

THE ROLE OF MOTIVATION FOR GROUP ACTIVITY IN THE TEACHING/LEARNING PROCESS IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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Abstract: Teachers know that motivation plays a huge role in learning, but even though all teachers know this, most often misunderstand how to ignite a desire to learn in their learners. The presence of an experienced teacher gradually leads the learner towards an intrinsic motivation or even the search for meaning in learning. To move from extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation in most cases, the mediation of the master is necessary. It is evident that the social environment of the learner (parents, teachers and school administration) affects in several ways the motivation of the learners, because not only can they encourage them to make autonomous choices, but also they can try to control their behavior. The pleasure of being in class with others and with the teacher in joy and good humor is a motivating factor. When the language class is no longer felt as an obligation, but as a moment of pleasure where we will learn with friends, the student's investment is much greater.

Keywords: *motivation, humor, group activity, first language, second language, attractive documents.*

INTRODUCTION

Language is an effective tool for communication and human exchanges. It is acquired and developed from childhood. The language acquired by the child since birth in the family refers to the native language. This process of acquiring the first language allows the child to adapt and conform to the conventional signs of the linguistic terms of his environment or his immediate society.

As part of the teaching of French as a foreign language in both middle school and high school, many materials are used to prepare students for better comprehension and written and oral production. Thus, the way is opened for students to develop the linguistic and sociolinguistic skills inherent in representative, interpersonal and interpretative means of communication.

Methods are present in all forms in education. They improve the effectiveness of learning because they offer a wide variety of motivating and familiar situations. Language represents a culture and this culture is expressed through poetry, theatre, literature, art etc. Thus, the teaching of the French language should offer a real contact with the French language and culture which can be achieved through the use of authentic entertaining materials. These represent additional motivation for learners as they depict real-life communication situations that are rare in traditional teaching.

Learners generally like to be challenged with tasks based on real materials that are normally designed for native speakers. Should language learning be defined in the broad sense, as an approach involving all the senses: hearing, touch, taste, smell, sight, an approach that can be achieved through entertaining means: games, fun activities, the Internet, etc.

INVESTMENT AND MOTIVATION FOR THE LANGUAGE LEARNING PROCESS

Motivation, as a general term, is the engine from which any activity starts. In college, for a student, the motivation to prepare intensively for a certain discipline constantly depends on a multitude of factors. First of all, there are students who are very passionate about a certain field of activity or a certain discipline. In their case, the passion for the field is paramount. Then there are students who are becoming better and more motivated to learn because of teachers, academia in general, and interaction with colleagues.

”Group work is an interactive activity intended for groups of 3 to 5 learners with unequal performance. Such work is characterized by its social aspect and aims above all to improve pragmatic performance in French as a foreign language courses.

The purpose of group work is above all to provide access to social learning. This can also lead, in the second place, to an improvement in performance

in FLE. This improvement will probably be less felt in «strong» learners, but more learners achieve the learning objectives of FLE based on interactive group work. Forming groups randomly and having learners work together within these groups is the best possible way to improve social interaction”.

(Hamidreza, Ghanbarinia, 2015: 1)

When it comes to learning a foreign language, many factors come into play, indeed, if it is accepted that motivation is one of the most important factors for success. We cannot claim to motivate a learner in a FLE class by telling him, for example: “The French language is very important to study so we should take an interest in it”. It would be necessary to create a bond of love between this learner and the French language by presenting him with its beauty, its outlets, its prestige, etc.

University professors know the phenomena according to which there is or is not motivation for students to start and graduate. There are students who start their university studies and who, unfortunately, do not reach their completion due to multiple causes. Be it personal - change of status (marriage, loss of a dear family member), financial causes (lack of money), professional causes (during university studies there is another much more comfortable and better paid opportunity). Teachers know that motivation plays a huge role in learning, but even though all teachers know this, most often misunderstand how to ignite the desire to learn in their learners. The presence of an experienced teacher gradually leads the learner towards an intrinsic motivation or even the search for meaning in learning. To move from extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation in most cases, the mediation of the master is necessary.

Several studies on academic motivation have shown that a motivated learner is a learner who engages, participates and persists in a learning activity.

