



Francophony and foreign language teaching-learning (french) in light of law 10.639/2003

Francofonia e ensino-aprendizagem de língua estrangeira (francês) à luz da lei 10.639/2003

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ABSTRACT

This paper proposes to present a study about francophony, which, according to our investigations, has been defended as a form of cultural cohabitation, respect for diversity, and solidarity among peoples. Law 10.639/2003 ensures the teaching of African History and Afro-Brazilian Culture in all subjects of the Brazilian school curriculum, in Elementary and Secondary Education. The teaching materials, also containing cultural elements, can contribute to the promotion of education for ethnic-racial relations in the teaching of French as a Foreign Language (FLE). This research proposes to investigate how the teaching of culture associated with Francophone and Law 10.639/2003 a teaching that also aims at the education of ethnic-racial relations. This research, characterized as an action research, of interpretativist character, will be developed in a public language center environment and, by concluding it, we hope to contribute to the reflection about the insertion of culture in language teaching as an element that provokes reflections, debates, individual formation, construction of new social perspectives and also deconstruction of values related to race and prejudices cultivated in our environment.

Keywords: Francophony, Teaching, Language, Law.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Francophonie has been advocated as a space of cultural exchange, respect and cordiality between peoples, especially between Francophone peoples. These assumptions are also disseminated by the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF), a political entity that brings together several countries linked to the French language. From this perspective, we believe that francophony can be a positive element for the promotion of culture teaching in the classroom.

The general objective of this proposal is to analyze the contribution of francophony in the French class through FLE teaching materials and to verify the possible contributions of Law 10.639/2003 to the teaching of FLE in a Brazilian context.



In the case of FLE teaching, one can consider francophony and law 10.639/2003 as important supports for teaching culture in the classroom. Therefore, the specific objectives of this project are:

- To verify how the insertion of the Francophone theme in FLE classes can promote the teaching of culture.
- Articulate a teaching approach aimed at valuing ethno-racial diversity in the school context.
- To present actions that enable teachers and students to acquire the French language through teaching that stimulates construction, reconstruction, rescue, and reflection on cultural visions and identities.

Thus we have the following research questions:

- How can we use the francophone theme in language culture teaching in FLE class?
- In what ways does Law 10.639/2003 help us rethink the Francophone for FLE teaching and for the education of ethnic-racial relations in the Brazilian context?
- What are the effects of the didactic material prepared according to the guidelines of law 10.639/2003?

2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION - CULTURE AND LANGUAGE TEACHING

Pennycook (2007) calls the attention of applied linguists to the need for a critical position on our part, since we deal with language and education, which are "essentially political factors of life". Following the author's ideas, we assume that we, as applied linguists, also have our political function. According to the author, our world is marked by child deaths, ecological problems, oppression due to gender, race, sexual orientation, social class, and various other inequalities. Given this, Pennycook believes that such problems should not only be of interest to "political leaders" and that we should "perceive ourselves within a set of power relations that are global in essence" (Pennycook, 2007, p. 21). Therefore, we agree with the author in recognizing that we are part of a system in which our positions as professionals will interfere with what we do and influence others. The author invites us to consider "[...] the cultural and ideological bases of our work and



our lives in an attempt to understand how those bases can perpetuate these great inequities." (Pennycook, 2007, p. 22).

In my view, societies are unequally structured and are dominated by hegemonic cultures and ideologies that limit our possibilities to reflect on the world and, consequently, on the possibilities to change that world. I am also convinced that language learning is closely linked both to the maintenance of these inequities and to the conditions that make it possible to change them. Thus, it is the duty of applied linguistics to examine the ideological basis of the knowledge we produce. (Pennycook, 2007, p. 22)

This excerpt translates an important concern of this research, which is to seek, including through language teaching, to critically reflect on our reality and also provoke in our students these reflections. Pennycook (2007, p. 23) states that he is "[...] in favor of a critical approach to Applied Linguistics that is more sensitive to social, cultural, and political concerns."

