

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DIDACTICS: REINFORCING ENGLISH AND FRENCH COMMUNICATIONAL RELATIONSHIP THROUGH EFFECTIVE ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING.

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Abstract

Language is linguistically conceived as a system of meaningful vocal sounds. Language is by this sense a means of communication. Considerably numerous and various due to peoples' ethnical diversity, African languages met the European ones with the arrival of the colonists, mainly French and English in West Africa. So, both French and English served of means for school education in order to unify peoples with a common language for more control. Henceforth, French and English became official or foreign languages to educate and to maintain cooperative and diplomatic relationships between African countries and the rest of the world. Therefore, talking about the relationship between French and English in Africa, effective learning of foreign languages is concerned too because acquiring good communicative skills and language competences is a matter of school education. Unfortunately, in Niger, the English teaching and learning syllabus is more structural (theoretical) than functional (practical). This article is then a contribution that aims at reinforcing objectively the English language teaching and learning style for communicative purpose rather than for exams preparation. Moreover, its content is purely built upon our professional experience in teaching English as foreign language.

Key words: *English, French, relationship, translation, interpretation.*

Résumé

La langue est linguistiquement conçue comme un système significatif de sons vocaux. Elle est de ce fait un moyen de communication. Considérablement nombreuses et variées vu la diversité ethnique des populations, les langues Africaines entrèrent en contact avec celles de l'Europe avec l'arrivée des colons, principalement le Français et l'Anglais en Afrique occidentale. Ces deux langues étrangères servirent de moyens d'éducation scolaire afin d'unifier les peuples avec une langue commune pour plus de contrôle. Dès lors, le Français et l'Anglais devinrent langues officielles et ou étrangères pour éduquer et pour maintenir des relations de coopération et de diplomatie entre les pays Africains et le reste du monde. Alors, parlant de la relation entre le français et l'Anglais en Afrique, l'apprentissage effectif des langues étrangères est aussi concerné car l'expertise en traduction et en interprétation des langues relève de l'éducation scolaire. Malheureusement, au Niger, le programme de l'enseignement-apprentissage de l'Anglais est plus structural (théorique) que fonctionnel (pratique). Cet article est donc une contribution qui vise à renforcer objectivement le style l'enseignement-apprentissage de l'Anglais pour but de communication plutôt que pour préparation

d'examens. Cependant, son contenu est purement fondé à partir de notre expérience professionnelle en enseignement de l'Anglais comme langue étrangère.

Mots clés : *Anglais, Français, relation, traduction, interprétation.*

Introduction

Appropriating English as a foreign language for communicative purpose through learning becomes a great challenge for non-native speakers. Knowing that languages are humans' communicative instruments for all types of social interactions, the appropriation of the English language is very complex because of the difficulties we face in sounds production and transcription, and also in their articulation. The only way to solve and to prevent these difficulties regarding the English language appropriation for communicative use is to deal first of all with communicative syllabus in focusing intensively the English teaching and learning on phonetics and phonology that are the language spelling, pronunciation, and words transcription affair. In starting with pronunciation teaching, learners are prepared and are placed on the right way to acquire all the language skills and competences that allow them to use English in all types of interactive situations such as dialogues, debates, discussions, etc.

Earlier defined as a means of communication, English and French are linked by a great relationship that focuses its main function on the cooperative and the diplomatic partnership between African countries. Both English and French play the interchange role in interpretation and translation area. So, how can English be in good relationship with French in Niger when English is not taught efficiently according to the language communicative function? To answer the question, we outline a possible progressive way to teach English so that learners learn autonomously with self-confidence, self-reliance and self-esteem when interpreting and translating French into English and inversely.

Exposing learners to intensive learn of phonetic-phonology since at the very beginning stage of learning is preponderant than needed. By doing so, they gain correct individual spelling of vowels, letters and diphthongs according their position in words because acquiring good spelling attests of good pronunciation of words, because pronunciation is indisputably known as the 'nucleus' of language skills (speaking, reading, listening and writing) that are progressively and simultaneously acquired with vocabulary and grammar learning.

Effective English learning is the starting point and continuous learning of pronunciation and words transcription for non-native speakers. There is no level or age for teachers to teach pronunciation for its great contribution to language learning. We cannot afford to wait until learners are advanced in other areas before we go back and fix entrenched pronunciation.

