

ASSESSING THE ALIGNMENT OF THE SYLLABUS TO THE CURRICULUM: THE CULTURAL COMPONENT IN BOTSWANA'S FRENCH JUNIOR CERTIFICATE SYLLABUS.

Obene B. Bojosi
Université d'Avignon
boiketleetso-obene.bojosi@alumni.univ-avignon.fr

Boingotlo W. Kaome
Université Clermont Auvergne
Boingotlo_winnie.KAOME@etu.uca.fr

Rodah Sechele-Nthapelelang*
University of Botswana
nthapelelangr@ub.ac.bw

Abstract

Societal needs have dictated the change from traditional methods of teaching language, which had a grammar-translation oriented approach with the teacher assuming an authoritarian role and learners memorising grammar rules, to methodologies that are communicative and task-based. These methodologies call for the incorporation of the target language culture in curricula and syllabi since the aim is to produce not only multilingual but also multicultural learners. One of the aims of the Revised French Curriculum for the Botswana three-year junior certificate of 2010 is for the learners to appreciate the culture of the target language. The aim of this study is to investigate the extent to which the French syllabus of 2010 incorporates the francophone culture and guides in developing the intercultural competency. Inclusion of cultural elements in the syllabus was analysed in relation to the topics of the syllabus. A questionnaire was administered to teachers, the results of which were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The results suggest that the cultural component has been neglected in the syllabus and this has implications on teacher practices.

Keywords: curriculum, syllabus, francophone culture, intercultural competency, learner.

1.0 Introduction

As a directional map, the syllabus weighs heavily on how teaching is organised and on how effective it will be. It helps the teacher to prepare and organise the teaching content, just as it conveys to the student a clear idea of the knowledge they are to gain. Moreover, it is seen as “an instrument by which the teacher, with the help of the syllabus designer, can achieve a degree of 'fit' between the needs and aims of the learner (as a social being and as an individual), and the activities which will take place in the classroom” (Yalden, 1984, p. 14). With French being the only foreign language in Botswana's public secondary school education system, it is even more paramount for its syllabus to be as effective a tool as it can be, because the language's teaching success could possibly pave way for the inclusion of other foreign

languages in the future. A communicative and task-based approach to teaching and learning forms the basis of this study. This study is premised on the understanding that language forms the basis of communication, and that communication is done within a certain cultural context. The underlying reality to any language learning is the fact that culture is inherent to any language. Therefore, the objective of this study is to assess whether the design of instruction and identify foresees any interface between culture and language. The article seeks to show through various studies why incorporating culture into language learning is ideal to the learner. Furthermore, the results of a study will be presented to establish the teacher's perspective on the matter as well as how it translates into classroom practices.

2.0 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the extent to which the junior secondary school syllabus of French incorporates the cultural aspect and guides teachers in developing intercultural skills in learners to enable them to “appreciate the culture of the target language” (Republic of Botswana, 2010, p. 3) as stated in the aims of the three-year junior secondary French syllabus. The study will seek to answer these questions: a) Through which objectives is the cultural component covered if any? b) Which cultures are covered? c) How is the cultural aspect covered? d) How easy is it for teachers to interpret the syllabus? e) Is the syllabus explicit enough to guide teachers in incorporation of the target language? and f) Is there any alignment between the syllabus and the curriculum's aim to have intercultural competency in students?

3.0 Significance of this study

This study examines the alignment of the syllabus to the written curriculum in the teaching of French as a foreign language. Its findings would inform curriculum designers of any gaps that exist in incorporating the cultural component. The findings would also inform policy makers on how the said component could be integrated in a reference tool meant for teachers. Through this study, teachers, important role players in developing intercultural skills in learners, are given an opportunity to share how they interpret the cultural aspect of the curriculum and how they implement it. Teachers' responses could benefit those in charge of both initial and in-service training about the effectiveness of pedagogical training on the integration of the culture of the target language in the delivery of their subject-matter.

