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**ASSESSMENT OF TECHNIQUES OF COMMUNICATIVE  
METHODS IN FRENCH AND PREVALENT BARRIERS**

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**ABSTRACT**

*It is observed that, in general, many teachers cannot engage in a long conversation in the French language. Basically, the communicative method is aimed exactly at the goal of training students to be able to express themselves with anyone in French. It was observed in this paper that the various techniques used in the communicative method are songs, exercises, role games, and audiovisuals. The song method allows students to master the pronunciation of French words and retain the lesson because, from the moment the students remember the song chanted by the teacher in class while teaching a particular lesson, the teacher remembers the lesson itself. The paper concluded that the barriers to the application of the communicative method are professional incompetence, lack of electronic devices, the government's attitude, and a lack of workshops for teachers. Professional experience in teaching is a big problem in the application of the communicative method. One of the recommendations was that linguistic and pedagogical courses should be organised locally and internationally for French teachers each year. This internship will allow French teachers to assess their level of competence, to promote their profession, and to be aware of the methodology, the techniques, and the most recent ones.*

**KEYWORDS:** Communicative method, and French teaching.

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**Introduction**

Among other methods of teaching French as a foreign language (FLE), the communicative method is the central point of this communication. According to our observation, the communicative method can be considered the most used method today, because we find that by applying this method, the class becomes animated because it allows the learners to manage themselves in class. This was previously prohibited because it was only the teacher who did everything in class while the learners

memorised the grammatical rules. The word "communication" comes from the Latin word "communiquer," and according to the French dictionary, the Robert, the word "communication" is "le fait de communiquer, d'établir une relation avec quell que chose". A dynamic relationship that occurs during the course of a function, an exchange of signs or messages between interlocutors. If it is true that "it is by forging that one becomes a blacksmith," it is nevertheless true that one can only learn a language by speaking it. That is certainly what is, in this context, referred to as "communication". This word establishes a link between interlocutors. Communication requires an understanding between two people. In a French class, learners should understand their teacher while the teacher gives them freedom to express themselves. In other words, it's a conversation class.

The appreciation of this method has contributed positively to the teaching and learning of French as a foreign language, as it encourages learners to express themselves instead of being silent in class while crossing their arms.

### **Rational for the work**

There are those who are not creative in creating exercises that should help students express themselves in class so that the class is full of joy. Some also do not know how to control the learners during the application of the communicative method so that there is no noise in the classroom. Electronic devices should also be part of this communicative method, but these devices are not installed in our schools, and this contributes to the neglect of the communicative method in the teaching of French. This work highlights all these problems while giving possible solutions. It gives useful recommendations to solve the problems in order to make the communicative method the best.

### **Research Problem**

It is observed that despite the many advantages of the communicative method, some problems militate against the effective use of this method. If no action is taken, this method runs the risk of being neglected by teachers. Some of these problems are: the shortage of teaching materials; the lack of workshops and training programmes for teachers; the lack of electronic devices; the inability to operate the few electronic devices available by some enseignants; etc. Given the contribution and effectiveness of the communicative method, it deserves to be encouraged and developed in the teaching of the FLE.

### **Objective of the Work**

This paper aims to:

1. Promote the use of games, exercises songs, as part of the communicative method in a French language class.
2. Identify barriers to the application of the communicative method in French

## **Communicative Method in French**

The communicative method is a teaching method that aims to teach students to listen, speak, read, and write. It seeks to empower them by giving them the skills they need, both orally and in writing, to be able to communicate in everyday situations (with regard to all acts of speech such as defending, ordering, permitting, thanking, greeting, affirming, warning, lending, etc.). The notion of interaction is very broad, and then there is interaction on each occasion that two people come into contact, orally or in writing, the conduct of each interlocutor acting on the other during the exchanges, in particular in the performance of a common task. This task is either personal or collective. Reading, listening, preparing an email, and reassigning a project are tasks in the same way as filling out your portfolio.

In other words, there are "tasks" whenever we act to achieve a certain result. The communicative method, therefore, consists of making the most of speaking because it is through speaking that we learn the language better in general. It is communicative and responsive. We create an atmosphere that makes everyone feel comfortable talking. We're recreating real-life situations. Of course, we do not forget to work in writing and to evaluate oral comprehension. That is why we use radio programme excerpts, film excerpts, songs, articles, advertising excerpts, etc. because it is important to understand everyday French. To stimulate conversations, we engage in debates, games, and creative exercises (Jordan, 2009).

The teacher must: improve communication skills; and teach the social dimension of the language. Work on the speech. Give strategies to students. The learner is considered an active subject who needs to master some communication skills. Learning must be active. Learning a language involves creating habits and reflexes. In its generic sense, the communicative approach can be seen as a necessary pedagogical overhaul aiming at coherence in the didactic principles identified centred on the learner. In short, it is a new vision of learning.

### **The Communicative Method according to Wikipedia**

Student-centered learning (also called child-centered learning) is an approach to education that focuses on the needs of the students rather than those of others involved in the educational process, such as teachers and administrators. Student's needs, abilities, interests, and learning styles with the teacher as a facilitator of learning (Wikipedia, 2017).

