HAL

archives-ouvertes.fr

French

Valérie Spaëth, Jean-Paul Narcy-Combes

▶ To cite this version:

HAL Id: halshs-01322995

https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-01322995

Submitted on 29 May 2016

Valérie Spaëth and Jean-Paul Narcy-Combes

20 French

Abstract: This paper investigates where French is acquired, in which conditions and what the specific problems are. It describes the various contexts that are concerned and studies the varying consequences. Contextual parameters are shown to play a major role and the dominant problems are learning problems that are studied by language educationalists and not in acquisitional terms in Europe or in the south. Due to the complexity of each situation, few studies are able to take all the parameters into consideration. The conclusion is a plea for more reciprocal exchanges between the research in French and in English and for a reflection in order to increase the role of research when political decisions are made in matters of language which are not without serious consequences in countries where French plays a dominant role.

Keywords: French, acquisition, language education, contexts, complexity

1 Introduction

Today French, as a language, is in a specific set-up at both micro and macro levels. The role of the French state in France, its language policy (↗3 Language Policy, Management and Planning) and a long history of colonial expansion explain that it is both largely dominated by Paris (with the exception of Quebec) and disconnected from its original home base and spoken on all the continents with three different and varying statuses. Actually, at the same time, French is a first language (L1) in mono or multilingual nations (for example, it is the second most-spoken L1 in the EU); it is a second language[1] (L2) in nations of the north for immigrant people, and an ambiguous L2 in many nations of the south where, as a result of decolonization, it may be the official language and/or the schooling language, or sometimes widely used without any special legal status, or even the schooling language with no legal status. It is also a foreign language (FL) all over the world due to the long-standing influence of various external or internal institutions (*Alliance française, lycées français*, and national schools).

Moreover, the social and cultural evolution of the French language may be shown to have followed two major trends since the second part of the 20th century: on the one hand the global development of education with a special focus on literacy and, on the other hand, the south to north and east to west migrations of people who

---

[1] In the didactics of French as a foreign and second language, FLS (French as a second language) always means that French has a collective and political status.

experience a change in language, education and culture. As a result, learning French as an L2 or FL may be seen as a special issue in language education.

Rather than writing another state of the art paper, we have chosen to study the contexts in which French was acquired and to see how the research into its acquisition could play a positive part in the problems that were observed. In the first part of the chapter, the present-day situation of French as an L1, L2 or FL will be described with special attention to the educational gap between the north and the south. In the second part, the development of French Second Language Acquisition research (FSLA) (↗2 Research Methods) will be studied with a focus on early results, followed by a study of the changes in the theories, as well as of how theories and the various contexts studied in part 1 are related.

2 Present-Day Situation of French as a First, Second or Foreign Language in the World

2.1 International Role in Language Policies

2.1.1 Role in the Political International Language Situation

French is one of the few languages (with English, Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese, etc.) which, in varying degrees, are spoken on the five continents. Different historical evolutions have left their traces on these languages. However, a number of shared points are diffusion due to wars and conquests; linguistic diglossic phenomena both within these countries and without, and with interference; disconnection from the original homeland; different values and beliefs and circulations (Fishman 1976; Weinreich 1953).

Because of this specific history of diffusion, these languages are subjected to macro level language and educational policies (↗3 Language Policy, Management and Planning). They play a big role in education, either as a subject or as schooling language. So, French has been part of UNESCO educational plans since the end of World War 2, the focus of OIF (*Organisation internationale de la Francophonie*) since its creation in 1970, and has had a good place in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), (Council of Europe 2001) since 2001. The set-up is complex and according to the contexts (north vs. south), these macro levels must be taken into account next to each national language policy.

As far as French is concerned, ideological and political points of view have to be examined at the same time as language policy. For instance, the aims of OIF are political as well as language-oriented. Moreover, since the beginning of the 21st century, especially since 2003, with the *Congrès de Libreville* (Dumont 2003), institutional speeches and acts have played an important role in Africa, the area most concerned.

2.1.2 Roles of Social Representations in the Learning of French

There is a long history of linguistic contacts between French and all other languages (Spaëth 2010). The scientific literature related to the many standards of French can be traced back over many decades (Dumont 1983; Klinkenberg 2007). However, with the exception of Quebec (↗26 Canada), the French standard is still strictly centralized around the French spoken in France (cf. McLaughlin et al. 2010). This strong representation[2] is shared in the north as well as in the south (Francard/Geron/Wilmet 2000) and increases difficulties when French has to be learnt or taught as an L1 or L2. French as an FL is no exception to this rule and it still benefits from it. Strong social representations, such as language of the élite, language of reason, language of liberty, a beautiful language,[3] are still very much alive.

2.2 A Tentative Classification: North vs. South

Actually, as far as languages can be said to have economic value (Bourdieu 1982; Calvet 2002), the macro linguistic level (type of state: mono vs. multilingual) organizes and influences the micro level. Thus, national language and educational policies are decisive and the role of the school is the core of this process. Moreover, the role of the CEFR is increasing with the implementation of common assessment procedures. As a consequence, the various statuses of French (L1, L2 and FL) cannot be examined from the same standpoint:

– French as L1 is to be examined from a personal and collective perspective.
– French as L2 will require both a collective and sociolinguistic interrogation;
– French as FL remains more simply on a didactic plan.

These statuses are to be classified according to an official and collective criterion where the notion of construction of a linguistic repertoire (Gumperz 1964) plays a central role.

In this case, the situation in the north has to be clearly differentiated from that in the south. In the north, the L1 status is dominant in officially monolingual (France) (↗27 France) or multilingual nations (Benelux, Switzerland, Canada) (↗26 Canada) where a large part of the population speak French as a mother tongue or as one of the languages in the family, and where French is also the schooling language. Hence there is a relative continuity between national, social and personal language prac-

---

2 We will use the term representation rather than belief since the former term has been the more used of the two in France since Durkheim (1968) [1912].
3 Cf. on this point Rivarol (1991) [1783]; Fumaroli (2011) and as a counterpoint Siouffi (2010).

tices, but the issue of construction of a linguistic repertoire is very different for immigrants for whom French is L2 and they need it for social integration.