Kubota (2013) suggests ways for teachers to conduct topics related to culture and race in the classroom. The author shows us that despite the development of a range of innovative teaching resources that are available in the language teaching field, cultural issues are brought up in these materials in a generalized way. The most recurrent topics are "food, fashion, shopping, travel, and holidays," while issues related to race "are avoided because they are controversial or uncomfortable" (Kubota, 2013, p. 130). From the author's statements, we see that when dealing with the teaching of culture, we have the choice of doing it in a superficial way, without much questioning, using everyday topics such as recipes, fashion, tourism, among others, without provoking reflections, nor teaching our students to have a critical reading of the world, of social relations and attitudes, in short, making up reality, refraining from touching on issues related to social problems. We also have the option of doing what we think is the best thing to practice in a classroom, and what is also the school's function: to provoke in our students a more judicious appreciation of this diversity and to raise questions about behaviors, social organizations, ways of seeing the world.

In view of the above, we affirm the importance of culture in language teaching since it reflects values, ideologies, and social actions. Therefore, it is necessary, when dealing with the cultural component in the classroom, to be aware of what our position is as educators, what values we are bringing to our students, to the community in which we work. Kubota (2013) calls for a critical stance in the teaching of culture and race issues, themes that we assume are pertinent to education, even more so when it comes to the



community in which this study was conducted: a mostly black and socially disadvantaged community.

3 LAW 10.639/03

Law 10.639, promulgated on January 9, 2003, changes the Law of Directives and Bases of Brazilian education (LDB) in its articles 26-A and 79-B, making mandatory the teaching of Afro-Brazilian History and Culture, African and African History, the struggle of black people in Brazil, the Brazilian black culture, and the black people in the formation of the national society, rescuing the contribution of the black people in the social, economic, and political areas, pertinent to the History of Brazil.

The Law covers all subjects of the school curriculum, from elementary to high school, and includes the "National Day of Black Consciousness" on November 20th in the school calendar. Cavaleiro (2006) when discussing the values that are transmitted through education throughout the history of the country states that

[By locating the concept and process of education in the context of black collectivities and people and their relationship with social spaces, the debate on education at the service of diversity becomes imperative, with the affirmation and revitalization of the self-image of black people as a great challenge. (Cavaleiro, 2006, p. 13)

The author also affirms that, even today, as a result of the discriminatory dynamics that have occurred throughout the history of Brazil, a demand for egalitarian conditions among Brazilian citizens in the most diverse spheres of society is necessary and that education is a powerful means for the defense of the rights of the black population and for the extinction of social and racial disparities. Based on the statements of this author, we can see that it is a positioning in the sense of joining forces with theoreticians and educators in defense of education as a means of raising awareness and transforming society.

According to Cavaleiro (2007), Law 10.639/2003 is also the result of one of the actions taken by the Brazilian State in Durban, South Africa, in 2001, during the 3rd World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Forms of Intolerance. Brazil took an Official Document to this conference, in which it declares itself historically responsible for the injustices and discriminations suffered by African descendants and commits itself to carry out reparation actions for such facts. The



author always stresses the importance of the work and participation of the Black Movement in claiming these actions:

In view of the developments in Brazilian education, one can observe the efforts of several fronts of the Black Movement, especially those of Black Women, and the efforts of the Nucleus of Afro-Brazilian Studies (NEABs) and related groups created in universities, which seek the structuring of a national education policy based on antidiscriminatory and anti-racist practices. (Cavalleiro, 2006, p. 19)

We see here the importance of the militancy, of the positioning, of the political engagement of the movements mentioned, in the search for an egalitarian and fair national policy.

After the publication of law 10.639/2003, the National Council of Education approved the Opinion CNE/CP 3/2004, establishing the Curricular Guidelines for the Education of Ethnic-Racial Relations and the Teaching of Afro-Brazilian and African History and Culture to be implemented by schools of different levels and modalities, and it is up to the education systems, within their jurisdiction, to guide and promote the training of teachers and supervise compliance with the Guidelines. (Cavalleiro, 2006, p. 19)

Thus, we understand that the language teaching that will be given at the Centro de Cultura e Referência Negra Graça do Axé, which is the environment of this project should also turn to ethnic-racial education, since there is an official document that regulates such activities and Lei 10.639/2003 covers all Brazilian school contexts.

