



HOW TO INTERGRATE THE AFFECTIVE DIMENSION IN THE TEACHING OF FRENCH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN KENYA

Dr. Auma Rose

Lecturer- French,
Department of Language and Literature
Education,
Masinde Muliro University of Science and
Technology,
Kakamega,
Kenya.

Dr. Joyce Kasili

Lecturer- French,
Department of Language and Literature
Education,
Masinde Muliro University of Science and
Technology,
Kakamega,
Kenya.

Ms. Clara Bulili

Lecturer- French,
Department of French and
other Foreign Languages,
Maseno University,
Maseno, Kenya

ABSTRACT

Learning a language can be a complicated affair, particularly when the language is foreign and learning takes place in an exolingual context. The teacher of a foreign language in a multilingual context such as Kenya has to choose his teaching/learning strategies and activities properly in order to motivate the learner. He/she must also ensure a conducive environment that encourages learning through his attitude and behavior. Another necessary ingredient for achieving this is affectivity, an important component of the teaching/learning process. Following our practice as teachers of languages in general and of that of French in particular, in the mentioned environment, we have observed that our colleague teachers encounter difficulties in the pursuit of interest in the subject area on the part of the learners. How does the teacher integrate affectivity into the learning/teaching of French as a foreign language as to get them eager to learn? This article attempts to answer this question by first, defining the term “affectivity,” and then exploring the different ways in which the teacher can integrate affectivity into the teaching of French as a foreign language.

KEYWORDS: *Didactics, French Foreign Language, Affectivity, Motivation*

INTRODUCTION

Learning of a foreign language calls for creativity and innovation on the part of the teacher to make his/her activity a success. Creativity here means adopting strategies that are likely to encourage the learners to participate in their own learning by actively interacting with their teacher and the pedagogical content. In this

paper, we try to propose ways in which a teacher can have positive impact on learning in order for him/her to attain his/her objectives besides causing the learner to communicate effectively in the target language.

1. The term “affectivity”

The Dictionary of Didactics of French as a Foreign and Second Language (2003) defines



affectivity as the set of feelings (hatred, respect, pleasure, etc.) that have an impact on learning. The affective dimension is present in all human relationships: teacher and learners, between learners, learners and language, learner and didactic material, etc. Affectivity, which is a powerful source of energy and motivation, enables access to knowledge. According to Larousse (2008), affectivity is a set of affective phenomena (emotions, feelings, passions, etc.).

In a teaching / learning situation, two agents, the learners on the one hand and the teacher on the other, interact for the success of the process. In other words, learning does not take place effectively without the involvement of both class groups. The student makes the decision to learn and the teacher, for his part, manages this learning. Learners should contribute to this project by cooperating and being actively involved in their own learning. This special relationship between teacher and learner is important for the quality of learning achieved by the learner.

The learner has his own emotions and the physiological manifestations that arise from them; manifestations which influence his activities and those of the teachers. Le petit Robert (Rey, 2002) defines emotion as a "pleasant or unpleasant sensation". This means that the emotional state can be positive or negative. In school, emotion can make learning easier or worse. According to Piccardo and Puozzo, (2003), the teacher should create an atmosphere in the classroom that promotes a positive emotional state in learners to facilitate learning. The teacher must find ways to integrate the affective dimension into the teaching of the foreign language.

2. How can the teacher promote a positive emotional state in learners, in order to improve the quality of performance in the classroom?

To answer this question, we refer to the work of psychologists who have been interested in the interaction of class factors during learning. These appeal to individual factors in the learner but also to those in his environment. This is the affective domain in learning. The psychologists found that a successful education is concerned with developing not only the cognitive abilities of the learner, but also their personality. There is therefore need to take into account affectivity as an equally important component of the teaching /learning process, also decisively influencing as the cognitive component on this process. (Rogers, 1975).

Apart from the development of the cognitive capacities of the learner that we are teaching, other factors in the learner's environment must also be taken into account to make the learning process effective. This vision introduces a new look at the practices of the teacher, those which must stimulate the emotional conditions of the learner for the learning to be successful.