In the south, the situation is inverted; French is rarely the L1, but an official language, or maybe, partly or totally, the schooling language. French is not associated with social integration as in the north, for the different national languages play this role. It means upward social mobility and an opening to the world, the competition with English being strongly felt in this case.

2.2.1 Situation in the North

French in France is a case apart as it is the only country where French is an L1 in an officially monolingual state, at least in Metropolitan France. Overseas France with territories over the 5 continents is more complex.[4]

Besides, the officially bi- or multilingual nations where French is the L1 for a large part of the population are all to be found in the north: Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Canada. In all these countries, French is one of the official languages sharing this privilege with one or more other languages. In officially bilingual Canada, Quebec, where French has been the sole official language since the Act of 1974, must attract our attraction. The protection of French follows the expansion of English. As far as practices are concerned, this Canadian Province is eventually becoming bilingual (Mclaughlin et al. 2010) (↗11 Bilingual Education).

This paper will not deal with reviewing all the contexts where French is the official language. Each would indeed deserve a specific study of its laws and language policies, of how the languages are spread geographically, of the variants of French that can be encountered, and eventually of the linguistic conflicts that are experienced (as in Belgium). We cannot but mention that in this already complex group, the status of French as L2 must be taken into account as the five countries have had to accommodate numerous migrants at different times. As French is the, or one of the, official languages, either immigrants already know it as it is one of the languages of their original countries, or they have to learn it in conditions which will vary according to the country they are in. In spite of different positions concerning integration, a common trend towards making mastery of the language one of the criteria to access total citizenship can be felt. This trend is in line with the European language and educational policy which has been concerned with the social integration of migrants since the 1970s.

---

4 Some of these territories share the very same statuses of *régions* (Provinces) and *départements* (counties) of the French Republic as Metropolitan *régions* and *départements* but are largely bilingual (creoles) or multilingual.

Two geo-linguistic situations can be drawn as far as French is concerned. On the one hand, Switzerland, Belgium and Quebec, language boundaries can fairly clearly be defined (Lüdi 1994), and on the other hand Luxembourg and Canada in a broader sense, where language boundaries are less clear as, most of the time, interactions in French will vary according to formal situations, and social or family practices. Due to high migration rate, according to the *Programme for International Student Assessment (*PISA), the five countries have implemented systems to educate migrants' children.[5] The French model of integration classes or Quebec's model of immersion classes can be found in Wallonia (Manço/Vaes-Harou 2009), in French-speaking Switzerland (Perregaux et al. 2003), in Luxembourg and Canada (Collès/Dufays/Maeder 2003; Moore/Sabatier 2012). As a consequence, the teaching and learning of French are vital stakes as far as politics and didactics are concerned.

2.2.2 Specific French Situation

In this matter, the French situation is an interesting case as it exemplifies all the problems specific to the acquisition of French as L2, especially those related to the acquisition of French citizenship. A look back at the thirty years of prosperity between 1946 and 1975 explains the situation. Metropolitan France sustained her industrial development by inviting workers from its former colonies (Noiriel 1992; 2004). The oil crisis of 1973 put an end to this process. Ever since, the question of integration/insertion of migrants has triggered legislation, and the creation of specific teaching and learning frameworks that will endlessly be discussed and amended (Schnapper 2007).

Since 1970, in France, there has existed a support system to welcome migrant children in primary and secondary schools. This went with diverging legislation concerning migrant workers and the nationality code. As an instance, the paradoxical character of the French language policy (↗3 Language Policy, Management and Planning) which oscillates constantly between closure and openness (Encrevé 2007) is illustrated by the Act of January 9th, 1973, concerning the closure of frontiers followed by the decree on family reunification in 1974. The institutional integration support system for migrant children has been built as a result of this tension. On the one hand, the objective is the mastery of French, but on the other hand the multi-lingual repertoire of the children has to be acknowledged (Archibald/Galligani 2009). The specific language and cultural background of non-French speaking children is paid timid interest in the recent ministerial circular of October 11th, 2012 concerning their education (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale 2012). Since the beginning of the 21st century the connection between mastery of the language and citizenship has

---

5 The PISA surveys (2003–2009) provide interesting indicators of the gap between the results of native-born, foreign-born or second-generation pupils.

become tighter for adults. In the light of this, the Act concerning the mastery of immigration, integration and political asylum of November 20th, 2007 (*Journal officiel*, 21.11.2007), offers a specific language integration plan. It has the form of a contract (CAI: *contrat d'accueil et d'intégration*) signed between the migrant and the representative of the government. However, the latest decree of October 12th, 2012, stipulates that henceforward applicants wishing to acquire French nationality must officially[6] achieve level B1.

Overseas France is a half-way house between Metropolitan France and countries in the south. Officially they are part of France, but, for historical reasons, their sociolinguistic situation is closer to that of countries where French has the status of a L2. One could say that they are spread over a sociolinguistic continuum. In Guadeloupe, Martinique and Reunion, a Creole-French bilingualism generally prevails even if French may be the L1 (Launey/Puren 2010). In Guyana, however, numerous Creoles and Amerindian languages are spoken and French is rarely an L1 and is not often usual in the inhabitants' repertoire (Léglise/Migge 2007).

2.2.3 Situation in the South

The presence of French in countries of the south is explained by the history of how it expanded (conquest and colonization, emigration, deportation). French colonial history exemplifies the two types of conquest and expansion (economic or human settlement). It dates back to the 16th century with a peak in the 19th century (Hobsbawm 1987). It came to a practical close with the end of the Algerian war and the *Accords d'Evian* in 1962. Today the whole of overseas France is part of "collectivités d'outre-mer" with varying statuses.

Let us briefly mention that French and schooling have always had a specific position in these countries. In the 19th century, under the influence of Jules Ferry, the State organized schooling in French in all the colonies (Spaëth 1998). The reference to mother tongues (local languages or patois in France) was subjected to different types of prohibition or eviction.

