

## The Learning of Foreign Languages in Senegalese High Schools: The Case of English and Spanish

**FAYE Jean Christophe**

Maître de Conférences

Enseignant-Chercheur

Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar (Sénégal)

Département d'Anglais

[jeanbbchrist@gmail.com](mailto:jeanbbchrist@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** The objective of the work is to highlight the linguistic policy and to see the different categories of the second language policy in this educational cycle and the challenges of learning English and Spanish as foreign languages in the Senegalese educational system. This work is devoted to the learning of foreign languages in Senegalese high schools, in a context dominated by the implementation of numerous projects and the realization of programs aiming at improving the quality of education. In this regard, the choice of a foreign language as a second language at high school is a major issue that cannot be ignored at the risk of compromising Senegal's educational prospects. To collect, process and analyze data, we tried to do research related to the teaching and learning foreign languages in the educational system. Field surveys, interviews and questionnaires were carried out with educational actors and state leaders. The results have shown that several students choose English for academic and professional purposes and Spanish for academic reasons. They have also shown that the French language, being the official language through which mainly all the courses are done, interferes in the learning of English and Spanish at Senegalese high schools.

**Key-words:** Education, foreign language, high school, learning, language policy

### L'apprentissage des langues étrangères dans les lycées sénégalais: le cas de l'anglais et de l'espagnol

**Résumé :** L'objectif de ce travail est d'étudier la politique linguistique du Sénégal et d'examiner les différentes catégories de la politique d'enseignement des langues secondes dans ce cycle éducatif, ainsi que les défis liés à l'apprentissage de l'anglais et de l'espagnol comme langues étrangères dans le système éducatif sénégalais. Ce travail est consacré à l'apprentissage des langues étrangères dans les lycées sénégalais, dans un contexte marqué par la mise en œuvre de nombreux projets et la réalisation de programmes visant à améliorer la qualité de l'éducation. À cet égard, le choix d'une langue étrangère comme langue seconde au lycée est un enjeu majeur qui ne saurait être ignoré au risque de compromettre les perspectives éducatives du Sénégal. Pour collecter, traiter et analyser les données, nous avons mené une recherche sur l'enseignement et l'apprentissage des langues étrangères dans le système éducatif. Des enquêtes de terrain, des entretiens et des questionnaires ont été réalisés auprès d'acteurs du secteur éducatif et de responsables étatiques. Les résultats ont montré que de nombreux élèves choisissent l'anglais à des fins académiques et professionnelles et l'espagnol à des fins académiques. Ils ont également montré que le français, langue officielle dans laquelle sont dispensés la plupart des cours, interfère à l'apprentissage de l'anglais et de l'espagnol dans les lycées sénégalais.

**Mots-clés :** Education, langue étrangère, lycée, apprentissage, politique linguistique

## 1. Context and Justification

The article deals with the learning of foreign languages in Senegalese high schools. Many of these languages have been being taught in Senegal since the independence days. French is the official language and besides this language, there are English, which was firstly taught in Senegal in the 1967s through the implementation of the Senegalese-British Institute for English Language Teaching and the other languages such as Spanish, Portuguese, etc. The work focuses on English and Spanish languages, in a context dominated by the implementation of numerous projects and the realization of programs aiming at improving the quality of education. The debate on language policy in postcolonial Senegal is particularly acute since the country has still been facing the challenges of building a school that is sufficiently effective to develop the capacities of young students and the country's vital forces to meet the linguistic challenges that arise on a global scale.

The choice of the subject is motivated by several reasons. We have noticed that these two foreign languages, belonging to the Indo- European language family, constitute the striking choices of most of the students at Senegalese high schools.

## 2. Thesis Statement

The Senegalese language policy has been in the heart of linguists and intellectual worlds for years. Thus the question of the language of instruction at high school and the place of professions in education and training systems are major issues that cannot be ignored at the risk of compromising Senegal's educational development prospects. In addition, there is a contact of languages in the Senegalese educational system, mainly with the implementation of the program aiming to introduce the teaching and learning of some local languages and of English in primary school. In so doing, several languages get in touch in the educational system.