Stevick (1980) states that, "Success (in learning foreign languages) depends less on materials, techniques and linguistic analysis than on what happens in and between people during the class." It therefore follows that success depends less on "things" than on "people". Some of the factors that determine this success are the teacher himself and the role he plays in the learning process, learner values, learner /teacher attitude, varying learner needs, accepting learner errors as learning tools of learning and creating a sense of belonging in the learner.

2.1 The role of the teacher

Before the introduction of the competency based curriculum (CBC) in Kenya in 2017, learners of French as a foreign language in Kenya generally encountered this language when they entered the first year of secondary school. Currently, foreign language learning starts in grade four, a level in the second cycle of primary education (Kenya Institute of Primary Development, 2017). How does one integrate the affective dimension into teaching French as a foreign language in a multilingual context as is the case in Kenya?

Foreign or second language learners often suffer from anxiety: fear of the unknown, frustration, tension and insecurity. Anxiety can be reduced through the teacher's attitude and the climate that the teacher creates in the classroom. He must do everything to promote the self-esteem and self-confidence of the learners. The Kenyan learner of French as a foreign language, who learns the language in an exo-lingual environment, also suffers from this anxiety. The teacher is therefore called upon to do everything possible to ensure the integration of an emotional dimension in teaching. This requires structured and planned strategies. The teacher must put in place pedagogy characterized by calm, create a friendly and pleasant atmosphere to reduce tension in the language class. He must lead the learner to bring out positive emotions, which facilitate language learning.

Meirieu (2014) suggests that creating the pleasure of learning tends to lift the negative emotions of incapacity (anxiety, fear, etc.) on the part of the learners. According to this author, the two agents in the classroom - the teacher and the learner, bring about the



pleasure of learning. He cites the attempts that the learner can make in his environment, the feeling that the learner has after having accessed something that comes from him and which escapes him at the same time and the encounter between the learner's intelligence, his most intimate questions, the intelligibility of the world as well as the universal answers. He asserts that in order for learners to be able to question themselves and to make attempts, the intervention of the mediator, here, the teacher is necessary.

2.2 Learner values and teacher expectations

The value students place on a given subject as well as the expectations teachers have of their students have a significant impact on the learning of a given subject. Giordan and Saltet (2011) indicate that the pleasure of knowing comes from the environmental and personal parameters. They support their argument by letting the learners express themselves as follows:

J'ai le plaisir d'apprendre quand: « je sens que mon enseignant est motivé, je me sens appréciée, j'ai confiance en la situation et en mes enseignants, j'ai confiance dans les compétences de mes enseignants, je bénéficie d'un environnement favorable, on m'offre un environnement pour apprendre qui me stimule, je me sens soutenu, je me sens respecté, écouté et quand je me sens accompagné pour choisir

I have the pleasure of learning when: I feel that my teacher is motivated, I feel appreciated, I have confidence in the situation and in my teachers, I have confidence in the skills of my teachers, I benefit from a favorable environment, I am offered a learning environment that stimulates me, I feel supported, I feel respected, listened to and when I feel supported to choose (Our translation)

Je suis bien motivé quand: j'ai un besoin, un ressenti, une attente, une bonne estime de moi, j'ai confiance en moi, j'ai confiance en mes capacités, j'y trouve un plus, un sens, un plaisir, je me sens interpellé, questionné, je me sens autonome, je sais appréhender mes peurs, mes angoisses et quand j'ai un objectif, un projet.

I'm well motivated when: I have a need, a feeling, an expectation, I have self-esteem, I

have confidence in myself, I have confidence in my abilities, I find a plus in it, a meaning, a pleasure, I feel challenged, questioned, I feel independent, I know how to apprehend my fears, my anxieties and when I have an objective, a project (Our translation)

From these citations above, it is evident that the learner experiences many emotions during the learning process. Learning is easier when the teacher is motivated in his task. His motivation will show during his practice in the classroom and spread to the learners who will in turn also feel motivated. The learner who feels appreciated will be motivated during his learning. The appreciative teacher will encourage learners' effort and make them desire to learn. The learners will feel supported and accompanied in their learning. The motivated teacher will create a favorable environment for learning and learners will consequently gain confidence in the skills of their teachers. Therefore, it is the teacher who conditions the thoughts of the learner.