Decolonization (1946–1962) was a time when the status and position of French in former French territories had to be reconsidered. Four different cases can be described:
1) The new nations in former French Indochina (Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia) linguistically nationalized their administrations and public services. French was systematically eradicated as the schooling language and rapidly became an FL that is a language learnt, generally in secondary schools. English is now the first

---

6 That is through a certified institution recognized by the State. This goes with the development of a market for the language education of migrants.

FL. Some university scientific courses continued to be taught in French. At the end of the twentieth century, they became higher education courses in French with specific teaching practices centred on the discourse requirements of the various disciplines (medicine, biology, dentistry, economics, law, tourism, etc.).

2) The new nations succeeding Maghreb protectorates (Tunisia and Morocco) totally Arabized primary education but maintained French as the schooling language in scientific subjects in high schools and as the first FL. Scientific higher education courses are given in French. The social status of French remains relatively stable, even if, in Tunisia, for instance, since the Arab Spring, it may have been attributed a certain anti-Islamic character. French still remains a widely spoken and favoured language which may still be part of the everyday repertoire of speakers, especially in urban areas (Abou Haidar 2012; Miled 2010; Veltcheff 2006). In the two countries, the status of French is extremely dynamic, varied and changing at the same time as L2, FL, schooling language and even, in some social groups, as a mother tongue. It must be analysed in the context of a complex embedded diglossia (Calvet 1987) in which Arabic dialects, Amazigh languages, French and Standard Arabic are combined.

3) Algeria remains a case apart in North Africa, even though it shares some characteristics with its neighbours, especially multilingualism and a form of embedded diglossia. Until 1962, the country was not a colony but a part of France. The schooling language was French and Quran schools were subjected to strict regulations. Administration and education were totally Arabized after independence. Standard Arabic became the only schooling language and French stooped down to the first FL in schools (Ferhani 2006). However in 2012, Algeria was still the second French-speaking community in the world after France even if it is not a member of OIF. The status of French remains unstable between real social use, use in schools and education, and different ideological points of views.

4) Finally, in former sub-Saharan French and Belgian colonies, French remains official or co-official language. While it is spoken by a very limited part of the population, French still has a major place in schooling generally as the only language of education at all levels, including apprenticeship, while being in fact a FL for most learners. Since the 2003 Libreville Conference, these countries have been following a policy of valorization of their national languages and of their standardization in order to introduce them into schooling either as the language of literacy (Goody 1993; Olson 1994) or as a subject. What is at stake is very complex. Indeed, even if the national languages are not necessarily the mother tongues of all schoolchildren, from an identity and L1 point of view, they facilitate introduction to writing as UNESCO had suggested at the beginning of the post-colonial period (UNESCO 1953). Their standardization remains problematic as is well known: which variety, written form, and which terminology for education? Meanwhile the international status of French has also evolved since independence. In the whole of Africa today, French stands as an international language

that offers an opening to the world. A tension can be felt between an acquisitional need (the introduction to writing and learning in the mother tongue), a didactic situation (French is the L2 but is taught as an L1 most of the time) and a social objective of opening to a global world (↗3 Language Policy, Management and Planning).

This study of the various contexts in which French is acquired would remain incomplete if the status of French as an FL was not considered, even if briefly.

2.3 French as FL

Teaching French as an FL has had a long history (↗14 European History of Romance Language Teching). Let us mention *Alliance française* (AF), an association, founded in Paris in 1883, which was an important institutional turning point (Spaëth 2010). The development of the various AF schools in the twentieth century can be seen in the various continents as a more or less loose parallel to the development of French diplomatic and cultural institutions. The effect of this development can be observed in the dense network that characterizes the teaching of French as an FL (↗13 Foreign Language Teaching and Learning). In the second half of the twentieth century, the appearance of the sociology of language (Fishman 1976; Hymes 1974) triggered a theoretical and methodological change. The communicative approach to language learning highlighted a model based on the learners' social language needs. As proposed by CEFR, classes of general French (organized in levels) were soon taught next to classes in FSP (French for Specific Purposes) (FOS/*français sur objectifs spécifiques*). Following the CLIL programme (*Content and Language Integrated Learning/EMILE Enseignement d'une Matière par l'Intégration d'une Langue Étrangère*) (Coyle/Hood/Marsh 2010), bilingual classes (↗11 Bilingual Education) have mushroomed in Europe and Turkey since the beginning of the 21st century (40 years after immersion classes in Canada). Multilingualism is now a central phenomenon (↗12 Plurilingual Education). This will partly explain the specific situation of the research into the acquisition of French.

3 Specific Problems

3.1 Discussion of Effects of Part 2

The different situations reveal problems that are connected to the social use of French, in particular in schooling (written "academic" French). They highlight the reflection on the acquisition of a linguistic system and raise the question of the numerous norms and variations of French in the French-speaking community (Marquilló Larruy 2003).

Research to understand and solve these problems can be classified into three comple-
mentary, though apparently contradictory, approaches.

3.1.1 A Systemic Approach

The first approach, systemic in the sense that it sees languages as systems, postulates
that these systems come into contact through the speaking subject. Thus zones of
interference come into being and cause specific errors due both to the target language
and to the original language. The resulting interlanguages are the signs of the positive
stages of acquisition (Selinker 1972). If this point of view is adopted, the research into
error analysis in FSLA shows zones of resistance common to all learners of French,
irrespective of their L1s (Marquilló Larruy 2003). Porquier points out recurring pro-
blems: "les déterminants, les formes verbales, la morphologie du genre et du nombre
et les prépositions" (Porquier 1977, 27), the tricky question of acquisition of articles
(definite/indefinite/partitive/article 0) being a major obstacle (Besse/Porquier 1984;
de Salins 1996). This is particularly true if we deal with these problems at the two
different levels of sentence, on the one hand, and of text and discourse, on the other
hand (Combettes 1983; Chiss/David 2012). Obviously, as in the acquisition of any FL,
modality in discourse seen as "le processus par lequel le sujet de l'énonciation
manifeste son attitude à l'égard de son énoncé" (Arrivé/Gadet/Galmiche 1986, 389) is
a specifically sensitive zone for all non-native speakers (tenses and time and aspect,
markers of deixis). It should be stressed that these problems are rarely encountered
with native speakers who have interiorized a specific linguistic intuition (Besse/
Porquier 1984; Corder 1971), how and to what extent they can be taken into account
successfully remains a research problem.