Praxedes (2010) in his article *The racial issue and the overcoming of eurocentrism in school education* reiterates a change of attitude on the part of those involved in the educational process and calls attention to respect for diversity.

We live in a multicultural society, where countless ethnic groups live together, and it is no longer accepted that only the knowledge provided by the Eurocentric, white, Catholic, and masculine worldview be represented in the way we build school curricula. (Praxedes, 2010, p. 39)

We consider Praxedes' definition of eurocentrism for this work:

By Eurocentrism, we mean the tendency to evaluate the physical appearance of individuals, the ideas, customs and behaviors, religions and forms of knowledge such as literature, arts, philosophy and sciences proper to European societies as superior to human beings, cultures and civilizations from other regions of the world. (Praxedes, 2010, p. 43)

The author advocates the training of teachers critical of eurocentrism, since this is a historical stance that has been established in the educational field. Praxedes (2010) also



clarifies that a critical stance does not mean exchanging eurocentrism for afrocentrism, but that the diverse worldviews should be respected.

As for the teaching of FLE, which is one of the objects of this study, carried out in the light of Law 10.639/2003, and considering all the essential statements of the theorists mentioned here, we seek to reflect on the influence of this law in order to rethink the teaching of FLE in Brazilian schools.

Facing this reality brought by Law 10.639/2003, we recognize the need to explore new pedagogical attitudes, new possibilities for critical training of our students in relation to ethnic-racial and multicultural issues.

We consider francophony a rich contribution for the promotion of ethnic-racial relations education in Brazil, considering the premise of diversity and multiculturalism. The Francophone universe is composed of several African countries that can be an important element to promote the application of Law 10.639/2003 in FLE classroom. How many poets, thinkers, artists make up the African universe and can they be introduced to our teachers and students? The possibility of promoting ethnic-racial teaching and learning can become considerably fruitful and enriching, according to the educators' attitudes and the choice of teaching materials.

4 LEARNING MATERIALS

Almeida Filho (2008, 2015) presents four actions that make up the process of teaching languages, actions that integrate what he calls Global Operation of Language Teaching (OGEL). According to the author, in order to accomplish teaching, the language teacher performs the following activities:

- (1) the planning of the units of a course;
- (2) the production of teaching materials or their selection;
- (3) the experiences in, with and about the target language made with students mainly inside but also outside the classroom, and
- (4) student performance evaluation (but also the teacher's own self-evaluation and student and/or external evaluation of the teacher's work) (Almeida Filho, 2008, p. 17)

The author states that these steps influence each other and are guided by an approach, which would be "a philosophy, an enforce, an approach, a treatment, a read"



(Almeida Filho, 2008, p. 18). In Figure 1, we can observe Almeida Filho's (2008) model of the Global Operation of Language Teaching.

According to the OGEL model presented by Almeida Filho (2008), after planning a course, the next step would be the production of teaching materials or their selection. Thus, we understand teaching materials as resources of great influence in language teaching and that they deserve a careful look not only at what they can provide in the linguistic scope, but also in the ideological context, that is: what are the concepts, the ideas, the values, the power relations that would be present in these materials.

Barbosa (2013) draws attention to the prominent role of the LD in the national context by virtue of its wide use, and also draws our attention to the fact that the LD is for many people "a depository of truths" and "opinion maker" (Barbosa, 2013, p.150).

In view of this, we can infer that not only the DL, but the DM in general, are loaded with ideologies, representations, stereotypes, etc.

In light of the above, we understand that language teaching is also responsible for building black identity, for making our students aware of our origins and our conditions.