4.0 Definitions of culture and education

The term culture is derived from the Latin *cultura* which means to cultivate or to tend an agricultural piece of land. In the mid-16th century this term evolved to eventually imply cultivation of the mind, faculties, or manners. It is this meaning that has evolved to today's acceptance of culture as a set of knowledge that allows to develop a critical sense, taste, and judgment. This perception of culture informs on two points: firstly, that a culture is inseparable from the person and therefore forms the basis of their identity, and secondly that a culture is repetitive and is transmitted from one generation to the other. Citing Tylor (1871), Mattelart (2005) defines culture in a general etymological sense to denote “ a complex notion which

includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, customs or any other faculty which is acquired by the human being by virtue of being a member of a society”(p. 6)¹

The principles of acquisition and belonging underpin this definition and it is important to note that these are the same principles that equally underpin the definition of education. Many times, society uses the term “cultured people”, and this is normally used to refer to someone who does worthwhile activities, someone who has been educated in a particular way and who responds to society’s expectations of either an institutionalised or a non-institutionalised education. In this acceptance, education and culture can be used interchangeably.

The simplest definition for education is given by Castle (1982), cited in Chipeta (1999 p.16), which is “what happens from the day one is born to the day they die”. This means the acquisition of the experiences that one gets from the environment. To educate someone means to train the mind, the character, the physique, and the behaviour so as to allow the person to behave in a certain way. This definition echoes a similar one given in the Oxford English Dictionary where education is defined as “the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgement, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life”. The same perception is shared by philosophers such as Aristotle, Socrates, and Dewey. If we go by this definition, it then follows that education is a key denominator to identity and to a certain extent, one can conclude that how much we know of languages and the extent to which foreign cultures form the basis of our general culture depends on our national and individual priorities.

Another appreciation of the term education will be informed by its actual utilisation whereby it refers to the formal, institutionalised, planned situation where the mind, the character, behaviour and physique are trained with a set of expected goals in mind. Chipeta (1999) defines education as “an area of knowledge which deals with how to teach properly” (p. 16). This means education does not only shape the person in a general way, but also in a pedagogical way. It implies a desired process, planned, with objectives to achieve and eventually with an expected end result. If we apply this definition to the school system, then this education implies government planning and positioning which is inherently premised on the following: a) the language politics of the country, b) the national policy on education, c) the bilateral and multilateral relations that the country has, d) the imperialistic positioning of the country, and e) manpower planning for the country which will then dictate what skills need to be developed within a certain period.

The above paragraph denotes institutionalised education which in turn is guided by a curriculum. The curriculum development process systematically organizes what will be taught, who will be taught, and how it will be taught. Each component affects and interacts with other

¹ Our Translation : « *Dans son sens ethnographique le plus large, le terme de culture désigne ce tout complexe qui comprend à la fois le savoir, les croyances, les arts, les lois, les coutumes ou toute autre faculté acquise par l'être humain en tant que membre d'une société* ».

components (Adagale, 2015; El Sawi, 1996). For example, what will be taught is affected by who is being taught, e.g., their stage of development in age, maturity, and education. Methods of how content is taught are affected by who is being taught, their characteristics, and the setting. Essential considerations for curriculum development include identifying the need (the what), characteristics and needs of learners (target audience or the who), changes intended for learners (intended outcomes/objectives/ what the learners will be able to do), the important and relevant content to achieve the intended changes for learners (what), methods to accomplish the intended outcomes (how), and evaluation of strategies for methods, content, and intended outcomes (what works?) (El Sawi, 1996).