Research into classroom interaction (↗13 Foreign Language Teaching and Learn-
ing) is connected to this approach. Clear evidence (Myles/Towell 2004) came from
studies where learners had been led towards the discovery of an underlying rule with
metalinguistic explanations followed by controlled and communicative practice, with
progress even in problematic areas, such as the learning of gender in French with
variability across ages. Experiments have shown which interventions by teachers
prove most effective in enabling immersion students to move beyond a pidgin. Light-
bown (2000) provides evidence of classroom research related to the acquisition of
French, so does Genesee (2007) who shows that a comprehensive rather than a
reductionist view would help. In view of the resistance mentioned above, such
research should clearly be taken into consideration with careful investigation of the
forms instruction can take and of the balance between social interaction and training.

3.1.2 A Subjectivist Approach

The second approach is more radically subjective and places the subjects at the heart of the acquisition process since they are postulated not to be reducible to any systematic classification. Their history, their language biographies, their encounters and how they have come across languages are determining factors. Some of the research related to this has explored how L2s are learned through a process of social co-construction between "experts" and "novices". A recent instance of such research, warmly received by educators (Myles/Towell 2004), connected to immersion in this case (see below), can be found in *A Vygotskian sociocultural perspective on immersion education, The L1/L2 debate* (Swain/Lapkin 2013).

Other sociolinguistic work in SLA focuses in two areas. One is primarily concerned with the quantitative study of variability in L2 use. Research (↗2 Research Methods) can be found on how L2 learners acquire the varied sociolinguistic registers typical of native varieties in the context of French. Sociolinguists have explained internal learner variability, in terms of e.g. the linguistic context, linguistic markedness, the role of the L1, or more personal factors as in Lemée/Regan (2008) on *Le rôle du sexe du locuteur dans l'acquisition de la compétence sociolinguistique par des apprenants hibernophones de français L2*. External factors and their impact on learner variability are also studied as seen in Bensalah/Guerid (2011) on *Impact du milieu extrascolaire dans l'enseignement de la lecture en FLE à l'École primaire* in the Biskra area in Algeria where French can hardly be considered an L2.

Though sociolinguistic factors are influential in explainning variable productions as learners become more advanced, much variability can also be attributed to psycho-linguistic factors (Myles/Towell 2004). However, when these two trends are studied in relation to the various contexts where French is learned, one can see how meaningful and useful their results can be as shown in Juillard (2005) on *Dynamiques sociolinguistiques (scolaires et extrascolaires) de l'apprentissage et de l'usage du français dans un cadre bi- ou plurilingue (langues de migrants, langues locales) sur les axes ouest-africain et franco-africain (Alger, Timimoun, Dakar, Ouagadougou)*.

3.1.3 A Processual Approach

The third approach is not based on the postulate that a given linguistic system is to be learnt in a given context, but that complex language processes are to be stabilized whether it relies on Emergentism or Dynamic-systems theory (DST) (↗10 Second Language Acquisition) or on the concept of plurilingual competence (↗12 Plurilingual Education).

The first trend of theorists posits that general cognitive principles explain the nature of language knowledge and the development of processing (Myles/Towell 2004). The complexity of language emerges (cf. McWhinney 1998) from associative

learning processes triggered by exposure to a massive and complex environment. Language is patterned behavior and all learning takes place through the building of patterns strengthened through practice. Such research and its applications regarding French is exemplified in McWhinney (2006) within the context of online courses in French and Chinese, developed by the Pittsburgh Science of Learning Center, or in Dewaele (2002) on *Variation, chaos et système en interlangue française*. One can see how such research completes research on instruction but needs further development to be more widely applicable.

In many ways research into multilingualism (↗12 Plurilingual Education) and associated research have common points with processual approaches, they are more interested in a global competence than in the acquisition of a given linguistic system. Plurilingual speakers are described as having a partial and imbalanced competence in the languages they use due to numerous factors (psychology, perception, pragmatic principles, social interaction, learning mechanisms, identity and attitudes). Influential factors include: plurilingual attitude, metalinguistic competences, acquisition process, motivation, self-confidence, anxiety, contexts and social activities, and this has to be assessed and applied. Two types of role (instrumental or provider) can be played by the L2 in the acquisition of an L3. Transfer, code mixing and code switching assume different positions on a continuum (Herdina/Jessner 2006). *Translanguaging (*input in one language, task in another: Williams 2002) and *code-meshing* (merging local varieties with standard codes: Canagarajah 2007) highlight the fluidity between the different codes of an integrated system. Multilingual Education often goes with *Content and Language Education* (CLIL) as it is postulated that an integrated curriculum offers better conditions to develop metalinguistic awareness (Cenoz/Gorter 2011). Multilingual schooling implies the learning of subject matters and languages through the total or partial medium of an L2 (as part of the learner's repertoire or supported specifically) (Gajo 2008). However, as seen above, it is the school's role to sustain the learners' language development by facilitating a shift from *Basic interpersonal communicative skills* (BICS) to *Cognitive academic language proficiency* (CALP) in order to allow disciplinary acquisition (Cummins 1994). One of the schooling languages must be familiar to the pupils. It is not always the case in African countries, as seen in Demba (2010), who studies what happens in Gabon but also describes similar situations in neighbouring countries (ibid., 9–28) and also highlights the resulting socio-affective problems, while Tirvassen (2010) gives evidence with direct reference to Cummins. Official projects strive to overcome the unwanted results (Maurer 2010). One example can show the complexity of the problem: the various (compulsory, prohibited, optional) liaisons in spoken French are a major obstacle when initiation to reading and writing is concerned, they require CALP competencies as they go beyond the basically instance-based BICS production. This is observed in most areas where French is a second or schooling language (Dalgalian 2007). In other areas, the results of bilingual schooling (EMILE/CLIL) (↗11 Bilingual Education) often reveal that a classroom pidgin may develop if not enough attention is paid to L2 or L3 development

(Dalton-Puffer 2007). These results can also be very positive as in Val d'Aosta (Cavalli 2005) where the context is favourable, so transfer cannot be made without further reflection.