5 FRANCOFONIA

The term "francophony", according to Pinhas (2004), was created by the French geographer Onésime Reclus, approximately in 1880 to refer to the linguistic and cultural community of the French colonial empire. According to Araújo (2005), Léopold Sédar Senghor took up the term again in 1962, which "applies to that geographical, linguistic, and cultural reality that brings together all those who make use of the French language as a mother tongue, second language, language of communication, or language of culture." (Araújo, 2005, p. 1)

According to the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF), today the word francophonie:

- (with a lowercase f) refers to the promotion of the French language and the values it conveys. It also refers to a group of people who share the French language.
- (with a capital F) refers to the international organization that brings together 84 French-speaking states and governments, the OIF itself.

According to data from the *Observatoire de la Langue Française 2014*, French is the fifth most widely spoken language in the world, with 274 million speakers and is present on five continents.



The OIF is an intergovernmental institution composed of 84 states and governments, and within the 84 states, 54 are member states, 26 are observer states, and 04 are associate states.

Table 1- Member, associate, and observer countries of the OIF.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Africa • Benin • Brukna Faso • Cape Verde • Ivory Coast • Ghana • Guinea • Guinea Bissau • Mali • Niger • Senegal • Togo • Central Africa and Indian Ocean • Burundi • Shrimp • Central African Republic • Congo • Congo RD • Gabon • Equatorial Guinea • Rwanda • Sao Tome and Principe • Tchad • Comoros • Djibouti • Madagascar • Maurícia • Mozambique • Seychelles • North Africa and Middle East • Egypt • United Arab Emirates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mauritania • Tunisia • Qatar • America-Caribbean • Argentina • Canada • Canada New Brunswick • Canada Ontario • Canada Quebec • Costa Rica • Mexico • Dominican Republic • Dominica • Haiti • Saint Lucia • Uruguay • Asia Pacific • Cambodia • South Korea • Laos • New Caledonia • Thailand • Vanuatu • Vietnam • Europe • Albania • Andorra • Armenia • Austria • Kingdom of Belgium • Bosnia Herzegovina • Bulgaria • Cyprus • Estonia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Croatia • Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia • France • Georgia • Greece • Hungary • Kosovo • Latvia • Lithuania • Luxembourg • Mondalvia • Principality of Monaco • Montenegro • Poland • Czech Rep. • Romania • Serbia • Slovakia • Slovenia • Switzerland • Ukraine • Wallonic-Brussels Federation 				
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54 OIF member states and governments.						
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04 Associated States.						



• Lebanon		
• Morocco		

Source: Available at < <http://www.francophonie.org/-80--Etats-et-gouvernements-html>>. Accessed at 02.Jan.2017.

According to the OIF, this entity implements political and multilateral cooperation actions for the benefit of French-speaking populations. Its actions are subject to respect for cultural and linguistic diversity and serve to promote the French language, peace, and sustainable development.

Here we see the French language as an instrument of political articulation. It is interesting to note that not all OIF member countries have French as their main language. It is necessary to observe how the OIF seeks to carry out the actions mentioned above.

Jean Calvet, in dealing with language policies, gives us examples of political action on languages. According to the theorist, when one intervenes politically on the form of the language, for example, "fixing a writing, enriching the lexicon, fighting against foreign influences" (Calvet, 2007, p. 87), this intervention is considered an "action on the *corpus*" of the language. In characterizing action on the *status of* the language, Calvet states that:

In situations of multilingualism, States are sometimes led to promote one or the other language that was previously dominated, or, on the contrary, to deprive a language of a *status* it previously enjoyed, or to enforce a balance between all languages, that is, to administer the *status* and social functions of the languages present. (Calvet, 2007, p. 117, emphasis added)

Based on this statement, as far as the OIF is concerned, one can see the quest of this political entity to maintain the status and international prestige of the French language, thus, this is one of the main interests of this organization.

Historically, "the diffusion of French culture abroad goes through the diffusion of the French language" (Calvet, 2007, p. 131). The French position in relation to the European Union is also one of defense, especially in relation to the English language.