5.0 Language politics and policy in Botswana

The Botswana language policy has accorded the status of official language to English while Setswana is accorded the status of a national language. Setswana stands out as a national language because its varieties are spoken by 80% of the population. Apart from these two languages, there are 27 other minority languages spoken in the country (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2000). The languages of instruction in the educational system of Botswana are English and Setswana. The National Education Plan advocates for the use of Setswana in the first year of primary school. As early as the second year, English becomes the language of instruction, and it is recommended that Setswana be a compulsory subject for all Batswana until high school. Given that Botswana is a multilingual country, a move towards including the so-called minority languages is captured in the Revised National Education Policy of 1994 which recommends the introduction of a third language in the educational system. This was apparently done for students whose mother language is not Setswana but what is remarkable is that French was recommended as the third language (Republic of Botswana, 1994).

Botswana's policy on education is guided by the Report of the National Commission on Education of 1977, the Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE) Government Paper No 2 of April 1994, NDP9, Vision 2016 as well as the 2001-2006 Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education and Skills Development. Having been adopted from the pre-independence era Botswana's education system came to a more domesticated approach with the setting up of a National Commission on Education of 1977 which was mandated to carry out a review of the education system. This Commission proposed that the starting point in the educational review should be the national principles of democracy, development, unity and self-reliance. Needless to say, this was an era of nation building and as such, other actors equally participated in shaping the education system in Botswana. There has been numerous of them from state actors to non-state actors with one important stakeholder, the voice of the teachers coming through the Botswana Teachers Union (subsequently referred to as BTU) Policy on Education.

According to the BTU Policy on Education "The Revised National Policy on Education Government Paper No 2 of April 1994 has guided the programme activities of the Ministry of Education and Skills Development in terms of curriculum reforms and ongoing improvements since NDP8. The RNPE was intended to cover a timeframe of 25 years given that its recommendations were to be implemented in the short, medium and long term" (Botswana

Federation of Trade Unions, 2007, p. 2). Regarding the recommendation of a third language in the school systems, as mentioned earlier, this third language became French at a later stage.

6.0 The teaching of French in Botswana

Currently, French is the only foreign language taught in public schools. According to an unpublished report of the Ministry of Basic Education on school performances in the 2019 Junior Certificate Examinations, 39 public junior schools and 6 senior secondary schools teach French currently (Maplanka, 2019). The teaching began in the 1980s in two public schools, but the latter was not a great success due to lack of qualified teachers and the political orientation of the time. Kewagamang (2011) argues that the teaching of French at that time had no organized structures due to lack of enough trained personnel to implement a well-adapted programme in French. According to Kewagamang, everything was left to the discretion of teachers, themselves not sufficiently trained. However, in private schools the teaching of French was of relative success. The serious uptake of French in public schools and the institutionalization of such within the Education Policy of Botswana has been through a number of factors, some emanating from personal experiences by decision makers who saw the need for the country to adopt a political positioning within the world. In June 1999 during a bilateral meeting between France and Botswana, the then Minister of Education, Honourable Gaositwe Chiepe said: "There is nothing more embarrassing than to see two Africans, one francophone, the other anglophone, communicating through an interpreter" (Sénat & Australe, 1999). This declaration opened doors to the teaching of French; the aim was to reduce linguistic and cultural divide within the continent. Subsequently, the Ministry of National Education implemented a pilot programme on the teaching of French in 15 secondary schools throughout the country, commencing in 1999.

A recommendation made in 1994 through the Revised National Policy on Education, Government Paper No 2 for the introduction of a third language in the school system took five years to concretise into the teaching and learning of French as a foreign language. Had the then Minister not been confronted with a situation where she appreciated the need for French to be introduced in the school system in Botswana, the situation could have evolved differently. This shows the extent to which language teaching is a political issue and even more so for a foreign language.

Following the success of the first phase of piloting French language in schools, the Ministry adopted for a position to roll-out the teaching of the language to all public schools and the implementation thereof was left to the discretion of the regions and the schools. This was further made possible through a cooperation agreement signed between the Government of Botswana, the Alliance Française de Gaborone and the Embassy of France for the introduction of French in public schools in 2008, followed by a more comprehensive cooperation agreement in 2015 between the governments of Botswana and France (Sénat & Australe, 2016).