The choice of a foreign language as a second language at high school is one of the major issues that cannot be left stranded, considering the number of languages and the Senegalese education prospects. However, the two most chosen foreign languages at Senegalese high schools are English and Spanish, two Indo-European languages. What justifies the choice of these two foreign languages? Is there any language transfer between languages taught at high school? Do students resort to codeswitching when speaking or writing Spanish or English essays?

## 3. Hypotheses and Objectives

The learning of foreign languages in the Senegalese high school educational system raises a lot of issues and prospects due to the language policy and the choice of English and Spanish as foreign languages. Through the study, we have also noticed that there is an interference of local languages in the teaching and learning of these foreign languages in the morphological, phonological, syntactic etc. levels. This interference is caused by lot of parameters and has several consequences in the teaching and learning of foreign languages.

The objective of the work is to highlight this language policy and to see the different categories of the language policy in this educational cycle and the issues and prospects of learning foreign languages in the Senegalese educational system. In addition, it aims at showing the advantages and drawbacks of learning foreign languages in Senegalese high schools. Through this work, we would also like to show the importance of language contact in a multilingual context. The work also aims at explaining and analyzing the fact that most of the students choose English or Spanish as their first foreign languages at high school.

#### 4. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework on which this study is based is the Interlanguage Theory developed by Selinker, who first presented his theory orally in 1967 and was heavily influenced by Chomsky and Weinreich, borrowing innateness from the former and the concept of interlingual identification from the latter (U. Weinreich, 1953, p.68). The interlanguage hypothesis is presented as a psycholinguistic theory of second or foreign language learning. The starting point is the notion of interlingual identification (a notion defined by Weinreich in terms of the identification of units of a language with those that must have their seat in a latent psychological structure, different from the latent language structure postulated by Lenneberg for language acquisition, which is only activated after puberty during second or foreign language learning (E. Lenneberg, 1967, p. 26).

Language transfer: items, rules, and subsystems of second or foreign language may be the result of transfer from this language;

b) Transfer of training: elements of second or foreign language may be the result of characteristics of the pedagogical process followed during this second or foreign language learning;

c) Strategies of second language learning: elements of second or foreign language may be the result of specific approaches to the material to be learned; learning strategies would be the set of procedures used to structure information;

d) Strategies of second language communication: elements of second or foreign language may be the result of the different ways in which learners communicate with native speakers of the foreign language; communication strategies would be the set of procedures used to solve a communication problem;

e) Overgeneralization of the target language linguistic material: Elements of the first language may be the result of overgeneralizations (or analogies) of the rules of the target language. Although the notion of first language has been applied primarily to the acquisition of a target language in adults, it was extended to children's performance to characterize systematicity of their productions (L. Selinker, M. Swain, & M. Dumas, 1975, p.24/25). This systematicity cannot be explained by grammatical rules, but by the use of strategies (cognitive activities involved in second or foreign language productions) such as transfer, overgeneralization and simplification. For these authors, the interference between two languages is probably more striking when there is no daily contact with the second or foreign language, for example when the second or foreign language learner only attends classes of this language in their own country.

It should be noted here that the study of interlanguage is the basis of a large number of studies on the acquisition of a language other than First Language. This notion has defined an autonomous field of research. As Py points out in a theoretical study on the epistemological status of Interlanguage, it is a particular manifestation of language, which is why a good number of researchers are interested in it (B. Py, 1982, p. 27). For further information, we refer the reader to the work of Tarone where numerous studies (both in children and adults) are widely presented, discussed and evaluated (E. Tarone, 1988, p. 37).