Thus, if translation and interpretation can assert durable relationship between French and English in Africa to establish and maintain bilateral cooperation and diplomacy, cultural understanding after language skills

acquisition is not to neglect in English teaching and learning because of the diversities of the languages features according to peoples' cultural background. So, learning foreign languages for communicative purpose does not exclude language translation and interpretation that is an intellectual act in language expertise resulting from effective learning inputs.

Communicative teaching and learning process for effectiveness

1. Spelling

The communicative way of teaching and learning English may begin with phonetic spelling of letters, of syllables and finally of words pronunciation that guaranty vocabulary learning for the reason that as well as learners are able to phonetically spell words according to their sound, they can probably write them. Exposing learners to intensive learning of spelling leads them to gain good pronunciation that develops in turn language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) including good retention and memorization for benefit outputs. Spelling has a direct link with pronunciation and together, they offer learners the genuine ability of comprehensive communication. That is to say spelling and pronunciation are inevitable sources of oral communication ability. In recognizing this, teaching and learning English as foreign language for social interactions may goes from teaching spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, teaching language skills and some cultural aspects of English native speakers in order to maintain a good relationship with French in Africa.

2. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the most essential part of phonology known as a sound system that is hard to learn. That is why pronunciation is said to be the most difficult practice of the English language teaching for teachers who are nonnative speakers. Teaching and learning pronunciation are fundamental for appropriating English in foreign context. Pronunciation ensures real English use via intonation and words stresses master. Exposing nonnative learners to learning pronunciation helps them appropriate the language even if it is hard or impossible to carry them to native ones' level. That is why (Morley, 1991) tells if pronunciation has become an integral part of oral communication in the class, the pedagogical aim of pronunciation teaching is not to attain the perfect pronunciation of the native speaker, but instead to aim at a more realistic goal of developing students' functional intelligibility, communicability, and increased self-confidence. Thus, it is incontestable known that teaching pronunciation is fundamental for an effective language use. Understanding others and making oneself understood in social interactions require good utterance of words that are already most learnt in vocabulary and used in grammar practice for communicative purpose. A mutual intelligibility of comprehensive communication depends on the interlocutors' phonological

and phonetic for of knowledge that allow speakers and listeners to use their common knowledge to communicate varied levels of the language, such as interpreting or translating information in oral or written discourses and messages. Pronunciation is somehow the heart of successful communication because as soon as we orally communicate in a given language, we produce vocal sounds that refer not only to pronunciation but also to speaking. Developing learners' pronunciation ability in learning English leads them to oral proficiency while communicating, and this, with fluency or not since English is always spoken using particular lexical and grammar skill according to the speaker's language competence. For this reason, helping learners to improve their pronunciation is therefore obligatory than necessary for appropriating English. If learners cannot read or repeat new words they meet, they then probably don't know how these are pronounced. Appropriating the English language for communicative goal such as in translation or interpretation requires first of all a comprehensive pronunciation ability to gain language skills and competences that are both resulting from good pronunciation because other than in speaking, we pronounce as we listen to repeat, we also pronounce as we read and lastly we pronounce as we think on words spelling before writing. Pronunciation is absolutely essential to teaching listening, speaking, reading, grammar, etc.

3. Pronunciation and the english language skills

We distinguish receptive skills (listening and reading) from productive ones with the presence of more phonological aspects. Productive skills (speaking and writing) deal with phonetics competence requirement even if by combination, listening (receptive skill) and speaking (productive skill) are thought to be the only practices which can offer learners the ability of good pronunciation.

3. 1. Teaching receptive skills for good pronunciation

Receptive skills in language appropriateness are those skills which involve not only the organs of listening and hearing (ears) in function, but also the organ of sounds production (the tongue) through vocal cords vibration when we read, even though speaking shares in common the tongue involvement as productive skill. The particularity is that when we read, we listen to ourselves like the others do, and when we speak, we utter words in sentences or in an entire discourse. It is the simultaneous and promptitude of sounds production in interactions that attribute to speaking the characteristic of productive skill. Without pronunciation, there is no sounds production and without sounds, no one can talk about oral communication which is not possible without the act of speaking. 'Owning' receptive skills depends on acquiring good pronunciation.