Given this background, it is therefore evident that the teaching of French has evolved in a context of tension between English, Setswana, and other national languages. This presupposes that the learning of the French language comes in a situation where the reception of the latter started off with very little buy-in or lack of preparedness. Now the underlying question to this situation is how prepared was the political atmosphere to accept French into Botswana knowing that a learned language is a vehicle of the linguistic structures as well as its cultural imprints? How prepared was the country to put in the rightful structures for syllabus design to allow for a smooth planning for teaching and learning of such a language?

7.0 Why is culture important in language learning?

We have in our earlier arguments postulated that culture is an integral part of being, of identity and as such it is rooted in our self-expressions, one of which is language. Our languages are therefore a translation of our culture through linguistic structures. A number of studies have been carried out to explain the need for including culture in language learning. One such study is by Kitao (1991) which lists some of the benefits of teaching culture as follows:

- a) studying culture gives students a reason to study the target language as well as rendering the study of the target language meaningful (Stainer, 1971) cited in (Genc & Bada, 2005, p. 74).
- b) providing access into cultural aspects of language helps learners relate the abstract sounds and forms of a language to real people and real places (Chastain, 1971) cited in (Genc & Bada, 2005, p. 74).
- c) in an age of tolerance towards different ideologies, religion, sub-cultures, we need to understand not only the other culture but also our own culture (Genc & Bada, 2005, p. 74).

Looking at the above-mentioned benefits, it is not deniable that learning a new language is learning a new culture and as such, a discussion on how teachers can ensure that their learners do not miss out on the cultural aspect of the language they are learning is inevitable.

8.0 How to incorporate culture into language learning

Byram (1997), cited in (Pourkalhor & Esfandiari, 2017, p. 27), proposed the concept of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) as a way of improving the quality of language learners. In his model, foreign language teachers are encouraged to guide learners through the process of acquiring competencies in attitudes, knowledge and skills related to intercultural competence while using a foreign language. In this way, Byram (1997) thinks there are five *savoirs* that teachers should concentrate on and these are knowledge, attitudes, critical cultural awareness, skills of interpreting and relating as well as skills of discovery and interaction. He further suggests ways on how to develop each *savoir* in class. A person who has developed this intercultural competence is able to build relationships while speaking in the foreign language, communicates effectively taking into consideration his own and the other person's viewpoint and needs, mediates interactions between people of different backgrounds and strives to continue developing communicative skills.

On the other hand, Seelye (1976), cited in Pourkalthor and Esfandiari (2017, p. 27), introduced seven instructional goals for teaching culture in the language classroom. These goals include a) the sense or functionality of culturally conditioned behaviour—in this goal students are to understand that people generally act the way they do because they are using options the society allows to satisfy basic physical and psychological needs, b) interaction of language and social variables—the focus here is on the student understanding that social variables such as age, sex, social class and place of residence affect the way people speak and behave, c) conventional behaviour in common situations—the student should demonstrate an awareness of the role convention and norm play in shaping behaviour by demonstrating how people act in common mundane and crisis situations in the target culture, d) culture connotations of words and phrases—the student should indicate awareness that culture conditioned images are linked to the most common target words and phrases, e) evaluating statements about a culture—students should be able to make, evaluate and refine generalities concerning the target culture, f) researching another culture—students should prove that they developed the skills needed to locate and organize information about the target culture from any available sources such as the media, and g) attitudes towards other societies—students should indicate intellectual curiosity about the target culture and empathy towards its people.