## 5. Methodological framework

The methodological framework of the work is composed of data collection, data processing and data presentation. For the collection of data, there are two types of sources: the primary sources and the secondary sources. The primary sources involve direct interaction with the sources to gather new information. For this, a structured approach using questionnaires (twenty questions) was organized in two Senegalese high schools where English and Spanish are the most chosen foreign languages. This approach involves direct conversations with students, teachers and the other educational actors to gather in-depth information, which is structured in the present work. Thus, it is important to mention that we used a quantitative methodology to collect data. Therefore, we used questionnaires to gather as much information as possible from the students. However, this didn't prevent us from using qualitative data methodology whenever we deemed it appropriate, especially to verify certain information.

In the questionnaires, we tried to take into account a certain number of factors but also external parameters that could arouse the motivation of the learners, consolidate it, stimulate it... Our interest was also focused, on the one hand, on the methodological approaches of the teachers, their professionalism and, on the other hand, on the reasons which led these students to choose English or Spanish alongside the other foreign languages offered such as German, Portuguese, Arabic, Italian, Russian, etc.

The students who were interviewed were selected from two Senegalese high schools through their marks in the second semester, as they got between twelve (12) and eighteen (18) out of twenty (20) in English and or in Spanish. They were given a questionnaire of twenty questions. After this questionnaire some of them were asked some direct questions regarding their choices and their studies. A case study about a student who was good at speaking but bad at writing was also carried out with some students in order to understand and analyze the complex phenomenon of the situation. For the teachers, we interviewed two English teachers, two Spanish teachers and two other persons teaching other foreign languages.

As for the secondary sources, they are composed of documents reviews consisting in analyzing existing documents, records, and reports to extract relevant information about the Senegalese educational system and the teaching and learning of foreign languages. Some data about the Senegalese language policy were also gathered from various sources such as government agencies and research institutions. In addition, some published research papers, books and articles were reviewed to gather information about language policy and education system in general.

After collecting data, two methods were used to process these data: the lemmatization which proceeds from a syntactic and, at the same time, paradigmatic approach and corresponds to technical constraints and the reduction which naturally fits within the framework of lemmatization, but it is not limited to it. It is possible, for example, to design a lexical analysis following a content analysis. After reading the corpus and reducing the texts to a set of mental representations, lexical analysis can be done. Thus, after collecting and processing data, we have moved on to data analysis and ended up with the following results that are discussed.

## 6. Results and Discussions

Throughout the research that we have conducted, we have pointed out that several students choose English as a first foreign language, for, according to them, English is an international language which is spoken in almost all the countries in the world. The fact of starting learning English at the sixth grade also constitutes one of the most striking answers of the students at high

school, thanks to the knowledge and the skills that they already acquired before this cycle. Furthermore, some of them choose the English language thanks to the English teachers' pedagogical approach. For them, English teachers are (very) good at teaching because they use comprehensible communicative approaches that help them understand easily.

Communicative approach is regarded as a method of teaching (English) language that prioritizes real world communication and meaningful interaction to develop learners' practical language skills and confidence. It emphasizes using the language for tasks and communication, integrating all four language skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing), and utilizing authentic materials and activities like role play and problem solving. The goal is to achieve communicative competence, allowing learners to use English effectively and appropriately in various social contexts, rather than focusing solely on grammatical accuracy<sup>1</sup>.

The English teacher's competence is often a source of motivation. Almost all the learners appreciate it when their teachers answer their questions accurately, thoroughly, and precisely. They also greatly appreciate it when their teachers make an effort to adapt to their level of knowledge. According to them, this attitude on the part of teachers is all the most important because it facilitates the English language learning process.

The way language skills are taught, especially through vocabulary and grammar, plays a special role in motivating English language learners. In fact, almost half of the interviewed students stated that they prefer to learn grammar or vocabulary through games, music, films, stories, or other fun activities whereas some of them do not mind their teacher choosing the grammatical points or vocabulary words to study in the texts they teach. Others believe that the medium is of little importance to them, as long as it is their teachers who choose when and how to teach their grammar or vocabulary lessons. This work also allowed us to point out that many students admit that they do their own research in their learning of English language, beyond what teachers offer as linguistic background. Several among them admit that they go online from time to time, especially when preparing topic presentation.