2.3 Learner/teacher attitude towards the foreign language

What attitude does the learner/teacher have towards the language and the native speakers of this language? The response to this question lies on how the class-group view the language being learnt/taught. The attitude of the learner towards the foreign language is plays an important role in the success of the learning. Secord and Backman (1964) distinguish three components of attitude towards things: the affective component, relating to feelings towards an object or a valuation of these feelings; the conductive component, which has to do with behavior towards the object; and the cognitive component, which relates to beliefs about the object. Attitudes are therefore favorable or unfavorable and present themselves in varying degrees, generally presenting themselves in form of likes and dislikes.

We often hear of comments such as "*French is difficult*", "*it is a beautiful language*", "*it's a language of people of class*", "*I'm learning it for the sake of it*", "*where will it take me?*" "*It's a language of foreigners*", "*I'm learning it for the first time while my colleagues learnt it earlier*", "*I really love it*"...

These generally constitute the feelings and perceptions that learners can have of a language and its native speakers. These can influence either positively or negatively thus fostering or hindering the learning of a given language. The teacher should therefore create situations likely to render the learners attitude positive.



2.4 Learners' varying needs.

In the French as a foreign language classroom in Kenya and elsewhere in a teaching /learning situation, learners all have different needs, different abilities, and different learning profiles. A visual learner needs to visualize, the auditory type needs to hear, the kinesthetic one needs to move and engage their body and the verbal learner needs to express themselves (CECR 2001). To meet the needs of the whole group, the teacher should choose activities likely to motivate all learners to learn, according to their needs and their profiles. He cannot deal with all learning styles at the same time, but he must vary his ways of teaching to be able to implement, at one time or another, activities which correspond to preferences and capacities of each, to integrate the visual, the auditory, the kinesthetic and the verbal. This gives each learner the opportunity to open up to others and to practice other ways of learning. Varying the modes of delivering content reduces monotony and increases motivation in learners.

The teacher should also take into account the experiences and interests of the learners. Future journalists would not be offered the same activities as future diplomats taking French for Specific Objectives (FOS), courses offered at some Kenyan universities, as the situations of communication they are likely to find themselves in in the future are not the same. For the same reasons, we would not propose the same activities to children as to adults, or activities at level CI to learners at level A2. An audience that learns French for fun will not have the same needs as an audience of doctors. It therefore holds that a random choice of activities can lead to undesirable reactions in learners.

2.5 Error as a support tool for learning

Errors are an integral part of learning. By making errors, the learner gets to know what to say and how to say it as opposed to one who keeps quiet fearing to make mistakes. The teacher should therefore try to make the learners active, encouraging them to participate in class. He/she should let the learners know that pronouncing/spelling a word incorrectly does not call for punishment. Following the "think-pair-share" technique proposed by (Kagan, 1994), learners' should not be penalized for errors, but rather, participation should be encouraged despite the errors because they are a support to learning. Thus, the learner will feel accepted even if his productions are wrong.

In the light of this, the teacher should try to involve all the learners by proposing group work because in small groups, they participate easily. To ensure effectiveness of the groups, the teacher could

constitute them instead of asking the learners to form them at their convenience. While doing this, the psychological profile of the learners should be taken into account in order to foster cohesion. The teacher is called upon to always treat the students with the utmost respect that they deserve at all times as to protect their ego and create an atmosphere of cooperation instead of that of competition because competition discourages learning (Casal, 2001; Crandall, 1999). The teacher should further allow the learner to express himself/herself freely following the "Total Physical Response" method where the learners exchange with each other spontaneously. This reduces anxiety and feelings of insecurity (Asher, et al, 1967).

2.6 Show learners they are valued

The teacher can also show learners that they are valued by calling them by their first names and by getting into the habit of talking to them even outside the classroom. This motivates the learners, giving them a sense of belonging besides proving to them that the teacher is interested in what they are doing.

He/she should engage them in building the learning space by soliciting their opinions on classroom activities and showing confidence in their ability to learn the language. He/she should recognize their successes; introduce activities, which have, not only linguistic purposes, but also personal goals, such as getting to know each other and getting to know their classmates better. The teacher can further help the learners to identify their strengths and come up with strategies that will enable him/her to overcome their weaknesses and consequently build spaces so that they can share, at will, their interests, feelings and concerns. He can then evaluate the learners with the purpose of knowing what the learner can do instead of what he/she cannot do.