Finally, scholars like Cortazzi and Jin (1999), cited in Nguyen (2017), believe there are three types of cultural information that should be represented in lessons: the target culture, the source culture and the international culture. The target culture is what will expose the learners to the culture of countries where the language they are learning is spoken as the first language. This kind of exposure can help learners develop positive attitudes towards these language speakers and countries. The source culture on the other hand, draws on the learner's own culture and as such helps them develop a positive cultural identity. Lastly, the international culture includes various cultures from various parts of the world, or cultural topics that are of concern to the global society at large (Matsuda, 2012, cited in Nguyen, 2017). We tend to favour this approach because not only does it take into consideration the influences of the target culture on the learner, but also those of the pre-existing cultures of the learner on the target language. Consequently, a language teacher in a multicultural context has to deal with a meeting of cultures, which he/ she has to know how to manage.

To some researchers like Hoeh and Spuck (1975) and Klink (1980), the best way to learn culture while learning language is to experience it, for example, through immersion programmes. Although that is a very effective way indeed, there are other ways of ensuring the learner experiences the target culture without the cost of travelling. Examples of strategies of how to integrate culture into classroom activities include the utilization of movies, lectures from native speakers, observations of the target language community, literary readings, display and exhibitions of regalia, discussion activities, etc.

9.0 Botswana's French junior certificate syllabus and inclusion of culture

With these guiding principles in mind, this study looked at the French Junior Secondary School Syllabus of 2010, presently used in schools, with the view of determining if the “what” component, which is basically the content or intended outcomes from the learners has any provision for culture, the francophone culture and the Tswana culture respectively. Thereafter the study sought to have the teachers' opinions on the extent to which the syllabus guided them on the cultural component. Participants were drawn randomly from all the seven regions in which French is offered. These regions are Central, Kgatleng, Kweneng, North-East, North-West, South-East and Southern. The study targeted at least 2 participants from different schools per region because it was felt that this would be a balanced representation since it is a norm for teachers to prepare schemes of work as a regional team. The data was collected using a questionnaire of close-ended and open-ended questions.

10.0 Findings and discussion

10.1 The syllabus

The syllabus is a list of topics the teacher is supposed to teach over a given period of time during which a subject is to be taught. The implication here is that it is an instructional document consisting of subject topics to be taught to learners. The Botswana syllabus for French of 2010 draws its objectives from the ten-year Basic Education Programme, and these objectives are general in terms of the envisaged change in behaviours after completion of the training. Thus, the aims of the Syllabus are more general in terms of the envisaged outcomes. Objectives number 9,10 and 13 of the ten-year Basic Education Programme state that “On completion of the Three-Year Junior Secondary programme, students should have:

9. Acquired knowledge and understanding of society, appreciation of different cultures, religion and a sense of citizenship;
10. Developed tolerance towards different cultures, pride in own culture and unity in diversity;
13. Acquired knowledge, attitudes, moral standards, life skills etc [...] that will prepare them for responsible and productive family and community life” (Republic of Botswana, 2010, p. i).

The conclusion that we can draw from these three objectives is that the source culture, the target culture, and a general culture are envisaged in the general curriculum. The syllabus for teaching French equally states that the teaching approach should be communicative. In the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT), the goal of language acquisition is to develop the learner's communicative competence which includes four competences being linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic. These four imply that in language learning the learner should know how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions and to use the language appropriately in communicative situations. Having to know when to use and respond to language appropriately, given the setting, the topic, and the relationships among the people communicating, implies the cultural aspect should never be left out in the process of language teaching. Contrary to expectation of the rationale on language learning and

the envisaged outcomes of the ten-year Basic Education programme, the only objective in the Three-Year Junior Secondary French syllabus which relates to culture reads “learners should be able to appreciate the culture of the target language.” (Obj 5, Republic of Botswana, 2010, p. iii). These objectives are later translated into Key Competencies, the one corresponding to the latter objective being “learners should be able to appreciate aspects of the French customs and culture ” (Key competency 12, Republic of Botswana, 2010, p. iii). The syllabus is silent on how this objective is to be achieved. With this skeletal orientation by the syllabus on culture one can question if the move to include very little on culture was planned and if that is the case, what was the objective? To go further, one can equally question the trust vested on the teacher to decide on how and to what extent to include the cultural component. This certainly leaves some grey areas and a whole lot of elasticity which translates into disparities even within the same school because no specific measure has been put in place to guide integration of cultural aspects into instructional material.