The way some teachers correct students, when teaching and learning English, can play a decisive role in their motivation. However, many of them do not see any problem with their teacher correcting them if they make mistakes, although they do point out that this may depend on the way the correction is done. For them, it is perfectly normal to be corrected since they are learners and, moreover, since the lessons are taught in a foreign language (English). They reinforce their position by admitting that this correction helps prevent them from making the same mistake again.

We have also noticed that students choose the English language given that this language is currently being used in most of job interviews and national competitions and exams. The fact of not having some skills in this language can prevent a candidate from passing exams or being selected or recruited for a job. The implementation of English clubs is also one of the major reasons that pushes a lot of students to choose English as their first foreign language thanks to the activities such as *English Lovers Awards*, *palaver tree*, *cultural week*, *budding genius*, *topic presentation*, etc. that are organized. However, whatever the number of students who choose English may be, some other students prefer Spanish to English or to other foreign languages. This can be explained by the fact that some students can lose their motivation because of some teachers, their poor

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<sup>1</sup> Communicative approach of English teaching, <https://www.google.com/search?q=communicative+approach+of+teaching+english>.

behavior or character, their lack of professionalism, etc. At least, that's exactly what few students who agreed to answer the questionnaires said.

Thus, the choice of Spanish as a first foreign language at high school is justified, for some students, by the fact that several Spanish words sound like French ones. According to some of these pupils, Spanish is easier than any foreign language (except French which is the official language). Through the interviews we organized, we have also pointed out that a few students choose Spanish for, according to them, it is easier to get good marks in Spanish than in other foreign languages. In other words, the Spanish tests are not as difficult as the other foreign languages' tests and this Spanish test easiness justifies the massive choice of this language to the detriment of English and other foreign languages.

This remark has also been affirmed by some English teachers, according to whom, English tests are sometimes very difficult, mainly during the baccalaureate exam, unlike Spanish tests that are regarded as acceptable. This phenomenon has pushed several students to give up English at high school and choose Spanish as their first foreign language, considering that their main objective is just to move up a class or pass their (baccalaureate) exams.

Some of the students also mentioned that their motivation for the Spanish language was strongly influenced by the role-playing or dramatizations they performed in class, with their classmates or with teachers. But contrary to what one might expect, only few of those interviewed said they were studying Spanish for professional reasons, that is to say, with the aim of finding a job related to the Spanish language, and others to realize their dream of immigrating to Spain one day.

We also noticed that a few students at high school consider the methodology used by their Spanish teachers to be satisfactory to them in providing oral expression courses. Thus, twenty students appreciated the way in which this skill is taught to them, especially in cases where the teacher gives them the necessary tools for independent expression, using texts or other resources that fit their realities as teaching aids. Without realizing it, few students feel more motivated when the texts or materials talk about life in Europe and many of them admit that they trust their teacher, so much so that they have no preference, judging, therefore, that it is up to the teacher to determine the materials the deem adequate to achieve their objectives. It also turns out that, in general, the vast majority of students are very motivated in recreational activities such as games, stories, songs, musical activities, to name but a few.

Furthermore, as Diop said, it should be noted that with regard to the teaching/ learning situation, the objectives of the Spanish class are part of the establishment of linguistic and communicative competence as stipulated in the official curriculum (Diop, 2012, p124). Through Spanish classes, students should be able to read Spanish correctly, respect accentuation and correct pronunciation of words. They should also write, understand, and express themselves in simple Spanish, have a perfect command of the grammatical and lexical content of the cycle, have a basic understanding of Hispanic culture and civilization. In addition, classes help them be able to make a judgment on a given question, express themselves easily in a given situation, know how to understand others in the language, and express themselves on concrete facts of daily life. These Spanish classes' objectives can justify the choice of Spanish as a first foreign language at Senegalese high schools.