Multilingualism has also led to research into intercomprehension (↗12 Plurilingual Education; cf. also Meissner 2008 which underlines the practical aspects of intercomprehension). Receptive skills are assumed to be essential (Degache 2006) but attention is also paid to acquisition as exemplified in Degache/Tea (2003). A great amount of course materials is available. Interlingual transparence is the dominant tool, but a purely comparatist perspective is not sufficient as the intercomprehension process is largely independent from each individual plurilingual repertoire, thus confirming that the comprehension of written texts is related to CALP.

3.1.4 Discussion

In the north as in Africa, studies have mostly been carried out from a purely language education perspective (Maurer 2010). The complexity of the research explains that we can say, somewhat hastily, that immersion studies have often paid more attention to acquisition of forms, CLIL research to acquisition of content, and study of schooling languages to psycho-sociological or linguistic problems (Colin 2012). Two moot points have arrested our attention: the research is largely dominated by the north while the major problems are in the south; and, lately, Francophone research has been more interested in appropriation conditions/learning than in acquisition (Moore/Gajo 2009), which may be explained by the specific problems encountered, and more in social representations and contexts than in psycholinguistics (Dagenais/Jacquet 2008), but not totally, as exemplified by Noyau (2007), which is more problematic. As a consequence, the first and third approaches described above have received less attention, though the linguistic points of resistance are connected with discourse competence and with CALP (Cummins 1994) and as a consequence may require explicit instruction.

Individual problems are also apparent. They are largely determined by the degree of (psycho) typological proximity (linguistic, sociolinguistic or cultural) which varies with the contexts and the level of schooling in the L1 (CALP). Research should assess whether purely (inter)linguistic problems actually play a secondary role in acquisition. However, the threshold between BICS and CALP is largely linguistic, especially in written communication (Cummins 1994), even though it depends on cultural and disciplinary competencies.

The situation, as developed in Part 1, shows that there is often a great difficulty in drawing a clear-cut line between FL and L2 on a personal or on a geo-social level. At a personal level, Castellotti (2011) warns us that it is difficult to determine the degree of foreignness of a language for a given learner and the perception of this distance or proximity has been shown to be subjective (psychotypology: Kellerman 1995).

We have noted that in the specific case of French, a number of points have to be taken into account:
– the roles of social representations in the learning of French,
– French as L2 requires both a collective and sociolinguistic interrogation,
– French as FL remains more simply on a didactic plan,
– the complexity of differentiating between French as FL and as L2 in most cases,
– the relative efficiency of systems to educate migrants' children in the North,
– socio-psychological phenomena connected to representations of native language and culture as opposed to local culture and French, and in Canada, even in Quebec, rivalry with English,
– the specificity of the situation in the south, where French is rarely the L1, but an official language, or partly or totally the schooling language, and where the situation is blurred in terms of status (FL or L2), with no clear language boundaries and diglossic situations.

As a consequence a number of research projects have been carried out in our research unit to try and see the interrelation between the three approaches and the various contexts.

3.2 What Does Research into Learning Situations Show When the Above Approaches Are Applied?

Two major cases can be distinguished.

3.2.1 French as Schooling Language

Doctoral and Master level research, in Lebanon (Stephan-Hayek 2013) and Greece (Souliou 2014), shows that French has little sociolinguistic reality while it is used as a schooling language, with problems with CALP and sociopolitical problems (variability of *francophonie* in these countries, no clear language boundaries, competition with English). Disciplines are taught as if French was the L1 and French classes are very traditional and often disconnected from content classes. However the points of resistance mentioned in chapter 3.1.1 remain unsolved, indicating that teaching and learning practices are still partly inadequate, in particular the instrumental role of code switching in correction and teaching maybe overused. Similar results have been found in Algeria and Morocco. Sanodji Yonbel (2011) shows an even more complex situation in sub-Saharan Africa. In Europe: beyond traditional immersion, bilingual or CLIL classes (Gajo 2008), an interesting solution is being researched: mutual immersion (cf. Buser et al. 2013). But actual acquisition in all these approaches and transferability to other contexts have to be assessed.

3.2.2 French as FL

Most of the time, French is learned as an L3, after English (L2). Even when action-based approaches are followed, the sociolinguistic reality of tasks is not convincing and may justify activation of the common schooling language (the L2 is shown to play a provider role while the schooling language plays an instrumental role) (Terzieva Bozhinova 2013). One may wonder if, in other settings such as tandem learning, collaborative work between peers in different institutions (Computer Mediated Communication), the activation of the different languages would follow the same pattern, as Abendroth-Timmer/Aguilar (forthcoming) suggest.

Similar results were found in countries where English is the schooling language (Atcero 2013) and we have come to postulate that, in learning situations, patterns of activation are often teaching-induced and that different learning environments would be more propitious (Bertin/Narcy-Combes 2012).

3.3 Discussion

Research into practices shows that the three approaches, far from being contradictory, are complementary, and confirms the necessity of what Blanchet et al. (2008) call in their title *Contextualisation de l'intervention didactique*. However, such contextualized practice implies a new look at research results and their application. The debates that appear in Seidlhofer (2003) show that the validity of the emic perspective relying on qualitative research was not yet totally accepted as an alternative at the date, even though it advocated the complementarity of the various SLA theories (↗6 Language Acquisition Theories). However the complex social needs and the new theories have modified the challenge and call for renewed research practices.