One can see then that France's policy towards Europe is divided between these two principles: the linguistic management of Europe and the defense of the French language. Behind this is the idea that the future of French is at stake in the European Union, that we must at all costs prevent English from becoming the only working language [...] (Calvet, 2007, p. 135)

Thus, we agree with Calvet when he states that the Francophonie becomes a political asset for maintaining the international status of French. According to the author,



If the international status of French is symbolically at stake in Europe, its statistical future is decided in Africa, where demography and possible progress in schooling ensure that the language has a huge reservoir of potential speakers. And this leads us to another side of France's linguistic policy: that which refers to the Francophonie. (Calvet, 2007, p. 135)

The author states that there are two ways to view and analyze francophony. The first is that it is a sociolinguistic reality, a result of colonialism that made the French language occupy a prominent place in the world. The French language is spoken in several countries. Thus,

[In any case, regardless of the accuracy of the figures, these people live in very different sociolinguistic situations, ranging from places where French is a highly dominant language (France, Quebec, part of Belgium) to countries where it is only the language of the state (i.e. of education, administration, justice, etc.), spoken by approximately 10% of the population (this is the case in French-speaking African countries). These situations are also differentiated by the languages with which French is confronted there. There are countries where French coexists with practically only one language, such as Tunisia; others where it coexists with dozens, even hundreds of languages (Senegal, Cameroon, Zaire). And finally, these situations are differentiated by the types of relationships between the languages, where French may be the dominant language (as in Africa) or the dominated language (as in Canada or Louisiana). In some of these countries, a major sociolinguistic problem arises: they find themselves in a situation of diglossia, but with the particularity that the majority of the population does not speak the "high variety," the official language, and is therefore de facto excluded from public life, education, etc. (Calvet, 2007, p. 137)

The second way to treat the francophony according to Calvet, is as a "geopolitical concept" (Calvet, 2007, p. 137). It is the *political association of countries* around the francophony. According to the author, "the list of 'francophone' countries in the geopolitical sense is slightly different from that of sociolinguistically 'francophone' countries, but it is equally varied" (Calvet, 2007, p. 138). The fact that there are countries where French is not an official language or is not even spoken highlights the political character of these alliances.

However, France has tended to take the side of the French language (and therefore of individual promotion) in its bilateral policy, while the French-speaking multilateral organizations, largely financed by France, are increasingly, but with fewer resources, moving in the second direction. (Calvet, 2007, p. 139-140)

The flag of linguistic and cultural pluralism preached by France is not always raised in the same way by the country. Calvet further states:



But it turns out that this linguistic and cultural pluralism, evoked whenever French is threatened, is practically forgotten when its positions are more secure, as in France or in French-speaking Africa. (Calvet, 2007, pg. 142)

In this way, this study proposes a French language teaching that goes beyond the usual Eurocentrism and is more expansive, that goes towards globalization, towards respect among peoples and cultures, that seeks to know other faces of the French-speaking world, that favors exchanges and mutual respect.

In addition to Calvet's vision, we bring to this work the perspective of Senegalese Ndiaye (2014), sociologist and researcher in history, regarding francophony in the African continent. The author presents some questions about the "relationship that the African francophone speaker has towards the French language" and states that it is necessary to "end the myth of French conceived as an African language." For Ndiaye (2014), according to the author, following the example of Senegal, such a myth is due to the strong acculturation of African elites. Ndiaye (2014) states that the positioning of the Senegalese poet and former president, Léopold Senghor regarding the French language, also contributed to the overvaluation of the French language in the country. Senghor stated that

[...] French would no longer effectively be a foreign language given the condition of extreme acculturation that would have led Senegalese elites to think in French and express themselves better in this language than in their mother tongues, replete, in essence, with "Frenchisms" in the cities. (Senghor apud Ndiaye 2014)

Ndiaye (2014) draws attention to the status of the French language in countries whose languages used are from the same language family as French such as Romania, Portugal, and Italy, but where French is considered a foreign language. However, in African countries, where the spoken languages have no Latin origin, French is not considered a foreign language. The author clarifies that this reality is "the result of an unconsciousness that was wisely maintained by the colonial administration and the local Francophone elites." (Ndiaye 2014).