This motivation is determined by:

- The conceptions he has of school, studies.
- The perceptions he has of himself (self-esteem, confidence, self-belief, feeling of competence, perceived effectiveness), of others (the students, the teacher), of the proposed activity (value, controllability/mastery).
- The pleasure that the activity gives him.

For example, if you start university immediately after graduating from high school, then the motivation to get a bachelor's degree is the idea of making a career, choosing a future job. But if you

start your university studies around the age of 40, then there is either the desire to give up your current job and the desire to work in another field. Either it can be about advancing to your current job, and this can only be done if you have a bachelor's degree.

It is evident that the social environment of the learner (parents, teachers and school administration) affects in several ways the motivation of the learners, because not only can they encourage them to make autonomous choices, but also they can try to control their behavior.

According to Vansteenkiste, Lens and Deci “people have intrinsically motivated and self-determined behaviors when circumstances permit”. (Vansteenkiste, Simons, Lens, Sheldon, K. M., & Deci, E. L., 2004: 246-260)

If we admit that we can define motivation as a set of interrelated beliefs and emotions that influence behavior, we can also claim that students' interpersonal relationships influence their motivation by intervening directly on the beliefs that constitute this motivation.

”To arouse the desire to learn, shouldn't the students feel that their teachers are eager in turn, that they see them passionate about their profession, know how to question themselves, imagine, create, undoubtedly constantly seek the the only „thing” that the teacher must continue to transmit is this desire: the desire to learn!”. (Viau, 1997:120)

To amplify this desire to learn in learners, it is necessary to amplify the desire to teach in teachers; in other words, the teacher himself must be motivated in order to succeed in motivating his learners.

Because the lack of motivation of the teacher can completely kill the motivation of the learners. Thus the murder is collective: „how can one accuse the pupils of not being motivated to learn, when they find themselves in front of a teacher who yawns never laughs constantly looks at his watch, does not want to be disturbed, gives them exercises so that you don't have to talk to them?”. (Vianin, 2007: 27-46)

These students wish to have a teacher who is competent in the subject he teaches because he is the only „teacher” figure that the learner is able to observe. Some limits remain: we cannot be motivated on behalf of the learners, but we must nevertheless help them.

The pleasure of being in class with others and with the teacher in joy and good humor is a motivating factor. When the language class is no

longer felt as an obligation, but as a moment of pleasure where we will learn with friends, the student's investment is much greater. But it is not enough to give the taste of being in class. Some may enjoy being in class, having fun, seeing friends, and yet being responsive to any type of work. Incorporating humor into classroom activities and into the teaching process is particularly effective. Whenever the activity does not contain a humorous, playful charge, the learner's interventions are more scattered. But when it is a playful, fun activity in which they can get involved and from which they can benefit (that is to say, according to their criterion, a good laugh), all fingers are up, everyone wants to participate. So, such simple little technical details can literally transform a business.

Humor in working documents

For a long time the world of French as a foreign language has been ahead of the world of institutional education. Its more informal status has allowed it to take more liberties vis-à-vis educational traditions and the humorous document is thus found more often in FLE methods. It is clearly seen that this one is essentially for advanced levels, since it is assumed that to break through the foreign humor, one must already perceive a certain finesse of the language. This is certainly not entirely false, but it would be a shame to deprive beginners of all the richness of

humorous material on the pretext that it would be too difficult for them.

Laughter is today singled out for its virtues. But more particularly, in the classroom, it is a very effective tool for defusing learners' stress and stimulating memorization. Encouraging play on the language, humor also invites learners to desacralize the target language by becoming aware of the necessary passage through an interlanguage in perpetual construction.

The most easily usable in FLE class is certainly drawing. Already the majority of manuals are embellished with small drawings that are intended to be humorous, or at least that seek to make the manual more attractive. This type of document is very productive. With little text, it is not an obstacle to understanding.

Example activity:

Level: A2

Objectives: to specify the homonyms of the word feast, to appropriate the lexicon of the feasts, to become familiar with the type of feasts in France, to notice the specificity of each feast.