4 Conclusion

In this paper we have investigated the contexts where French is acquired and in which conditions, and have seen that varying consequences resulted from often very different contexts. A certain discrepancy between language policies and the objects of research can be noted, and French as a schooling language is often taught as the L1 in many nations of the "south" without being the dominant language of communication. Migrations have led to different policies in the countries in the north. French as an FL still benefits from the fact that it is supported by the long-standing influence of various external or internal institutions (*Alliance française, lycées français*, and national schools). Policies and curricula are not often developed with the collaboration of acquisition researchers, but mainly with that of language educationalists who, in France in particular, are disconnected from research in acquisition, and recent

research shows that no one theory, nor one approach, is sufficient to reach complex objectives in complex situations. The research is still dominated by the north while the major problems are in the south. An enormous task is ahead, with obvious political implications due to the macro contextual conditions.

More reflection on writing in French and acquisition of CALP, as well as on French for academic purposes, would prove useful to meet the demand of mobility and education. It is now widely accepted that writing (CALP) is vital for education and that unsuccessful learners almost always have problems with writing. This is particularly true in the case of French, even as L1 (Dalgalian 2007). *Information and Communication Technology* tools may help to improve the situation and the role of computer-mediated communication and mobile devices in learning should be further researched (to enhance the reality of French as a language of actual communication).

Solving these problems may require reconsideration of social representations and epistemological positions, as, due to the complexity of the phenomena, reductionism remains the rule, in spite of attempts at dealing with complexity theories. The reconsideration of interdisciplinary relations would be beneficial (Coste 2002; Véronique 2005; Genesee 2007). The lack of reciprocal exchanges between the research in French and in English even when FSLA is the object is a sign of this limitation. Networking and the revival of applied linguistics in the Francophone world might prove a solution, but it remains to be found how to increase the role of research when political decisions are made in matters of language.

5 Bibliography

Abendroth-Timmer, Dagmar/Aguilar, José (2014), *Accompagner la formation de futurs enseignants de langue en tandem interculturel médiatisé: la sensibilisation aux fonctions du tutorat*, in: Dagmar Abendroth-Timmer/Eva-Maria Hennig (edd.), *Plurilingualism and multiliteracies: Internation Research on Identity-construction in Language Learning*, Frankfurt am Main, Lang, 297–309.

Abou Haidar, Laura (2012), *Statut du français au Maroc. Représentations et usages chez des lycéens marocains*, Cahiers du Celec 4, http://cahiersducelec.univ-st-etienne.fr/ (30.09.2013)

Archibald, James/Galligani, Stéphanie (2009), *Langue(s) et immigration(s): société, école, travail*, Paris, L'Harmattan.

Arrivé, Michel/Gadet, Françoise/Galmiche, Michel (1986), *La grammaire aujourd'hui. Guide alphabétique de linguistique française*, Paris, Flammarion.

Atcero, Milburga (2013), *Les technologies de l'information et de la communication (TIC) et le développement de l'expression orale en français sur objectif spécifique (FOS) dans le contexte ougandais*, PhD dissertation, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3.

Bensalah, Bachir/Guerid, Khaled (2011), *L'impact du milieu extra-scolaire dans l'enseignement de la lecture en FLE à l'École primaire*, Synergies Algérie 12, 173–181.

Bertin, Jean-Claude/Narcy-Combes, Jean-Paul (edd.) (2012), *Tutoring at a distance*, London, Routledge.

Besse, Henri/Porquier, Rémy (1984), *Grammaires et didactique des langues*, Paris, Hatier.

Blanchet, Philippe, et al. (2008), *Perspectives pour une didactique des langues contextualisée*, Paris, Éditions des archives contemporaines, AUF.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1982), *Ce que parler veut dire. Pour une économie des échanges linguistiques*, Paris, Fayard.

Buser, Mélanie, et al. (2013), *Enseignement par immersion réciproque à Biel/Bienne: Le développement langagier des élèves de la Filière Bilingue (FiBi) dans l'école publique de la Plänke*, Rapport intermédiaire sur la Filière Bilingue, Ville de Biel/Bienne, document officiel.

Calvet, Louis Jean (1987), *La guerre des langues et les politiques linguistiques*, Paris, Payot.

Calvet, Louis Jean (2002), *Le marché aux langues. Le marché linguistique de la mondialisation*, Paris, Plon.

Canagarajah, Suresh (2007), *Lingua Franca English, Multilingual Communities, and Language Acquisition*, Modern Language Journal 91, 921–937.

Castellotti, Véronique (2011), *Natif, non-natif ou plurilingue: dénativiser l'enseignement des langues?* in: Fred Dervin/Vasumathi Badrinathan (edd.), *L'enseignant non natif: Identités et légitimité dans l'enseignement-apprentissage des langues étrangères*, Fernelmont, EME, 29–50.

Cavalli, Marisa (2005), *Éducation bilingue et plurilinguisme. Le cas du Val d'Aoste*, Paris, Didier.

Cenoz, Jasone/Gorter, Durk (edd.) (2011), *"A Holistic Approach in Multilingual Education: Introduction": Special issue Toward a Multilingual Approach in the Study of Multilingualism in School Contexts*, The Modern Language Journal 95, 339–343.

Chiss, Jean-Louis/David, Jacques (2012), *Didactique du français et étude de la langue*, Paris, Colin.

Colin, Catherine (2012), *Construction du bi-plurilinguisme en français langue de scolarisation, Apprentissage d'une L2 en enseignement bilingue précoce*, PhD dissertation, Université Montpellier 3.

Collès, Luc/Dufays, Jean-Louis/Maeder, Costantino (2003), *Enseigner le français, l'espagnol et l'italien. Les langues romanes à l'heure des compétences*, Bruxelles, De Boeck-Duculot.

Combettes, Bernard (1983), *Pour une grammaire textuelle. La progression thématique*, Bruxelles, De Boeck-Duculot.

Corder, S. Pit (1971), *Idiosyncratic dialects and error analysis*, International Review of Applied Linguistics 9, 147–159.

Coste, Daniel (2002), *Quelle(s) acquisition(s) dans quelle(s) classe(s)?*, AILE 16, 3–22.