10.2 Teachers of French’s views on the importance of incorporating culture in the classroom activity

The survey administered to the teachers has helped in affirming that teachers are aware of the importance of incorporating culture into the teaching of a language. These are the responses they gave:

- a) It’s interesting to learners.
- b) I cover culture because it brings more value to teaching a foreign language. It is more important to students because the desire to share culture is captivating and helps with concentration span.
- c) It's easy for students to relate hence solicit interest and see French not as a foreign thing.
- d) Language is made up primarily of a culture of the people who speak it; without the knowledge of the culture, it will be a bit difficult to relay some of the linguistic aspects of the learnt language.
- e) Language is a tool that expresses a certain culture. By speaking French, you are expressing the French culture.
- f) A language transmits culture.
- g) I believe including culture for both countries is important to learners for experience’s sake. That is, when they happen to visit France, they should have an idea of what to expect.
- h) Because it teaches learners to be open to other cultures and to be able to survive and live with others.
- i) To make learners aware of the existing cultural differences and develop intercultural skills. This enables them to appreciate other cultures to avoid cultural shocks in future.
- j) I teach culture because I believe it is part of a language. For learners to appreciate the French language they should be able to avoid any gesture or shock concerning French due to misunderstanding, for instance during greetings they should understand why *la bise* because in Setswana it might be a shock why you are kissing someone.

With all these responses from the teachers one can confidently assert that there is an awareness of how important the cultural importance is in teaching a foreign language and the teachers are willing to integrate it. Without a clear guide by the syllabus as to what aspect of culture is to be exploited in class, how it is to be exploited, which is what is found to be lacking in the French Junior Secondary School Syllabus of 2010 and many other shortcomings, the following issues were observed through the responses from the teachers surveyed:

a) Disparity in teaching approach and in content

The disparity was reflected in the teachers' responses when asked if they find cultural aspects to be clearly articulated in the JC syllabus. To this question only three of the 14 teachers responded in the affirmative to say that the syllabus makes provision for cultural aspects to be integrated. When it came to the question of what culture they included in the French classroom, all teachers responded that the intercultural space exploited in class was for the French and the Tswana culture. This is a very limiting perspective of envisioning the Francophone space since the francophone space is constitutive of many countries which are diverse and rich with cultures, hence the inadequacy of representing the culture of the France in a French classroom. This disparity would even exist within the same region where one teacher asserts using one approach while their colleague from the same region confirms using a different approach. This is unfortunate since the discretion seems to be left to the teacher to interpret the syllabus as to when to include cultural aspects, for which countries and how much of it to treat during a unit. A noticeable difference between teachers was that those teachers who had more years of experience seemed to include cultural aspects to a certain extent while those who are new in the field had difficulties understanding that culture was to be part of their instruction material, and how much of it to include as well as how to impart it to their learners.

b) Lack of confidence in the French culture

When asked whether they cover culture in their classroom activities, most teachers responded in the affirmative except for one who responded in the negative but still went further to give examples of how they integrate culture in the classroom activities. This will imply that the teacher understands that they have to integrate culture, but they have limited knowledge of how to exploit it and impart it to the students. This is equally detectable in the way the teachers responded to the question of whether the textbooks have any cultural indication whereby they responded that examples given from the textbooks are from the two cultures. This implies that their textbooks somehow orient course content towards integrating the cultural aspect and as such, the teacher has very little choice except to mobilise their little know-how and impart what they can to the learners. Teachers feel they are not competent enough in the francophone cultures. Some respondents asserted: "If we could also be reinforced on cultural lessons as professionals because for most of us also this is foreign to us. You teach what you know".

