



Why would a university and professional experience in French as a Foreign Language (FLE) be particularly appreciated when teaching languages? Let's History tell us more about it...

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Par Béatrice JAILLET, enseignante Anglais-lettres au lycée St Jacques de Compostelle à Poitiers.

Descriptif :

This article deals with how FLE (French as a Foreign Language) has positioned itself at the center of language pedagogy using a different approach in contexts of "second language" acquisition or multilingualism.

- **History may offer some insight into this question** : during the decolonization period in the 1950s and 1960s, from a military-economic perspective, **the French language** had to go above and beyond to avoid "losing ground" and to **restore French influence and prestige**, facing the increasingly omnipresent English. French needed to remain the language of diplomacy and high-ranking powers !
- To **ensure the rapid development of the Francophonie**, it was necessary to quickly and thoroughly **rethink how to teach the language effectively**, using a different approach in contexts of "second language" acquisition or multilingualism.
- **Numerous linguists, teachers, and researchers jointly engaged** in intense reflection **to define the key principles of "learning to learn."** This marked **a transition from traditional methods** (Grammar-Translation) and Structural-Global approaches to the "Français Fondamental" (developed by Georges Gougenheim, Paul Rivenc, and others).
- It also led to **the creation of institutions** like the **CREDIF (Centre for Research and Studies on the Diffusion of French, 1959)** and the **BELC (Bureau for Teaching French Language and Civilization)**.



- These efforts gave **rise to new methodologies and didactic theories** that revolutionized language teaching ,

at the international level as well.

In the 1980s, the **university curriculum for FLE (French as a Foreign Language) was established as an academic discipline**. Extensive research conducted by pioneers in the field (Louis Porcher, André Reboullet, Daniele Coste, Henri Besse, Jean-Louis Chiss, V. Spaeth, J.P. Cuq, Gérard Vignier, among others) infused the discipline **with dynamic and enriching perspectives**, culminating in the development of **innovative methodologies**.

► These approaches **placed the learner at the heart of their own learning process** (learner-centered approach) and, through the **action-oriented method**, turned them **into the main agent of their language acquisition**. The creation of the **CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)** in 2002 **represented a pivotal moment in language didactics**.

► This historical overview highlights **how FLE has positioned itself at the center of language pedagogy**. Thus, a FLE course **would enable a future language teacher to understand how to design lesson sequences from a didactic perspective**, in accordance with the CEFR's expectations.

► The University of Poitiers, which has hosted renowned FLE scholars such as Martine Marquillo, Valérie Spaeth, and Paul Cappeau, has been specializing **in developing educational materials**. This fosters **creativity among future teachers in designing final-task scenarios**, taking into account Multiple Intelligences, the heterogeneity of learners within a classroom group let alone the socio-cultural context.

► At a time when methodological trends favor eclecticism, it is **essential for teachers to have a broad understanding of the different ways to teach and encourage speech production** (as Vignier advocated for) and to bridge the gap between written and spoken languages.

► In conclusion, a **FLE University training provides a solid foundation in language pedagogy**, offering a **dynamic, playful, varied, and spiral approach to language teaching**.



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