Moreover, the results have shown that the French language, being the official language through which mainly all the courses are done, interferes in the learning of English and Spanish at Senegalese high schools, in the grammatical, morphological and phonological levels.

- **French interference on the learning of Spanish**

Let's consider the following examples, taken during the interview from Spanish students.

- ✓ La fin de semana (el fin de semana)  
The- end- week  
'The weekend'
- ✓ Quiero mucho mi padre (quiero mucho a mi padre)  
Love/like- much- my-dad  
'I love my dad very much'

These two examples show that French language interferes in the learning of Spanish in the grammatical level. In the first example, we have pointed out a misuse of the determiner. In French, the word '*fin*' (end) is a feminine word; which means that it should be used with the article '*la*' in the definite form in singular, whereas in Spanish, this word (fin) is a masculine word; which means that, in the definite form in singular, it is used with '*el*'. This misuse of the determiner can be justified or explained by the fact that French and Spanish languages, not only do they abide by gender and number rules, they also structure similarly their words, in this type of sentences or phrases. In French, it is said "*la fin de semaine*" and in Spanish "*el fin de semana*". Both languages use *Det-noun - det- noun*. But unlike in French, in Spanish the noun "*semana*" is used in this context with the masculine definite article "*el*" and not "*la*".

In the second example, the influence of French language can also be noticed. Some students do not use the preposition "*a*" after the quantifier "*mucho*" and before the possessive determiner "*mi*", as it is the case in French where there is no preposition between the quantifier and the possessive determiner. It is said in French: "*j'aime beaucoup mon père*" and not "*j'aime beaucoup à père*". This French morphosyntactic structure misleads many students in the learning of Spanish as a foreign language in Senegalese high schools.

This French interference can also be noticed in the following example, in which the author (one of the interviewed students) uses a word composed a French word (*femme*) plus the bound morpheme "*a*" in their sentence. The formed word does not exist in Spanish. Let's consider the example:

- ✓ La femma de mi padre es mi madre (la esposa de mi padre es mi madre)  
The- created word- of- my- father- is- my- mother  
'My father's wife is my mother'

In this example, we have pointed out that the created word does not exist in both (French and Spanish) languages. However, it can be seen that it is derived from the French word "*femme*", which means "*esposa*" in Spanish or "*wife*" in English. The creation of the word (*femma*) can be justified by the fact that "*femme*" exists in French and, in Spanish the morpheme "*a*" also exists. It is used as a gender bound morpheme, utilized for the feminine gender. Nevertheless, several students, at high school, think or say that, in the learning of Spanish gender, one just needs to add the bound morpheme "*o*" for the masculine or "*a*" for the feminine, to some French or Spanish words.

- **French interference on the learning of English**

Through the questionnaires we organized, we have also pointed out that French language interferes in the learning of English in the grammatical, morphological, syntactic, phonological, etc. levels in Senegalese high schools. But as far as the present work is concerned, the main focus of the questionnaires was on the grammatical level, mainly on the noun and verb phrases.

- **Noun Phrase**

The noun phrase is a constituent of the sentence whose units are ordered around the noun. The noun is the central element of the noun phrase. It is normally preceded by a determiner and may be accompanied by expansions. The noun (in French) has certain morphological characteristics: it has its own gender and can vary in number. Thus, according to Roberte Tomassone, two subclasses of nouns are distinguished: proper nouns and common nouns. Proper nouns designate individuals, objects or unique beings, whereas common nouns designate classes of identical objects (R. Tomassone, 2002, p. 254). Proper nouns are distinguished from common nouns graphically because they begin with a capital letter. Some of them, if they designate a human being, are not preceded by a determiner. Proper nouns, in French, take the definite article when they refer to geographical names or countries, etc. Ex: *Le Sénégal, le Canada, le Brésil*, etc.

This often causes interference in the learning of English because some students or learners of the English language use the definite article in such situations. However, in English, these proper nouns generally do not take the definite article. We say "Senegal" instead of "*The Senegal*", "Canada" instead of "*The Canada*", etc.

