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# **An insight into the Northern Irish Troubles in France: Teaching English as a Foreign Language through Gary Mitchell's *Loyal Women* (2003) along the Common European Framework**

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**Abstract:** The pedagogical qualities of drama have recently been put to the fore especially when it comes to learning a foreign language. If we read the Common European Framework for language learning carefully, we realize that we may choose a play to facilitate language acquisition, notably at university level, when the bases are supposedly already acquired, when the knowledge of the target language needs to be strengthened. We have chosen to demonstrate that a contemporary play like Gary Mitchell's *Loyal Women* can suit many of the requirements of the Common framework. The study of such a play in EFL tutorials can thus pave the way for student's autonomy naturally.

**Key-words:** Common European Framework; didacticism; drama; language learning; skills.

Lately, much has been studied on the best ways to teach foreign languages, and more particularly English as a second language. Alan Maley and Alan Duff – among other researchers in performing arts – have demonstrated that drama was a pedagogical tool to teach a foreign language because drama precisely has a didactic dimension. In parallel, foreign language teachers in Europe are required to bear in mind the recommendations of the Common European Framework (CEF), a 264 pages long report on language teaching and learning. In its introduction, it says that

[It] provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. (CEF: 1)

We can see then that the aim of language teaching/ learning<sup>i</sup> as seen by the European commission in charge of the framework is communication (notably for political purposes<sup>ii</sup>). Therefore, the members of the commission in charge of the report defined the competences and the skills that pupils from their first year at school up to the last years at university needed to acquire in terms of written and oral reception, written and oral production, interaction and mediation.

Since the overall approach of the framework is action-oriented, we are convinced that drama is a useful tool to train the pupils and the students. We will thus here demonstrate to what extent studying Northern Irish drama is a complete exercise to reach the aims of the European report. We have chosen to base our demonstration on Gary Mitchell's play, *Loyal Women*, winner of the Aisling Award for Outstanding Achievement in Arts and Culture in 2005, because it suits the requirements of the report in terms of the acquisition of general competences (notably as far as culture is concerned), as well as communicative language competences that can be "considered as comprising several components: *linguistic*, *sociolinguistic* and *pragmatic*" according to the CEF (CEF: 13).

## **1. General competences**

In its introduction, the report refers to a series of recommendations made by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe; one of them lays the stress on culture. Indeed, it states that "the rich heritage of diverse languages and cultures in Europe is a valuable common resource to be protected and developed, and that a major educational effort is needed to convert that diversity from a barrier to communication into a source of mutual enrichment and understanding." (CEF: 2). Later in the report, the writers hope that, when it comes to teaching foreign languages, teachers will study literature, including drama, because they view it as making "a major contribution to the European cultural heritage, [...] as 'a valuable common resource to be protected and developed', serving many more educational purposes – intellectual, moral and emotional, linguistic and cultural – than the purely aesthetic."(CEF: 56). Northern Irish drama is definitely an educational tool to facilitate

communication since it enables learners to acquire, deepen and strengthen their knowledge on general competences and linguistic ones, two kinds that the report distinguishes.

### **1.1. Declarative knowledge**

The declarative knowledge is the first kind of general competences to be broached in the framework. This type then falls into three other sub-categories: knowledge of the world, sociocultural knowledge and intercultural awareness. If the writers of the report write that “second and foreign language teaching is often able to assume that learners have already acquired a knowledge of the world sufficient” (CEF, p.101), then, when we start teaching any Northern Irish play, a lecture on the history of Ireland, the background of the Troubles and the conflict is absolutely necessary in so far as it helps re-contextualise the play.

#### **1.1.1. Knowledge of the world**

The knowledge of the world, as far as Mitchell’s play is concerned, embraces the knowledge of the background of the Northern Irish Troubles, that is to say the history of Ireland and that of Northern Ireland. Then, students shall be well aware of the internecine divisions between, among and within the categories of people living in Northern Ireland. Indeed, they shall make it clear that there co-exist two sets of people: if we rapidly schematise for comprehension reasons we find the Catholics – nationalists – republicans and the Protestants – unionists – loyalists. Yet, prior to studying the play, it is crucial to point out that *Loyal Women* will only deal with the loyalists (of Protestant religious confession and unionist political affiliation for the major part) and their internal divisions. As Richard Rankin Russell

puts it in his article “‘Loyal to the Truth’: Gary Mitchell’s Aesthetic Loyalism in *As the Beast Sleeps* and *The Force of Change*”:

Working-class Northern Irish Protestant playwright Gary Mitchell has done an impressive body of work that analyses the crisis of identity within loyalism, that contractual belief held by a segment of the Protestant population committed to maintaining the province’s union with Great Britain, often through violence.” (186)

So studying the play implies much more than merely being aware of segregation in Northern Ireland. Its study also promotes the ability to go beyond stereotypes.

In the report, the European committee also stipulates that the knowledge of the world entails an awareness of classes of entities (such as concrete vs. abstract). In *Learning through Drama*, Lynn McGregor, Maggie Tate, and Ken Robinson assert that drama facilitates this comprehension:

[...] The experience of acting-out can be used to understand the nature of themes and abstract concepts. [...] Drama can help children understand concepts in general terms and at the same time make them relevant in personal terms. [...] Drama can be used to explore quite general concepts or themes. It can also be used to explore specific social or political issues. (37-38)

Mitchell’s play is here again the play to study these elements since it lies on paradoxes and conflicts reflecting the external conflict, that is to say the uncertainties that the post-Good Friday agreement days nurtured in the loyalists’ minds. The reflection of the public world in the private one is indeed what can strike students as soon as they read the first scene or as they act it out.

