whether the output of the former was accurate, nuanced and reliable.

Conclusions

In this study, *Gemini* covered cases that are related to those present in *Vitrine linguistique's* description of the pronunciation of *six* and the pronunciation of *dix* more often than *ChatGPT*. In addition, *Gemini's* responses were less inaccurate than *ChatGPT's*. Nonetheless, one has to be careful about the responses that *Gemini* outputs since therein hallucinations were observed in prompt type two. This agrees with previous literature that highlighted the importance of considering accuracy and nuances in LMs' output.

At the beginning of this paper, a Canadian FSL program that is strongly oriented towards the teaching of speaking skills and pronunciation was described. Despite the small size of this study and despite its limitations, the following conclusions can be made.

Owing to the hallucinations that were present in the LMs' output and the range of cases covered by the LMs, it would be beneficial to have a discussion about the limitations of using LMs as reference works while delving into the complexities of the pronunciation of French in the FSL program that was alluded to above or in other FSL programs for adults that rely heavily on teaching French pronunciation. It would also be useful to fact-check not only *ChatGPT's* output (Rasul et al., 2023), but also *Gemini's* output about pronunciation with reliable and extensive pronunciation sources in the same programs.

As explained, one of the limitations of this paper is the small size of its data. At the same time, owing to this limitation, a few future research possibilities open up. Two cases in point are the use of the same research procedure in the investigation into LMs' responses to questions regarding other pronunciation items and the use of this research procedure in the investigation into LMs' responses to questions regarding other language areas that learners of FSL can also find challenging such as French syntax. The study of FSL learners' views on the use of LMs to dispel doubts about French pronunciation and about other aspects of the French language may also be considered.

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