There is also interference in the learning of common nouns and more precisely in the formation of the plural of these countable nouns. The majority of these nouns vary in number; the singular is considered the unmarked form and the plural the marked form. Thus, in French the plural is marked (except for nouns ending in -s, -x, -z) by the addition of the bound morpheme **-s** (e.g.: *enfant* → *enfants*) or **-x** (*caillou* → *cailloux*) or by the modification of the final letter. In English, there are two types of plural: the regular plural and the irregular plural. As for the formation of the regular plural, in English, we add **-s** (*mother* → *mothers*) or **-es** (*church* → *churches*) or **-ies** (*lady* → *ladies*). It all depends on the last letter (sometimes the last and the penultimate letter) of the noun. For the irregular plural, its formation depends on the origin of the noun, because most of the time, it is a noun borrowed from another language.

As for uncountable nouns, the interference is found in singular nouns because in French these nouns are often used with the definite article. This is the example of nouns that designate a homogeneous substance (*l'eau, le lait*, etc.); those that designate an abstract character (*la jalousie, l'intelligence*, etc.). In English, the nouns that designate a homogeneous substance or an abstract character are not used with the article more precisely when they express a generality.

- ✓ *Water boils at 100° C* and not ~~*The water*~~ *boils at 100° C*;
- ✓ *Knowledge is good* and not ~~*The knowledge*~~ *is good*.

Thus, a noun can be countable in French while in English its corresponding noun can become uncountable. This is the case of nouns like *advice, damage, proof, soap*, etc. In French the nouns corresponding to these English uncountable nouns are countable: *conseil(s), dégats, preuve(s), savon(s)*, etc.

Apart from this nominal interference, we have also noticed another interference related to determination. This French interference is one of the most remarkable ones in the learning of



English grammar. Regarding articles, we have pointed that they are not used in the same way in the two languages. To express a generality, French often uses the definite article, whereas in English we use the zero article. French also uses the article for nouns that designate homogeneous substances and abstract objects. English does not use the article with this type of noun (which are always uncountable nouns). Moreover, English does not make a distinction between genders (masculine/feminine) when it comes to the use of articles.

English uses the definite article **The** to translate **le** (masculine), **la** (feminine), **l'** (neuter), **les** (plural) and **a/an** to translate the indefinite article **un** (masculine) and **une** (feminine). This same observation is made with the use of demonstratives. French uses **ce, cet** for the masculine, **cette** for the feminine while English uses **this** and **that** for the masculine and feminine. The difference between these two demonstratives (**this and that**) lies in the distance in space and time in accordance to the moment of the utterance. This difference can also depend on the point of view of the enunciator. This, most of the time, misleads a lot of students who think that **this** is used for the masculine gender and **that** for the feminine one.

As for quantifiers, we have also noticed that French and English use these determiners differently. English differentiates between the quantifiers **many** and **much**, which express a large/big quantity. **Many** is used with plural countable nouns and **much** with singular uncountable nouns. This difference is not directly reflected in French. To express a large quantity, French language often uses the quantifier **beaucoup** for both countable and uncountable nouns. This leads many students or learners of the English language to misuse these quantifiers, because some believe that, as in French, there is no difference between **many** and **much**. In short, we can say that French grammar and more precisely the noun phrase interferes in the learning of English grammar. However, this French interference is not only pointed in the noun phrase, but it is also remarkable in the verb phrase.

### ➤ Verb Phrase

The verb phrase is the second mandatory component of the basic sentence. The verb is its fundamental element, its head. In its simplest form, the verb phrase can be reduced to the verb alone. But sometimes the verb is followed by elements that cannot be deleted or freely moved within the sentence. These elements can be of various types.