c) Little to no culture in the syllabus

When asked to state their interpretation of the syllabus, about half the teachers stated that there is very little to no coverage of culture in the syllabus and as such it is difficult to integrate it in the instruction content. Some extracts from the responses are as follows: "I do

not really think it does;” “there are not many objectives that cater for that;” “no, the syllabus does not say anything about covering the cultural aspect in my classes;” “no. I just integrate;” “it lacks precisions;” “it gives more importance to grammatical objectives;” “it gives us less covering as it gives more time to achieving grammatical objectives;” and “it’s mostly grammatically orientated.”

d) Foreign Language Syllabus designed as a copy of a Second Language syllabus

One of the respondents asserted that the French syllabus does not cover culture, and this is the reasoning given: “No, it does not, due to the fact that the syllabus is a replica of the English language syllabus and therefore has neglected some objectives that could be useful in teaching and learning of French as a foreign language.”

e) The teaching and assessment curriculum do not talk to each other

Through the questions of the survey, teachers were requested to justify why they did not include culture in their instruction activities, and they gave responses which questioned the alignment of the teaching objectives to the assessment tool. The following are some of the responses given by the teachers: “The cultural aspects are not assessed;” “if testing and teaching correlated it will be easy to include” and “The curriculum does not help much as mostly we concentrate on how the students are tested and concentrate much on teaching them that.”

Given these realisations, the teachers proposed a revision of the curriculum as captured in the following comments:

- a) There is need for balanced intercultural activities in teaching materials;
- b) There needs to be a win-win exchange of culture; supporting material such as textbooks must cover our culture so that they (students) have a sense of belonging in the French class.
- c) Without it (culture) incorporated in the syllabus, it is the teacher’s discretion to incorporate it in the syllabus;
- d) Inculcate in the production of curriculum French cultural aspects. The objectives do not exist on the syllabus and therefore the teachers just improvise in making them a part of the learning process.

11.0 Conclusion and recommendations

The syllabus states that, “the study of French in Botswana will assist in a broader outlook, an understanding and appreciation of other cultures and will raise awareness of the importance of learning a foreign language to facilitate international relations in a global economy” (Republic of Botswana, 2010). Moreover, according to one of the aims of the syllabus, at the end of the three-year JC, learners should be able to appreciate aspects of the French customs and culture. The rationale and aims seem to be only intentions not a reality as the cultural aspect is not reflected in the syllabus itself. Of the 76 general objectives that are to be covered in the three years, there is only one sub-objective that takes the French culture into

consideration. This brings us to conclude that though there is mention of culture in the syllabus, it is not enough to ensure that the culture of the French language is exploited in teaching the language. In practice this aspect is often left to the discretion of the teacher. The findings suggest that although teachers are aware of the importance to incorporate culture in their pedagogical practices, it is difficult to make that a reality because they lack confidence in the target culture. Furthermore, they do not find the syllabus explicit enough in guiding them to exploit the culture of the francophone countries. The fact that the cultural component is not covered in the assessment make teachers judge this syllabus as none-binding on that aspect.

Based on the findings of this study and related literature we believe that if certain intentions were concretised and if certain measures were put in place, the objective of producing students who are interculturally competent would be attained. Therefore, we would like to recommend the following for consideration by the concerned stakeholders. Syllabus designers should come up with a framework that includes all the topics in the syllabus. For each topic, there could be suggestions on what to exploit, how to teach it, and resources that could be used as teaching aids. As the sole institution in Botswana which trains teachers in the theory and methodology of teaching French as a foreign language, the University of Botswana should propose a better way of preparing future teachers to incorporate the cultural aspect. Those responsible for in-service training of teachers should come up with workshops and cultural immersion programmes that equip teachers, leaving them confident enough to talk about the cultures of francophone countries in their classes. We suggest that teachers who have been in the profession for long mentor new ones in exploiting culture in class. All the above stakeholders could deposit the resources they come across covering cultural aspects. The resource centre could be physical and electronical for access by all. Policy makers should appreciate that the teaching of a foreign language is not similar to the teaching of a first or second language and that of an official language and therefore needs certain preparedness socially, politically and economically. For instance, while it could be easy to incorporate the English culture in a class in Botswana, the teaching of French as a foreign language will require that a deliberate, planned approach to integrating it be used. This calls for awareness of this at national curriculum and syllabus planning stage.