L'apprentissage centré sur l'étudiant (aussi appelé l'apprentissage centré sur l'enfant) est une approche à l'éducation qui est plutôt centré sur les besoins des

étudiants au lieu des autres participants dans le processus de l'enseignement comme des professeurs et des administrateurs. L'apprentissage centre sur l'étudiant vise les besoins des étudiants, capacités, intérêt et des techniques d'apprentissage dans lequel l'enseignant n'est qu'un guide. (Notre traduction)

This indicates that in the classroom, the teacher has the responsibility of guiding the learners to achieve what they need to know and what they are interested in doing.

### **The Techniques of the Communicative Method in French**

The techniques of the communicative method are techniques created by the teacher to make the class lively and allow students to express themselves in class with the aim of achieving active participation of all students (Richards, 2006). These are techniques such as: games, songs, exercises, and audiovisual.

*Now let's try to explain these techniques one after the other:*

**Songs:** These, as an approach in the communicative method, allow students to master the pronunciation of French words and retain the lesson because, from the moment the students remember the song chanted by the teacher in class while teaching a particular lesson, the teacher remembers the lesson itself. For example, in the teaching of the "days of the week," if the teacher forms a song with this lesson after the explanation, this will make his task easy because the pupils will be motivated to sing. So, using the communicative method, the teacher should not forget the impact of the songs on the pupils (Patel & Jain, 2008).

**Exercises:** Here the teacher should create exercises that will allow students to express themselves in class, after each lesson, exercises should be given for students to open their mouths. For example, after the explanation on the subject like "parts of the body", the teacher can give an exercise like:

Make three sentences each with parts of the body. Example: (I speak with my mouth), and after the conjugation of the verbs, the teacher asks: who can conjugate the verb "come" in the present indicative? With the help of such exercises, students will be motivated and will always be tempted to say something even if they make mistakes (Zwiers, 2010).

**Role games:** This approach encourages the active participation of students in the classroom. It makes it possible to better assess the development of each student. Students can thus share the feelings of others because they are called to play the roles of others; this makes the teaching effective. This approach is profitable in the development of comprehension, expression, reading, etc. because the pupils will recreate activities around what they are trying to imitate. The teacher's task, in this case, is to guide the

students and divide them into small groups, giving them different roles up to date in front of the class. As a result, students will no longer be afraid of making a mistake or standing up in front of others to speak because everyone in the class will participate (Kodotchigova, 2008).

**Audiovisual:** According to Jefferson (2007), it is a combination of sound and image. Audio is synonymous with sound, just as the visual implies an image. The concept of audiovisual in French class is defined as the use of audio-visual materials and equipment such as video cassettes, audio cassettes, compact discs (CD), video tape recorders, television sets, overhead projectors, and even computers. The use of these materials and equipment has many advantages that will facilitate the learning of phonetics, grammar, oral comprehension, language skills, and oral and written communication techniques, all of which aim at mastering speech. language itself. Audiovisual is a perfect companion in the banking class. It is one of the teaching aids that can transmit audio and visual messages in the teaching of language. Messages can be recorded by the teacher on audio (sound) or video (image + sound) cassettes, tapes, audio and video discs, etc.

### **Barriers to the Application of the Communicative Method**

**Professional Incompetence:** Professional experience in teaching is a big problem in the application of the communicative method. This competence includes “what to say and how to say it appropriately based on the situation, the participants, and their roles and intentions” (Ozsevik 2010). It is observed that in general, many of our teachers cannot engage in a long conversation in the French language, yet the communicative method is aimed exactly at the goal of training students to be able to express themselves with anyone in French. There is no doubt that a teacher who expresses himself badly would find it difficult to use the communicative method in his classes.

We have pointed out that the use of the communicative method allows the teacher to guide the students. They will therefore be able to do well in class. It is at this point up to the teacher to correct the poorly constructed phrases by the pupils, but if the teacher in question is incompetent, he will defeat the objectives of this method. Since the majority of teachers in our system still need a training workshop, there is a failure in the task of applying said method. In this regard, Mbanefo (2008):

To teach in our secondary schools, we need interested people, having a license in French combined with teaching. Moreover, in principle, no one can teach at colleges without having a minimum of mastery in French and pedagogy. Even if this principle is not always in force. (68)

Mbanefo's observation cited above shows us that the license, not to speak of NCE, is no longer adequate as an academic and professional diploma for teaching French in

secondary school. On the other hand, many teachers in our secondary schools have only the license and there are no workshops that can serve as training in the linguistic competence to improve their oral and written competence.

Receiving the timetable also contributes to this problem because it does not favor these teachers. Very few hours are devoted to French on the timetable, and we know that for the communicative approach, there should be enough time for the teacher because he must introduce the lesson, do a little explanation, and adopt techniques from the communicative approach to animate the class. We discover that the subjects of personal concern in charge of the timetable are only English, mathematics, and science, thus minimizing the importance of French.