1. Support document: cartoon, (<http://gigistudio.over-blog.com/article-2563264.html>)

Corint manual text, 9th class

It is an activity that targets areas of immediate priority and allows you to discover the French cultural universe, its customs and traditions, with celebrations in mind.



Steps:

I presented this drawing to my students in order to provoke reactions in them. The absence of text, and the simplicity of the message makes this document quite affordable. This caricature made them understand the importance of women in a normal society, but also the fight against violence, inequality and injustice. In addition, it made it possible to approach a vocabulary (that of festivals and traditions) which, being part of their daily universe, was retained very quickly.

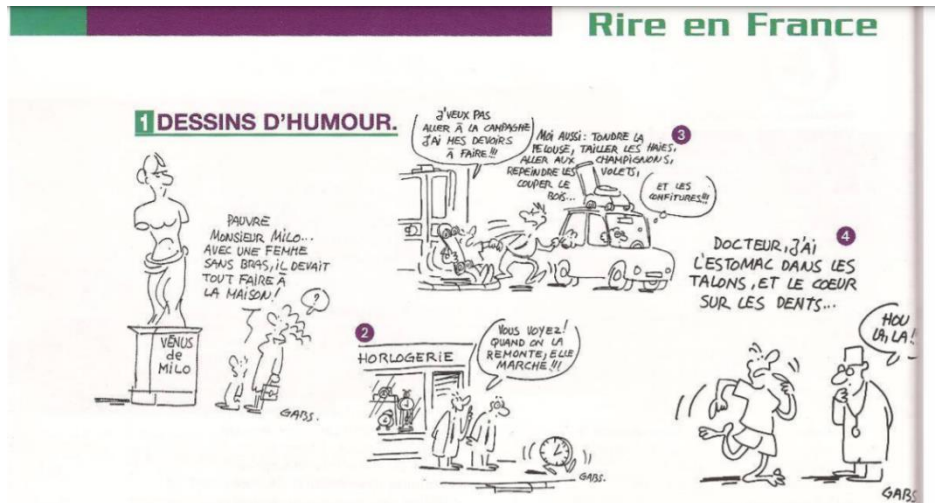
After discovering the French festivals, the pupils are asked to draw up the calendar of the festivals and to present those which are common to France and Romania.

Example activity:

Level: A2

Objectives: identify words for laughs, express personal opinions on styles, fashions, ridicule.

Support document: cartoon (Dollez, Pons, 2002:48)



Steps:

Activity 1

Observe the drawings.

at. Which are the ones from which humor results:

- absurd?

- from a stereotyped situation?

b. What causes the absurd situation?

vs. What is the stereotype?

Activity 2

at. In your opinion, how do these drawings illustrate the following definition of the word humour?

HUMOR - Taking a distance that tries to take a fresh look at the conventions in use to denounce malfunctions, but without aggressiveness.

b. What do they tell you about the French?

Activity 3

Which drawing do you find the funniest? Why?

The cartoon has the advantage of carrying with it many implicit. It is often the understanding of these that is difficult for learners. But it allows them an irreplaceable intercultural learning.

The humorous text is a more delicate approach. It requires that the vocabulary be accessible. This is why it is often approached only from an intermediate level.

Example activity:

Level: A2

Objectives: to report on the types of comedy in France, to analyze the comic effects used and the different kinds of humor.

Support document:

From chapter 4 of the French textbook Reflets 3 devoted to humour, I chose a text by Raymond Devos which is very interesting to work with teenagers of intermediate level.

„Recently in the street, I heard someone shouting 'fire', so I approached and realized that there was no fire. So, as the one who had shouted “fire” continued to shout, I shouted “crazy!”. Eh? So the madman who had cried fire, when he heard that I was screaming madman, he set the fire... Well, so as not to pass for a madman. Well me, when I saw that the madman had set fire, I shouted „fire!”. Eh? So the madman put out the fire. Well, since there was no more fire and I kept shouting fire like a madman, it was me who was locked up.