Thus, the collected data allow us to see that there is an interference of French tenses in learning of English tenses in Senegalese high schools. However, the main part of the research was focused on the present, the past tense, and the future. Let's consider the following sentences taken from the corpus:

- ✓ *Je quitte demain matin.*  
"I **leave** tomorrow morning"
- ✓ *Il est là depuis la semaine dernière.*  
"He **is** here since last week"
- ✓ *Il a eu son baccalauréat en 2000.*  
"He **has had** his baccalaureate in 2000"
- ✓ *Elle l'aimait beaucoup.*  
"She **was loving** him too much",

These sentences do show the interference of French tenses in the learning of English ones. In French, the present tense is the tense of enunciation; the tense in which the enunciator indicates that what they say exists and is true at the time they utter it. It is the tense of commentary, where we say what is happening. The **present tense** is also the verb tense that indicates that the process coincides with the moment of enunciation or encompasses this moment, extending more or less into the past. It is because of the status of this **present tense** that there is interference in learning the *present tense* in English. Many students translate the French present tense by the “*simple present*” in English. In English, there are three present tenses: the “**simple present**”, the “**present continuous**” and the “**present perfect (simple or continuous)**”.

The fact of translating the French *present tense* into one of these tenses depends on the context in which the statement is made. English uses the “**simple present**” when referring to general or scientific truths. English also uses this tense to express habit in the present or a permanent action. This tense is also used to describe an action that is taking place at the time of the utterance but without making any comment or giving one's personal point of view. It can also be used in other contexts. Thus we can say that the “**simple present**” is used when the enunciator validates the predicative relationship at the time of the utterance by highlighting either the grammatical subject or the predicate. In doing so, the speaker is in a situation where he is required to be objective.

As for the “**present continuous**” it can be used to translate the French *present tense* when the action is taking place at the time of speaking. In addition, it can be used when the speaker expresses an action that will take place in the near future. English also uses this tense when the speaker wants to express an actualization value, a resumption value, or an aspectual value. The speaker can also use this tense to express subjectivity at the time of speaking.

The French *present tense* can also be translated by the “**present perfect**” or the “**present perfect continuous**” when the process begins at a time before the time of utterance and continues until the moment of speaking. In doing so, the difference between these tenses lies in the verb. If it is a verb of state, we use the “**present perfect**” and if it is a verb of action we use the “**present perfect continuous**”.

The “**simple past**” in English is used to translate the past tense when the event is marked in time. In other words, English uses this grammatical tense if there is a precision of chronological time or if the event is dated in time. Thus, the “**imparfait**” tense, in French, is a tense that captures the process at a specific point in its development, assuming that one part has already been completed and another, imprecise, part remains to be completed. It is a tense whose vision is not limited. Its uses are based on this fundamental value. It indicates that the process has not yet reached its conclusion, and it is therefore possible to interrupt it. It is a descriptive tense. As such, its translation into English poses enormous problems for students. Some believe that its English equivalent is the “**past continuous**”. However, this tense can be translated into several tenses in English, namely the “**past continuous**”, the “**simple past**”, the “**past perfect or past perfect continuous**” “**used to**”, “**would**”, etc.

The “**imparfait**” tense is translated by the “**past continuous**” when the enunciator describes a process in the past. English also uses this tense to translate the French “**imparfait**” when the process has not reached its end and it is possible to interrupt it.

As far as the **future** is concerned, we can say that it is a time that situates the moment of the event after the utterance. In its simple form, it presents the process as not completed at the time of the utterance. Furthermore, the **simple future** does not capture the event in its entirety, it presents it

at a moment in its unfolding without specifying the limits of the process. Thus, some students encounter difficulties translating it into English. This is due to the interference of French grammar in learning English grammar. These students often use “**will**” to translate this future tense, whereas in English one can use “**will**” or “**shall**” or the “**simple present**”.

- **Interference of English on the learning of Spanish**

Whatever the French interference in the learning of English and Spanish may be, the research we conducted have also revealed that English language interferes in the learning of Spanish in Senegalese high schools. This English interference is mainly reflected in the **YES/NO** questions. Many students, when asked such questions in Spanish, answer by **YES** when they would like to affirm or confirm instead of using the Spanish word “**SÍ**”. The following examples do illustrate it.