Council of Europe (2001), *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Coyle, Do/Hood, Philip/Marsh, David (2010), *CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Cummins, John (1994), *Knowledge, power, and identity in teaching English as a second language*, in: Fred Genesee (ed.), *Educating second language children: The whole child, the whole curriculum, the whole community*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 103–125.

Dagenais, Diane/Jacquet, Marianne (2008), *Theories of representation in French and English scholarship on multilingualism,* International Journal of Multilingualism 5/1, 41–52.

Dalgalian, Gilbert (2007), *Reconstruire l'éducation – ou le désir d'apprendre*, Paris, édition du temps.

Dalton-Puffer, Christiane (2007), *Discourse in "Content and Language Integrated Learning" (CLIL) classrooms*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins.

Degache, Christian (2006), *Didactique du plurilinguisme. Travaux sur l'intercompréhension et l'utilisation des technologies pour l'apprentissage des* langues, 2 vol., dossier HDR, Université Stendal – Grenoble 3.

Degache, Christian/Tea, Elena (2003), *Intercompréhension: quelles interactions pour quelles acquisitions? Les potentialités du Forum Galanet*, in: Christian Degache (ed.), *Lidil 28 décembre 2003*, Grenoble, Lidilem, 75–94.

Demba, Jean-Jacques, (2010), *La face subjective de l'échec scolaire: récits d'élèves gabonais du secondaire*, PhD dissertation, Université Laval, Québec.

Dewaele, Jean-Marc (2002), *Variation, chaos et système en interlangue française*, AILE 17, 143–167.

Dumont, Pierre (1983), *Le français et les langues africaines*, Paris, ACCT/Karthala.

Dumont, Pierre (2003), *Rapport États généraux*, "L'enseignement du/en français", Paris, OIF.

Durkheim, Émile (1968) [1912], *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*, Paris, PUF.

Encrevé, Pierre (2007), *Conditions d'exercice d'une politique linguistique en démocratie aujourd'hui. Notes sur le cas français*, in: Michaël Werner (ed.), *Politiques et usages de la langue en Europe*, Paris, Éditions de la maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 121–136.

Ferhani, Fatiha Fatma (2006), *Algérie, l'enseignement du français à la lumière de la réforme*, Le français aujourd'hui, Former au français dans le Maghreb 154, 11–18.

Fishman, Joshua (ed.) (1976), *The sociology of language. Basic concepts, Theories and alternative approaches*, Paris/The Hague, Mouton.

Francard, Michel/Geron, Geneviève/Wilmet, Régine (edd.) (2000), *Le français de référence. Constructions et appropriations d'un concept*, Cahiers de l'Institut de Linguistique de Louvain 26, 1–4.

Fumaroli, Michel (2011) [2001], *When the World Spoke French*, New York, Review Books.

Gajo, Laurent (2008), *L'intercompréhension entre didactique intégrée et enseignement bilingue*, in: Virginie Conti/François Grin (edd.), *S'entendre entre langues voisines: vers l'intercompréhension*, Genève, Georg, 131–150.

Genesee, Fred (2007), *The suitability of French immersion for students who are at risk: a review of research evidence*, Canadian Modern Language Review 63/5, 655–687.

Goody, John (1993), *The interface between the written and the oral*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Gumperz, John (1964), *Linguistic and social interaction in two communities*, American anthropologist 66/2, 37–53.

Herdina, Philip/Jessner, Ulrike (2006), *A Dynamic Model of Multilingualism, Perspectives of Change in Psycholinguistics*, Clevedon, Multilingual Matters.

Hobsbawm, Eric (1987), *The Age of Empire, 1875–1914*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Hymes, Dell (1974), *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach,* Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press.

Journal officiel de la République, 21/11/2007, Loi n° 2007–1631 relative à la maîtrise de l'immigration, à l'intégration et à l'asile.

Juillard, Caroline (2005), *Dynamiques sociolinguistiques (scolaires et extrascolaires) de l'apprentissage et de l'usage du français dans un cadre bi- ou plurilingue (langues de migrants, langues locales) sur les axes ouest-africain et franco-africain (Alger, Timimoun, Dakar, Ouagadougou). Rapport définitif, Réseau Sociolinguistique et dynamique des langues*, Paris, AUF.

Kellerman, Eric (1995), *Crosslinguistic influence: Transfer to nowhere?* Annual Review of Applied Linguistics 15, 125–150.

Klinkenberg, Jean-Marie (2007), *La norme du français: d'un modèle centré au modèle polycentrique, Constellations francophones*, Publifarum 7, http://publifarum.farum.it/ezine_articles.php?id=49 (30.09.2013).

Launey Michel/Puren, Laurent (2010), *Josiane Hamers à la rencontre du plurilinguisme guyanais*, Synergies Monde 7, 79–96.

Larsen-Freeman, Diane (1997), *Chaos/Complexity Science and Second Language Acquisition*, Applied Linguistics 18/2, 141–165.

Léglise, Isabelle/Migge, Bettina (2007), *Pratiques et représentations linguistiques en Guyane. Regards croisés*, Paris, Éditions IRD.

Lemée, Isabelle/Regan, Vera (2008), *Le rôle du sexe du locuteur dans l'acquisition de la compétence sociolinguistique par des apprenants hibernophones de français L2*, Synergies Royaume-Uni et Irlande 1, 9–2.

Lightbown, Patsy (2000), *Classroom SLA research and second language teaching*, Applied Linguistics 21/4, 431–462.

Lüdi, Georges (1994), *Qu'est-ce qu'une frontière linguistique?*, Babylonia 1–2, 6–17.

Manço, Altay/Vaes-Harou, Aude (2009), *Accueil scolaire des immigrés non francophones dans le cycle secondaire en Communauté française de Belgique: enseignements d'une recherche-formation*, Didáctica, Lengua y Litteratura 21, 227–253.

Marquilló Larruy, Martine (2003), *L'interprétation de l'erreur*, Paris, CLE International.