***Lack of Electronic Devices.*** According to Andreou, Vlachos and Andreou (2005), there are many electronic devices that are very useful for teaching a language like French, there are three categories of device class namely: the audio class, the visual class and the audiovisual class.

- ❖ **The Audio Class:** This is the class in which devices such as tape recorders, audio CDs, combined tape recorders, radio sets, non-computer assisted language laboratories etc. are exploited to learn the language.
- ❖ **The Visual Class:** These are visual devices and materials that are used to illustrate the lessons in French as a foreign language class. We can mention: posters, moving images, tables, silent video documents, equipment used to project film strips such as video projector, overhead projector, slide projector etc.
- ❖ **The Audiovisual Class:** the audiovisual devices and materials are: television, video recorder, camcorder, computer, multimedia language laboratories, digital video devices, video compact discs, digital video tapes, etc.

Overall, each device has a specific importance and function that is required in a class of lagoons. The tape recorder, for example, is especially recommended for phonetic correction, good intonation, diction, and pronunciation in general. With the help of the tape recorder, the speaker can hear himself just as the others hear him, and he can not only assess his own performance while listening again as many times as he wishes and making the necessary corrections.

Therefore, all of these devices need electricity to operate and funding to be Nigeria has a big electricity challenge because there are too many blackouts. For example, in Akwa Ibom state, sometimes one can go more than a week without having electricity. In this case, it is only those who have a generator that use the energy. With this electricity problem in our country, the use of these devices becomes very difficult for these teachers. Also, these electronic devices are very expensive, and our schools do not have the capacity to obtain them. All these problems are also factors hindering the

application of the communicative method for which these electronic devices have a lot of value.

***The Government's Attitude:*** It is up to the government to provide the schools of the country with the necessary teaching materials, but in our country, the government is more interested in biological, chemical, and physical science, as if other fields are not important. Teachers who are specialists in these subjects are paid a financial allowance called "Science Allowances". The reason is that the government gives them a great privilege. We note, however, that a French teacher is also a full-fledged professional. Unfortunately, these French teachers are not well paid, and that adds to the problems that we are currently identifying. The government shows an indifferent attitude by refusing to recruit enough French teachers for our secondary schools. It is noted that in some high schools in the city, not to speak of schools for the companion, there is only one French teacher. How will a number of teachers complete the tasks of teaching French using the communicative method, which is considered to be the most motivating method? Indeed, they abandon this method so that they are able to cover class routes. We understand that this is because French is not considered an important subject by the government, which explains the negligence in recruiting enough French teachers (Olayiwola & Ogundele, 2015).

It is also the role of the government to install the necessary equipment for learning French. A visit to a number of secondary schools reveals that there are not enough teaching materials to help teachers explain lessons in class, and this discourages them. There are lessons which require the use of electronic devices such as cassette radios, televisions, language labs, etc., but when teachers need them to facilitate the communicative approach, they cannot find them. They have nothing to do but abandon the communicative method.

***Lack of Workshops for Teachers:*** so that French teachers do not forget what they already know. The government and well-placed individuals should organize regular internships, seminars, and workshops for these teachers. These internships will allow them to get acquainted with new methodologies and techniques for teaching French. Through internships abroad, such as in Benin, Togo, Cameroon, etc., teachers would improve their linguistic competence and could possibly apply the communicative method. On the contrary, the lack of a training workshop would always make it difficult to apply this method (Olayiwola & Ogundele, 2015).

***Poor Enrolment Policy:*** According to Offorma (2012), French language department basically rely on pre-NCE programme to have students in to year one. This may not be unconnected with the fact that most of the public secondary school do not offer French. Therefore, it would be very difficult for the students to gain direct entry admission into department of French without having an "O" level French which is a pre-requisite for admission. Those students with deficit in their admission requirement are the ones that opt for pre-NCE French programme. Most of the admitted students into the department

are either the less intelligent or consider French as the last option. This trend has gone a long way in affecting the standard of the caliber of students produced yearly by the departments.

### **Conclusion**

The techniques used in the communicative method are songs, exercises, role games, and audiovisuals. The song method allows students to master the pronunciation of French words and retain the lesson because, from the moment the students remember the song chanted by the teacher in class while teaching a particular lesson, the teacher remembers the lesson itself. The barriers to the application of the communicative method are professional incompetence, lack of electronic devices, the government's attitude, and a lack of workshops for teachers. Professional experience in teaching is a big problem in the application of the communicative method. It is observed that in general, many of our teachers cannot engage in a long conversation in the French language, yet the communicative method is aimed exactly at the goal of training students to be able to express themselves with anyone in French.

### **Recommendations**

1. Linguistic and pedagogical courses should be organised locally and internationally for French teachers each year. This internship will allow French teachers to assess their level of competence, to promote their profession, and to be aware of the methodology, the techniques, and the most recent ones.
2. As for French teachers, we advise them to use the French language in class and outside the classroom in order to improve their French competence and that of the students.

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