- ✓ Question: *¿Quieres aprender español?*  
answer: **YES**
- ✓ Question: *¿Tienes una buena nota en español?*  
answer: **YES**

In these two examples, we have pointed out that the student’s answer is influenced by the English language. Several students, instead of answering by “**SÍ**”, they use the English adverb **YES**. But this interference can be explained by the fact that they have been learning English since the six grade, mainly at least, two years before learning Spanish. The English influence on Spanish language learning is also noticed through the use of coordinating conjunctions.

- ✓ Ngoor **and** Diegane son estudiantes en su último año de secundaria.  
Ngoor-and-Diegane - are- students- in - their- final-year- at high school  
“Ngoor **and** Diegane are students in their final year of high school”.

The example shows that some students, learning Spanish, misuse the coordinating conjunctions, mainly the one that coordinates two words or phrases or sentences of the same nature. English language uses “**and**” whereas in Spanish, it is “**Y**” that is used. So the student should have *Ngoor y Diegane* instead of *Ngoor and Diegane*. The same influence is also pointed out with the use of months. Many students say **August** instead of **Agosto**, **September** instead of **Septiembre**, **October** instead of **Octubre**, etc.

Furthermore, apart from the interference of French on the learning of English and Spanish and the one of English in the learning of Spanish, we have pointed out the phenomenon of Codeswitching. The latter, which is the act of changing languages, dialects, or registers within a single conversation or sentence, whether by multilingual or monolingual speakers, is one of the most striking phenomena that appear in the learning of foreign languages in Senegalese high schools. This phenomenon can occur for a variety of reasons, such as adapting to a specific context, reinforcing group identity, expressing emotion, or for stylistic reasons. Some students code switch between English and Spanish or between French and Spanish when discussing or during topic presentation.

## Conclusion

The objective of the work is to highlight this linguistic policy and to see the different categories of the second language policy in this educational cycle and the challenges of learning English and Spanish as foreign languages in the Senegalese educational system.

To collect, process and analyze data, we tried to do research related to the teaching and learning foreign languages in the educational system. Field surveys, interviews and questionnaires were organized with educational actors such as English and Spanish teachers, students, headmasters, etc. and state leaders. After collecting data, two methods were used to process these data: the lemmatization which proceeds from a syntactic and, at the same time, paradigmatic approach and corresponds to technical constraints and the reduction which naturally fits within the framework of lemmatization, but it is not limited to it. It is possible, for example, to design a lexical analysis following a content analysis. Thus, the results have shown that several students choose English as a first foreign language for academic and professional purposes and Spanish for academic reasons. They have also shown that the French language, being the official language through which mainly all the courses are done, interferes in the learning of English and Spanish at Senegalese high schools, in the grammatical, morphological and phonological levels and English also interferes in the learning of Spanish.

Through the research we conducted and the results we ended up with, we can say that teaching a foreign language requires sufficient linguistic knowledge but also socio-affective, socio-cultural, socio-emotional strategies, etc. Teachers must use a whole host of tricks to motivate their students, depending on the objectives they set: group work, role play, simulation, inversion, fun activities, etc. in order to promote meaningful, autonomous, and creative learning. With active methods, foreign language teachers must act as friends, mediators, collaborators with learners, motivators, or facilitators of the knowledge building process, as it is stated by some scholars. They also have an interest in maintaining fraternal and friendly relationships with learners, providing them with the educational resources they need to work actively and meaningfully to satisfy their communication needs.

Thus, as one teacher states it, one of the most effective ways to motivate learners currently is to frequently use the new technologies in the knowledge building process. This is because these tools are highly motivating and are part of the lives of today's youth. It's true that students don't always have access to computers connected to the Internet, nor to televisions, videos, etc., in sufficient quantities in Senegal's high schools. However, these tools will play a very important role in the future of foreign language learning, as they significantly motivate students and, consequently, enable them to learn in a meaningful way.

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