Maurer, Bruno (2010), *Les langues de scolarisation en Afrique francophone. Enjeux et repères pour l'action. Rapport général*, Paris, AUF.

McLaughlin, Mireille, et al. (edd.) (2010), *Les mots du marché: l'inscription de la francophonie canadienne dans la nouvelle économie*, Francophonies d'Amérique 27, http://www.erudit.org/revue/fa/apropos.html (30.09.2013).

McWhinney, Brian (1998), *Models of the emergence of language*, Review of Psychology 49, 199–227.

McWhinney, Brian (2006), *Emergentism – Use Often and With Care*, Applied Linguistics 27/4, 729–740.

Meissner, Franz-Joseph (2008), *Que peut apporter la didactique de l'intercompréhension aux systèmes éducatifs européens?*, in: Christian Degache/Silvia Melo (edd.), *Langues Modernes*, vol. 1: *L'intercompréhension*, Paris, APLV, 15–24.

Miled, Mohamed (2010), *Le français dans le monde arabophone, quels statuts, quels contacts avec la langue arabe?*, Langue française 167, 159–171.

Ministère de l'Éducation nationale (2012), *Bulletin officiel* 37, Paris.

Moore, Danièle/Gajo, Laurent (edd.) (2009), *French Voices on Plurilingualism and Pluriculturalism: Theory, Significance and Perspectives*, International Journal of Multilingualism and Multiculturalism 6, 2.

Moore, Danièle/Sabatier, Cécile (2012), *Une semaine en classe en immersion française au Canada. Approche ethnographique pour la formation*, Grenoble, PUG.

Myles, Florence/Towell, Richard (edd.) (2004), *Journal of French Language Studies. Special Issue on the acquisition of French as a second language*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Noiriel, Gérard (1992), *Le Creuset français. Histoire de l'immigration (XIXᵉ–XXᵉ siècle)*, Paris, Seuil.

Noiriel, Gérard (2004), *État, nation et immigration. Vers une histoire du pouvoir*, Paris, Gallimard.

Noyau, Colette (2007), *Manuels de français langue seconde au primaire en Afrique de l'ouest: quelle image de la langue et de l'apprentissage? Appui ou contrainte pour l'intervention éducative?*, in: Monique Lebrun (ed.), *Le manuel scolaire d'ici et d'ailleurs, d'hier à demain*, Sainte-Foy, Éditions Multimondes, 1–22.

Olson, David (1994), *The world on paper: The conceptual and cognitive implications of writing and reading*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Perregaux, Christiane, et al. (edd.) (2003), *Éducation et ouverture aux langues à l'école*, Neuchâtel, Conférence intercantonale de l'instruction publique de la Suisse romande et du Tessin – Secrétariat général.

Porquier, Rémy (1977), *Analogie, généralisation et systèmes intermédiaires dans l'apprentissage d'une langue non maternelle*, Bulletin de linguistique appliquée *et* générale 3, 37–64.

Rivarol, Antoine (1991) [1783], *De l'universalité de la langue française*, Paris, Arléa.

Salins, Geneviève de (1996), *Grammaire pour l'enseignement/apprentissage du Fle*, Paris, Didier/Hatier.

Sanodji Youbel, Abiathar (2011), *L'enseignement apprentissage des langues étrangères dans le système éducatif tchadien. Quelle politique linguistique pour le Tchad?*, PhD dissertation, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3.

Schnapper, Dominique (2007), *Qu'est-ce que l'intégration?*, Paris, Gallimard.

Seidlhofer, Barbara (2003), *Controversies in Applied Linguistics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Selinker, Larry (1972), *Interlanguage*, International Review of Applied Linguistics 10, 219–231.

Siouffi, Gilles (2010), *De l'"universalité" européenne du français au XVIIIᵉ siècle*, Langue Française 167, 13–30.

Souliou, Lelouda (2014), *L'activation d'une autre langue que celle attendue*, PhD dissertation, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3.

Spaëth, Valérie (1998), *Généalogie de la didactique du français langue étrangère. L'enjeu africain*, Paris, Cirelfa/Didier Érudition.

Spaëth, Valérie (ed.) (2010), *Le français au contact des langues. Histoire, sociolinguistique, didactique*, Langue française, 167.

Stephan-Hayek, Christelle (2013), *Le français au Liban: représentations de la nouvelle génération*, Étude de cas. Mémoire de Master 2 Recherche, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3.

Swain, Merrill/Lapkin, Sharon (2013), *A Vygotskian sociocultural perspective on immersion education*, Journal of Immersion and Content-Based Language Education 1/1, 101–129.

Terzieva Bozhinova, Krastanka (2013), *Implications du plurilinguisme individuel sur l'apprentissage du français troisième langue dans un contexte universitaire bulgare*, Mémoire de Master 2 Recherche, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3.

Tirvassen, Rada (2010), *La langue maternelle à l'école dans l'Océan indien: Comores, Madagascar, Maurice, Réunion, Seychelles*, Paris, L'Harmattan.

UNESCO (1953), *L'emploi des langues vernaculaires dans l'enseignement*, Monographie sur l'éducation de base 8.

Veltcheff, Caroline (2006), *Le français en Tunisie: une langue vivante ou une langue morte?*, Le français aujourd'hui 154, 83–92.

Véronique, Daniel (2005), *Les interrelations entre la recherche sur l'acquisition du français langue étrangère et la didactique du français langue étrangère*, Acquisition et interaction en langue étrangère 23, 9–41.

Verspoor, Marjolin/Schmid, Monica/Xu, Xiaoyan (2012), *A dynamic usage based perspective on L2 writing*, Journal of Second Language Writing 21/3, 239–263.

Vygotski, Lev (1934 [³1997]), *Pensée et langage*, Paris, La Dispute.

Weinreich, Uriel (1953), *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*, New York, VOG.

Williams, Cen (2002), *Extending bilingualism in the education system*, Education and Lifelong learning committee, 8 August 2013, http://www.assemblywales.org/3c91c7af00023d820000595000000000.pdf (30.09.2013).