2.7 CONCLUSION

Affectivity leads to motivation, tools without which learning would not be realized effectively. A positive mind and a friendly environment created by the teacher enable learning. The learner's interaction with the subject content is largely influenced by the teacher. The teacher is therefore a major agent in promoting learning. He/she is the mediator between the learner and the content to be learnt. He/she is the role model influencing every step of the learner in class. He is the pace setter, regulating the learning process. He/she is the moderator, intervening regularly in the process of learning. He/she is thus the master planner of the activity that takes place in the world of a learner.



2.8 Recommendations

From this present work, it is evident that teachers need to be sufficiently informed on this subject. The aspects pointed out in this article need not only to be mentioned in the course of training as is the case in some universities in Kenya where only one unit in the Psychology course attempts to mention the affective domain in class. In this regard, we propose that the Ministry of Education organizes training in the form of workshops or seminars and involve all teachers of French. The university programs that aim at training teachers of language could be reworked as to include this subject. Teachers are equally called upon to be innovators in their own classrooms, observing creativity in their lessons in order to interest their learners who only meet in class once a week. We also suggest that teachers study this topic and disseminate their findings so that the information can be shared among teachers of French as a foreign language in Kenya in order to improve the teaching/learning of this language in the country.

REFERENCES

1. Asher, J. J. et al. (1967). *The Learning Strategy of the Total Physical Response: Some Age Differences*. *Child Development*, (4), 1219. doi:10.2307/1127119
2. Bandura, A. (2007). *Auto-efficacité. Le sentiment d'efficacité personnelle* (P. Lecomte, trad.) (2^e éd.), Bruxelles, De Boeck.
3. Casal, S. (2002). « El desarrollo de la inteligencia interpersonal mediante las técnicas del aprendizaje cooperativo », dans Fonseca, M. C. (ed.). *Inteligencias múltiples, múltiples formas de enseñar inglés*. Sevilla : Mergablum.
4. Crandall, J. (1999). « Cooperative language learning and affective factors », dans Arnold, J. (ed.) *Affect in Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
5. Conseil de l'Europe. (2000). *Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues. Apprendre. Enseigner. Evaluer*. Strasbourg/Paris : Conseil de l'Europe/Didier.
6. Cuq, J- P. (2003). *Dictionnaire de didactique du français langue étrangère*, Paris, Clé international.
7. Giordan, A. et Saltet, J. (2011). *Apprendre à apprendre*, Paris, Libro.
8. Kagan, S. (1994). *Cooperative Learning*. San Clemente, CA: Kagan Cooperative Learning.
9. Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (2017)
10. Larousse. (2008). *Le Petit Larousse illustré*, Paris, Larousse.
11. Ledoux, J. (1996). *The Emotional Brain*. New York: Simon Schuster.
12. Mathon, O. (2015) *Apprendre à apprendre*, Consulté le 12/8/2016 <http://www.apprendreaapprendre.com/réussite-scolaires/profil-pedagogiques/>

13. Meirieu, P. (2014) http://www.meirieu.com/li_plaisir_dapprendre.htm
14. Piccardo, E. et Puozzo I. (2013). « Émotion et apprentissage des langues », *Linguistique et Didactique des Langues (LIDIL)*.
15. Puozzo, C. I. (2009). « Le sentiment d'efficacité personnelle. Pour un nouvel enseignement/apprentissage des langues », *Revue sciences croisées*, 6, p. 1-29. [en ligne : <http://sciences-croisees.com/N6/PuozzoCapron.pdf>]
16. Puozzo, C. I. et Piccardo E. (2013). "L'émotion dans l'apprentissage des langues." *Revue de linguistique et de didactique des langues* 48.
17. Rey, (2002). *Le Petit Robert*. Paris, Le Robert.
18. Rogers, C. (1975). « Bringing together ideas and feelings in learning », dans D. A. Read y S. B. Simon. *Humanistic Education Sourcebook*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
19. Secord, P.F & Backman, C.W (1964) *Social Psychology*. New York: McGraw Hill
20. Stevick, E. (1980). *Teaching Languages: A Way and Ways*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.