3. 1. 1. Teaching listening

Listening skill in English language learning is highly preponderant as it prepares nonnative speakers to comprehend easily with attentive hearing and to promptly react to partners' speeches in communications. Good listening requires both the capacity to hear with attention and the ability to repeat what is heard in order to push interchanges going on. Listening scholars are, however, quick to separate the capacity to hear from the ability to listen (e.g. Imhof, 2010; Lipari, 2010; Wolvin, 2009).

While hearing denotes a capacity to discriminate characteristics of one's environment through aural sense perception, listening is a relationally oriented phenomenon; it connects and bridges according to (Lipari, 2012). Thus, listening involves setting skills that go beyond the physiological requirements to perceive sound. That is to highly voice it is not possible to expect the English nonnative speakers to produce sounds which are not part of their mother tongue or to speak the language using stress, rhythms and intonations like native speakers do without first of all providing them with a model of the form they are asked to produce. A foreign language learner can never produce satisfactorily what he has not heard before. Listening can clearly be seen as English language learning phonological input that ensures understanding for comprehensive output as feedbacks or answers in conversations. When misunderstandings occur during conversational interactions due to listening ability default, difficulties to interact comprehensively occur too.

Difficulties in nonnative learners' listening comprehension are generally phonological in nature, and these are remediable or adjustable only when they are able to recognize with interpretation in detail of the phonological terms what are produced by their conversation partners. Acquiring listening skill is so hard for non-native English speakers because of the lots oral behaviors that characterize people's manner of talking. Speakers' speed and accent depending on the type of interaction surprise more and sometimes make listeners confused mainly when the interaction is taking place with native speakers who are generally not only fast in speaking, but also with different accent too. In listening process, "learners should consider specific characteristics of spoken language to help them comprehend easily. At least there are 8 characteristics that the learner should be aware of: clustering, redundancy, reduced form, performance variable, colloquial language, rate of delivery, stress, rhythm and intonation and interaction." ((Brown, 2001:252).

3. 1. 2. Teaching reading

When we talk about reading, we first get in mind the oral act of decoding written texts. For this reason, it must be recognized that reading aloud is primarily an oral matter, and oral refers to pronunciation. For those who teach and learn foreign languages like English, it is much closer to pronunciation than it is to comprehension. That is why teaching reading may not be a neglected classroom activity because pronunciation leads to the all language learning effectiveness as earlier said.

Reading as language skill is by definition, the ability of decrypting combined letters and words in order to find significance either silently or out loud. "Reading is a visual and cognitive process to extract meaning from writing by understanding the written text, processing information, and relating it to existing experience." (Millrood, 200: 117). In the same line to define reading, support is given to Millrood with almost the same characteristics to reading, in writing that reading may refer to "a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning" (Nunan, 2003: 68). Reading involves strategies related to correct production of sounds (pronunciation) from learners in learning vocabulary and grammar to boost their reading skill. The UK National Literacy Strategy suggests that when children learn to read, they use four different strategies, which are like four searchlights, throwing light on the text from different directions. These are: *phonic knowledge, knowledge of context, grammatical knowledge and graphic knowledge*

3. 2. Teaching productive skills for good pronunciation

Productive skills in language learning are abilities of being able to show knowing how to speak and to write. Speaking and writing are known productive skills because language in terms of form is either oral (to speak) or written (to write), and the more a language learner is able to do so, the more he becomes autonomously an active producer.

3. 2. 1. Teaching speaking

Naturally, speaking relates to people's ability of producing vocal sounds to express their ideas, opinions and thoughts in a given language. A foreign language such as English is so hard to appropriate that their users often interact without thinking about standard correctness in pronunciation or not and this might be the result of ineffective teaching and learning. "One of the basic problems in foreign-language teaching is to prepare learner to be able to use the language." (Bygate, 1987: 3). Good listening for pronunciation master and understanding should then guide speaking as we listen to speak like we speak to listen during conversations. By this sense, teaching phonology is imperative than needed to develop sounds recognizing ability before producing them to interact. That is why speaking can also be considered as a production of auditory signals made to produce differential verbal communication. Speaking is therefore seen as associating systematically sounds in logically order to meaningful utterances. Teaching speaking is important in helping learners learn English efficaciously. The primarily oral character of languages justifies the importance of speaking that is neatly closer to pronunciation teaching.