The author explains that French, compared to the African languages that were established centuries ago in the country, is a language imposed by colonization and that linguistically it has "no structural kinship" with African languages and should have the status of a foreign language. He claims that "francophony is the pursuit, in dulcified form, of the colonial project of affirming the values of the civilization of France."



We consider the statements exposed here of great relevance, because we can perceive in the words of the Senegalese philosopher that there are other not so fanciful postures regarding the reality of the French-speaking African countries.

6 METHODOLOGY

When discussing research in education, Lüdke & André (1986) state that research inevitably brings with it the burden of values, preferences, interests, and principles that guide the researcher. Thus, this research is based on qualitative paradigms. We seek to verify how the teaching of culture in FLE classes can be based on the Francophone theme and also to promote an education focused on ethnic-racial relations.

To conduct this research, we adopted the qualitative paradigm of an interpretativist nature. According to Creswell,

Qualitative research employs different philosophical conceptions; research strategies; methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Although the processes are similar, qualitative procedures rely on text and image data, have unique steps in data analysis, and draw on different research strategies.(Creswell, 2010, p. 208)

Therefore, we recognize here the importance of considering and evaluating all the views presented throughout the conduct of the research, both of the participants and of the researcher. Interpretation requires sensitivity to many elements that make up the research context.

7 RESEARCH CONTEXT

This project will be developed at the Centro de Referência e de Cultura Negra Graça do Axé, a public space of affirmative politics in the Presidente Roosevelt neighborhood.

There will be two classes corresponding to Level A1^a. 12 classes will be taught, each lasting 1 hour and 20 minutes, corresponding to two modules and the evaluations will be prepared by the teacher. One module will deal with the Francophone theme and the other will emphasize issues related to the application of Law 10.639/2003.

The students who will participate in this research have never studied French and are between 14 and 18 years old. Most of them are in the 9th grade of elementary school or in the 1st grade of high school. Among the students, some declared themselves as being



brown, black, and some white, according to the classification of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE).

8 THE DEMAND FOR A SYSTEMATIZED PEDAGOGICAL WORK FOR ETHNIC-RACIAL EDUCATION

Developing the racial theme in the classroom, more specifically in a language course could be something commonplace, however, we are still not close to the ideal desired by several education experts and activists of the Black Movement against racial discrimination, Munanga (2008), Gomes (2008), Praxedes (2010). In an interview with the electronic magazine *Brasil de Fato*, Silva (2017) states that the education of ethnic-racial relations still needs more attention from educators, even because after years of implementation of law 10.639/2003, the racial theme is not included in the pedagogical plans of school institutions in practice.

9 THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: A SPACE FOR ACTION

The foreign language class is also a space for the search for humanization, for debates that revolve around social problems, identity constructions, relativizations, and the development of critical thinking.

10 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this paper, we will seek to verify whether the insertion of the theme of francophony in FLE classes will promote the teaching of culture in the classroom. We understand that francophony can be used in a positive way to teach culture from a more social, critical, and questioning perspective.

The use of the French-speaking theme is enriching in order to change the Eurocentric focus commonly given to the teaching of FLE and make students experience other possibilities, such as the study of French-speaking countries located in other continents and also French-speaking African countries.

In FLE class, by using the Francophonie as a cultural teaching tool and as a means of discovery of African countries that use the French language, it is important to make students deconstruct some misconceptions about the culture of these countries. By performing these actions, we infer that we work guided by the Law 10.639/2003 and perform an education for ethno-racial relations, because we provide students the contact with African countries as well. Therefore, we consider that Law 10.639/2003 helped us



to rethink the Francophonie for the teaching of FLE and for the education of ethnic-racial relations in the Brazilian context.

We believe that the effects of the teaching materials prepared in accordance with the Law 10.639/2003 favored all those involved in the process of teaching and learning the French language through a didactic approach aimed at ethnic-racial education, for the development of critical thinking, and identity construction of all those involved in this work. There was learning on both sides: students and teachers. There was the expansion of the notion of Francophony, the reflection on issues of race and prejudice, the valorization of the discussions, and the encouragement to search for other themes and concerns that touch our young people in their relations with the world.



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