So now we can shout fire, I don't care. (Dollez, Pons, 2002:47)

Steps:

We see that this text, based on the pun, familiarizes learners with this type of humor (French culture particularly appreciates puns). Incidentally, it allows relevant work on pronunciation and on the differentiation of the sounds [ɥ] and [u]. This text can also be an effective way to approach idiomatic expressions (there is no fire..., sound crazy..., scream like

crazy..., don't give a damn..., etc.). Originally played on stage, it could be exploited as a video document, which, through comprehension and auditory discrimination activities, would further enrich the approach.

Activity 1

If you had to find a title, which one would you choose? Why?

a. The crazier we are, the merrier.

b. Who's the craziest?

vs. A crazy story.

Activity 2

Choose the right answer.

• Does the first comedic moment come:

a. at a game with several words?

b. of a word with double meaning?

vs. an error of interpretation by the partner?

• Characterize the role of the partner:

a. a dialogue partner

b. a jack of all trades

vs. a clown on duty

d. a silent partner

• Does the second comedic moment come:

a. comment?

b. mime?

vs. facial expression?

d. the role of the partner?

• Does the last comic moment come:

a. of an unforeseen „fall“?

b. of a gag planned but delayed?

vs. clumsiness of the shooter?

Activity 3

Explain the final line: We can shout fire, I don't care!

Video humorous documents are indeed much rarer and are limited either to filmed shows by comedians, or to a few television series, or to commercials playing on humor. Their exploitation therefore requires the teacher to carry out more substantial upstream research and development work. The humorous short film is perhaps by its duration, the most effective tool.

Example activity:

Level B1

Objectives: to argue the validity of humor in different circumstances; analyze and describe the springs of comedy; know how to tell a funny story, manage the suspense and prepare the fall of the story.

Support document:

I worked effectively on a 5 - minute animation document by Serge Elissalde, *Le Balayeur*. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yTDEFzoBkWQ>)

Steps:

In a private drawing, an immigrant sweeper is seen at work. He throws (by tapping on it with his broom) everything that bothers him into a sewer, first a man who groans, then the car of a young couple in love who has not paid attention to him and the splashed with the vehicle. A little girl then drops her ball into the manhole and asks him to get it back for her (she's the only character who speaks). The sweeper accepts, and before recovering it, pulls dozens of things out of the sewers: a man, a car, but also a cat, a truck, etc. When he recovers the ball, the street is cluttered with all the things he was able to remove. At this moment, an ambulance (or a police truck) arrives, he is handcuffed, then brought in, like a madman or a dangerous criminal. The little girl, with her ball, watches him leave sadly.

First, we watch the document without the sound. Next, the learners describe what is happening, some having different points of view, then, in groups of three, they imagine a possible dialogue for one of the sequences that provokes laughter in the short film.

Order:

Debate: Anything provokes laughter?

This exploitation worked very well with my group of 11th grade teenagers, as the video seems to have a very attractive effect for learners of this age, and it is firmly embedded in their cultural habits.

Humor seems to have its place in the FLE class, both in relationships between people and in usable documents. But this place can be even greater, if we agree to put humor at the center of the educational action. This can also be at the very heart of learning.

Fun activities

Fun activities are part of the educational means that serve to facilitate the learning of French as a foreign language, to motivate learners because they are a way of investing and exploiting the imagination and creativity of the learner. In the act of learning fun activities hides the humor that can be put in place with both the youngest and the oldest. The teacher can, through his instructions, promote the development of humor, and also the production activities of the learners. These directed activities are privileged places to fill hollow moments.

The term "ludic" refers in the language dictionary to the term „game“. To answer this question, we turned to didactics.

The didactic dictionary of French defines the playful activity as "a learning activity called

playful, is guided by game rules and practiced by the pleasure it provides [...]”. (Cuq, 2003:160)

Brigitte Cord-Mannoury conceives playful activities “as activities which are part of the game, that is to say which are organized by a system of rules defining a success or a failure, a gain or a loss”. (Pluies, 2000:24)

Games and fun activities can be said to refer to activities of pleasure subject to conventional rules with a winner and a loser. Through the activities that can be proposed, the learner will be a reader, receiver, writer, speaker and/or interlocutor. He will be led to mobilize his knowledge in vocabulary, grammar, etc. Also, „the learner will be led, through the experience of the game, to put into practice two functions fulfilled by speech: the propositional function (what the words say) and the illocutionary function (what we do with the words; give an order, accuse, apologize etc.). These two functions will be implemented spontaneously”.