3. 2. 2. Teaching writing

Pronunciation is a part of writing because when we write, we also express our thoughts or ideas in written communication. It seems that we are turning oral expressions that are governed by pronunciation into written form that is part of phonetics which itself cannot be separated from phonology. Therefore, when we write we talk too in other terms. The only difference is that talking or speaking is spontaneous whereas writing requires time of thinking about what is needed to write and how to avoid grammatical or morphological errors. So, if the goal of English teachers in teaching writing is to help learners to produce fluently, accurately and appropriately good written English, they must take into account certain aspects such as: mechanical problems with the script of English, Problems of accuracy of English grammar and lexis, Problems of relating the style of writing to the demands of a particular situation and Problems of developing ease and comfort in expressing what needs to be said.

Another aspect to challenge is that most of the English as foreign language learners face difficulty in writing (case in Niger). Producing a text and translation is a complex process. As reported by (Chen, 2006), many studies show that beginning EFL students tend to be obstructed by their first language in the process of writing in English. EFL students like Indonesian students, who learn writing English text often find many difficulties. Writing becomes then an activity that is avoided by the English learners. In order to help teachers to overcome these difficulties resulting from many insufficiencies of training, (Nunan, 2003) proposes some principles of teaching writing that need to be considered when they plan the course. These are: Understand your students' reasons for writing, provide many opportunities for students to write, make feedback helpful and meaningful, clarify for yourself, for your students, and how their writing will be evaluated.

Principles of teaching writing are many and contextually vary according to the learners' need of what is writing skill and how they can use it to contribute to French and English relationship in translation issues

3. 3. Pronunciation and cultural understanding as language skill

Learning English as a foreign language requires a familiarity with some cultural aspects linked to the language because language, as human product is an integral part of culture. Thus, learning someone's language in the goal of appropriating it for long life use without understanding his culture is like addressing him without knowing his cultural realities as all languages have derivatives and varieties such as dialects, formal and informal English, and all the language register. A language also uses some features of the language that function meaningfully in social interactions that are proverbs, dictions, idioms, metaphors...etc. And all these vary from a given language to another. "Teaching a language thus involves teaching aspects of the cultural system of the people who speak the

language.” (Rivers, 1964: 19-22). Cultural aspects comprise all people’s daily deeds. They are observable, remarkable and long life durable, but never totally changeable as they serve people to identify themselves to be belong to such or such ethnic, continent, society, class or tribe with good relationships development. The existence of good quality relationships enhances people’s social identity (Weiss, 1974). Elements of culture refer to things like the beliefs, values, customs, products, and the communication styles of a given culture or society according to (Cohen et al. 2003). Learning a foreign language with effectiveness requires the considerations of the culture of people whom it belongs. The program of teaching English as foreign language might include English people’s culture because of the differences of their culture. Learning these cultural differences may help to understand a variety of non-verbal communication styles, beliefs, values, customs and much more. Considering all that is said, English cultural understanding contributes much more in developing learners’ need of appropriating English for comprehensive communication even if native English speakers are fast in communication using words association or deletion contrarily to many non natives who speak the language ordinary as how they learn. For instance the sentence “*I’ll letcha know*” is hardly understandable for a nonnative speaker who prefers it in “*I will let you know*”. After all language skills talked about, including cultural consideration, teaching vocabulary and grammar contribute considerably to the English language teaching and learning effectiveness as core competences allowing learners to use meaningfully English for longlife use. (Wilkins, 1972) asserts that without grammar, nothing is learnt and without vocabulary, nothing is conveyed. We agree with Wilkins, but all language skills and competences are built upon spelling and pronunciation that is the focal point of communicative learning.

4. Pronunciation and teaching vocabulary

To explain the interest of pronunciation in teaching and learning English effectiveness, we think that it is an imperative to know what vocabulary means. Thinking about the meaning of vocabulary refers to see words contextual usage to conduct its real definition. (Diamond & Gutlohn, 2006) advocate that vocabulary is the knowledge of words and their meanings. Like teaching the language four skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing) develop pronunciation ability for comprehensive communication, teaching vocabulary is for the same purpose. Vocabulary is as the knowledge of “stored information about the meanings and pronunciations of words necessary for communication” (The *Multicultural & ESOL Program Services Education* (2007: 1). The term vocabulary broadly defined includes two categories: receptive and expressive. Receptive vocabulary includes all the words that a person understands while reading or listen, but may not feel comfortable using in speech or writing. And expressive vocabulary includes all the words a person feel comfortable using in his own spoken communication. Vocabulary teaching as classroom activity is essential for the English language learning, but vocabulary that deals specifically with words meaning itself needs grammar to be useful as

grammar employs words to structure verbal and written sentences and texts.