References

- Adagale, A. S. (2015). Curriculum development in higher education. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 1(11), 602-605.
- Botswana Federation of Trade Unions. (2007). *Policy on education in Botswana*. Retrieved from <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/botswana/04922.pdf>
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence: Multilingual Matters*.

- Chipeta, D. (1999). *Curriculum theory and teaching: Techniques for teachers and Supervisors*: Olive Publishing House.
- El Sawi, G. (1996). Curriculum development guide: Population education for non-formal education programs of out-of-school rural youth. Research Extension and Training Division, Food and Agricultural Organization, Rome.
- Genc, B., & Bada, E. (2005). Culture in language learning and teaching. *The Reading Matrix An International Online Journal*, 5(1), 73-84.
- Hoeh, J. A., & Spuck, D. W. (1975). Effects of a three phase acculturation process on language skill development and social and personal attitudes of high school French students. *Foreign Language Annals*, 8(3), 221-226.
- Kewagamang, P. (2011). *Pour une approche interactive en classe de FLE au Botswana : Analyse et perspective*. Mémoire de Master 2. Université de Rouen.
- Kitao, K. (1991). Teaching culture in Foreign Language Instruction in the United States. *Doshisha Studies in English*, 52(53), 285-306.
- Klink, P. (1980). Evaluation of the French immersion weekends. *ERIC Document Reproduction Service NED*, 201178.
- Maplanka, M. K. (2013). *Teaching of French language as a Foreign Language in Government secondary schools*. Retrieved February 9 2020 from <https://natcomreport.com/reports/Botswana1401/files/assets/basic-html/page64.html>
- Mattelart, A. (2005). *Mondialisation et culture: les apports de la Convention Internationale de l'Unesco sur la Diversité Culturelle*. Paper presented at the ponencia presentada en la I Conferencia Internacional de Políticas Culturales, llevada a cabo en la ciudad de Bilbao en noviembre de.
- Republic of Botswana. (1994). *The revised national policy on education, March 1994: As Approved by the National Assembly on the 7th March 1994*: Government Printers.
- Republic of Botswana. (2010). *Three-year junior secondary school syllabus, French*. Government Printers.
- Nguyen, T. T. T. (2017). Integrating culture into language teaching and learning: Learner outcomes. *The Reading Matrix: An International Online Journal*, 17(1), 145-155.
- Nyati-Ramahobo, L. (2000). The language situation in Botswana. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 1(2), 243-300.

Pourkalhor, O., & Esfandiari, N. (2017). Culture in language learning: Background, issues and implications. *Language*, 5(01),23-32.

Sénat, F., & Australe, F. S. G. d. a. F.-A. (1999). Le Botswana: un modèle pour l'Afrique?: compte rendu d'une mission effectuée au Botswana du 12 au 18 avril 1999 par une délégation du Groupe interparlementaire d'amitié France-Afrique australe: Sénat Retrieved from France le February 18 2020- Afrique australe: le Botswana, un modèle pour l'Afrique ? (senat.fr).

Sénat, F., & Australe, F. S. G. d. a. F.-A. (2016). Projet de loi autorisant l'accord-cadre entre le Gouvernement de la République française et le Gouvernement de la République du Botswana sur l'éducation et la langue française. Retrieved February 18 2020 from <https://www.senat.fr/rap/109-013/109-0132.html>

Yalden, J. (1984). Syllabus design in general education: options for ELT. *CJ Brumfit, CJ (Ed). General English Syllabus Design*, 13-21.