(https://www.uclouvain.be/cps/ucl/doc/adri/documents/Le_jeu_en_classe_de_FLE.pdf)

“A high level of personal motivation in carrying out a task will lead the learner to greater involvement and, consequently, to a more effective mobilization of his knowledge, resulting from previous knowledge and experience. These will be confronted with those of its interlocutors in order to reach a new level of performance”.

(https://www.uclouvain.be/cps/ucl/doc/adri/documents/Le_jeu_en_classe_de_FLE.pdf)

Through fun activities, classroom interventions should create expectations in children. It is also the way to „unschool” the book.

The game is a fun and exciting representation of real life. According to the French dictionary LAROUSSE, the game is “a physical or mental activity, not imposed, not aiming at any utilitarian end, and which one indulges in for entertainment, to derive pleasure from it; participate in a game”.

(<https://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/jeu/44887>)

The game according to the Latin French dictionary: “Game; joke, banter, joca, the joker, per Jocum; jokingly”. (Gaffiot, 2001:404)

It therefore designates the activity of playing in a general way. According to the didactic dictionary: „the game in language didactics, an interactive communication event with two or more participants to develop a skill” (Cuq, 2003:106) and according to Nicole De Grandmont, Canadian orthopedagogue, known for her work: game pedagogy, the educational game, the educational game, „the game is an activity which in absolute

terms should be playful. So imbued with intrinsic and gratuitous pleasure.” (De Grandmont, 1997:83)

According to these different definitions of the term „game”, it can be seen that it also serves to designate the activity of playing, favored and chosen by the child, which therefore represents a source of pleasure and a means of communication and development of skills in didactic situations.

The researchers (Giangiobbe, Lefort, 2003) have identified the advantages of the game in the teaching of foreign languages by specifying that the call for this kind of activity can also present certain disadvantages. Among the advantages, they cite: offering a wide variety of motivating and familiar situations; change the pace of a lesson and rekindle student interest; provide students with a moment of ownership of the action; repeat and reuse structures and vocabulary in a natural way; improve pronunciation and comprehension skills through a scenario; get the attention and involvement of all students.

If the game has many advantages, it has very few disadvantages: it does not allow the presentation of a structure or vocabulary because the child in a game situation does not learn; the game is not a good time for individual evaluation, because of the emotional factors and the competitive aspect that modify the behavior of children when faced with a task to be accomplished; the game involves very good time management as it consumes enough time in the economy of a class.

It balances these disadvantages by the possibility of exercising several types of skills: memory, the ability to manipulate structures or construct meaning, to reproduce phonemes, or to write spellings correctly, as well as by the possibility of acquire cultural references.

According to Jean-Laurent Pluies, the game is expressed in three levels: „For the game to fulfill its pedagogical function [...], the pedagogue must be informed of the three levels of pedagogical intervention of the game: 1. ludic level [...]. 2. educational level [...]. 3. pedagogical level [...]”. (Guerni, 2001: 14)

Playful play is a free, spontaneous, imaginative activity that has no fixed rules. According to Christine Renard „[...] it allows you to structure your physical process and develop your cognitive and affective capacities”. (Renard, 2002:1)

This type of game has no rules. The product is not necessarily aesthetic and perfected. To overcome organizational difficulties, I usually start my classes with a fun activity.

CONCLUSIONS

The means implemented for learning a language are no longer limited to traditional methods and materials, but must adapt to the advanced techniques introduced in pedagogy.

The objective of our activity is to prove that it is fruitful to use humorous comic strips in French as a foreign language class. Through this activity, we try to observe the image of sport in our society by taking into account sports comments. As a grammatical objective, the subject is the superlative. The session will also be an opportunity to review the comparisons (of superiority and inferiority). As a lexical objective, the vocabulary of comics as well as that of sport will be targeted. Finally, as a socio-cultural objective, sport in France will be the subject.

By way of conclusion, we can say that learning the French language using modern methods is like a game that may seem difficult or boring at first for some learners, but as they discover the beauty of this art form, they may enjoy the language more through this cultural enrichment and broadening.

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