5. Pronunciation and teaching grammar

According to (Harmer, 1999) grammar is partly the study of what forms (or structures) are possible in a language. Grammar is one of the most important parts in language learning as it studies the syntax and morphology of sentences that are not separated from pronunciation because grammar analyzes if the words are chained together in a particular and correct order to make sentences in the ideas that want to be expressed, and expression means pronunciation in other terms. If there is no a correct grammar, it is difficult for people to develop usefully the other skills of the language. It becomes then oblivious that teaching grammar implicitly can help much more learners in their language acquisition and performance as they are permanently engaged in communicative scenes situations since in classroom activities. Teaching grammar communicatively is the most didactic powerful tool for helping learners express themselves comprehensively. Teaching English through a communicative method with role play as language practice is more useful and appropriate to provide better opportunity to communicate, to imitate real life situations than focusing learning on theoretical structure. Effective teaching of grammar does not exclude at the same time teaching pronunciation because there is no grammar lesson teaching without words pronunciation for the reason that as soon as both teachers and learners are participating interactively, they speak, so they pronounce words by using oral sentences before written ones.

6. Core pillars of french and english relationship in africa

Language translation and interpretation are two bride pillars that fix English speaking countries and those that use French as official language in partnership. Translation and interpretation maintain countries of different language speaking in fructuous cooperative and diplomatic exchange. As remind, translation and interpretation are not going to be largely explored and developed in this article, but only their function in French and English relationship in Africa is touched regarding to the English teaching and learning effectiveness as foreign language. We suppose that if English is specifically learnt in Niger for exams preparation than for using it to communicate, relationship between French and English might not be positive to serve cooperative affairs and foreign business transactions.

6. 1. Translation

Translation in language and communication refers to the transfer of a content of a language body from a given language to another one. "Translation is a craft implying the attempt to replace a written message

or a statement in one language by the same message or statement in another language.” (Newmark, 1981: 7). Translation does not always take into account vocabulary and grammar meaning of words and expressions used in writing but it employs their contextual use to satisfy comprehension in sense. Translation word by word rarely conveys understanding because words meaning are never static in English. Rather guess the contextual meaning than considering the etymological meaning that originates from dictionaries. So, to be a good translator in English or in French, one may sufficiently be trained in vocabulary and in grammar to show ability in writing skill in order to translate meaning although translation needs a specific study such as in Applied Linguistic, in political discourse domain and in general literature where most of translators face some difficulties of translation because literary texts are characterized by figurative language such as collocations, metaphors, dictions, proverbs, idiomatic expressions, etc. Here lays the interest of cultural awareness as a foreign language skill that can help translators to solve difficulties linked to linguistic and cultural differences between two given languages. Every language has its own cultural manner to express ideas.

6. 2. Interpretation

Interpretation can be defined as the oral act to convert speeches from one language to another. To do so, an interpreter may be a facilitator, a language specialist and cultural mediator in order to fulfill his job. To gain all these characteristics attributed to the interpreter, a non-native speaker of English learning should be exposed to communicative teaching of English where he is able to acquire all skills and competences of the language including cultural awareness. If the learner’s language learning is communicatively incomplete, he cannot serve of a mediator or a bridge between two parties of different languages to satisfy cooperation and diplomacy needs in terms of relationship.

Conclusion

All in all, we think that teaching and learning English in Niger for communicative purpose related to language translation and interpretation to keep French and English in good relationship in Africa in particular and in all over the world in general are compulsory than needed. English must be taught and learned efficaciously under the roofing of pronunciation that guaranties all language skills acquisition and competences. If not language translation and interpretation will not be effective for establishing fruitful partnership between French and English regarding cooperative and diplomatic relationship. Translating and interpreting English into French need fluency, accuracy and proficiency that result from communicative English teaching and learning./.

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