### 1.1.2 Sociocultural knowledge

The second category has to do with the “knowledge of the society and culture of the community or communities in which a language is spoken.” (CEF: 101). Claire Tardieu, in *La Didactique des langues en 4 mots-clés : communication, culture, méthodologie et évaluation*, explains that the contemporary actional approach that the CEF promotes has a social dimension that cannot be acquired within the classroom only<sup>iii</sup>. Hence, plays like Mitchell’s enable students to break the walls of the room and fly away. The reporters of the CEF draw a list of the features distinctively characteristic of a particular European society and its culture and we can see that once again *Loyal Women* bears all the characteristics. To give but a few examples, the reporters mention “everyday living”, which is what the play is about: a family in a family house worried about “domestic tragedies” over a few days for Brian Clover in his review of the play for the “Curtain Up” online review. Clover writes: “At the centre of the play is the Ford family, a household of women headed by Brenda, and including three other generations, her mother-in-law, her teenage daughter and her grand daughter”. Indeed, we agree with Paul Davies’s idea in “Teaching The Use of Drama in English Language” that “in choosing a script, the teacher should ensure that the language is accessible to the learners and relevant to their needs and that the topic arouses the students' interest” and “themes relating to family situations are therefore useful, whereas love scenes and nostalgic situations normally are not.” (93). This is one additional reason why we may pick *Loyal Women* in particular.

The CEF writers also refer to “interpersonal relations”, which is another element tackled in the play since it deals with the intergenerational conflicts within a family but also with members from the outside world. They talk about “body language” as well, and we can not deny that drama is the place where body language is the most telling since it does not only

reflect everyday life but it is also deeply thought about and studied on the stage so as to add or substitute to words and convey messages, especially if we examine it from a semiotic angle. As a matter of fact, Keir Elam explains in *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*: “semiotics can best be defined as a science dedicated to the study of the production of meaning in society.” (1). In *Drama techniques in language Learning, a resource book of communication activities for language teachers*, Alan Maley and Alan Duff also support the power of the body in language learning:

Language is not purely an intellectual matter. Our minds are attached to our bodies, and our bodies to our minds. The intellect rarely functions without an element of emotion, yet it is so often just this element that is lacking in teaching material. Drama attempts to put back some of this forgotten emotional content into language – and to put the body back too. (7)

Here again, if we take the example of Mitchell’s play, with all its very precise stage directions that will orientate the actors’ movements, we can be sure that this recommendation of the CEF is respected.

### **1.1.3 Intercultural awareness**

As for intercultural awareness, it is said to be produced by “the knowledge, awareness and understanding of the relation (similarities and distinctive differences) between the ‘world of origin’ and the ‘world of the target community’.” (CEF: 103). Therefore, the study of the Troubles, the peace process and its aftermath and the close examination of Mitchell’s play, which gives us an insight into the life and worries of a loyalist family in Northern Ireland, help the students become aware of the notion of intercultural. In their book, Lynn McGregor et



al. state that “through drama, pupils, put themselves in other people’s shoes and may realize the attitudes and feelings underlying different points of view.” (145). Interculture is by the way also mentioned on several occasions later in the report since it takes an important dimension in language learning.

## **1.2. Skills and know-how**

The second type of general competences that students shall acquire is called “know-how”. A first kind of skills defined as “practical” has to do with their abilities in social, living, vocational/professional, leisure situations. The report recommends language teachers to consider “what practical skills and know-how the learner will need/be required to possess in order to communicate effectively in an area of concern.” (CEF: 104). It states abilities required to carry out daily routine actions, for instance. Furthermore, Paul Davies recommends following steps when it comes to studying a play, and thus subtly acquiring capacities that they will be capable of reproducing. He writes:

In order to extract the most out of a play, work on it should be approached in stages. The students are asked to familiarize themselves with the text by reading it through on their own before listening to a recording of it. The teacher then discusses the text with the class before assigning the roles. The text is played a second time, with the teacher pausing to draw attention to or invite comments on particular utterances, attitudes, or emotions. Dividing the class into groups, the teacher asks the students to discuss the setting and characters in detail. The penultimate stage – probably in a later lesson – has the students in their groups choosing their roles and rehearsing the play (any type of rehearsal is ideal for

mastering intonation patterns on account of the repetition involved). The final stage would be the performance of the play or a scene / scenes from it. The performance could be recorded for the students to listen to later. In any case, the performance should be discussed after it is over. (93-94)

Since Mitchell's play gives an overview of daily tasks assigned to each of the members of the family, a close examination of them in groups and an eventual performance lead students on a mimetic path to some kind of autonomy.

The second type of know-how is intercultural and refers to abilities such as "overcom[ing] stereotyped relationships". *Loyal Women* is here again the right play to study when it comes to helping students going beyond stereotypes since, as said before, it does not illustrate the conflict opposing the republicans and the loyalists; on the contrary, it shows the worries and divisions within loyalism itself. As a matter of fact, Mitchell complains his community has not been able to remain united and wanted to point out this division:

There is a fundamental crisis in Protestant culture. We have been going through an extremely depressing loss of identity, loss of culture, and worst of all, loss of a future. The past has been hijacked by the other side. They seem to have this huge mythic past, while the Protestant community has this little crappy one. We're hugely divided. Umpteen churches, umpteen political parties. When you have an enemy who is succeeding on every level, you need a new strategy. While we've been saying 'Not an inch' we have been losing miles. (Pelletier: 17)

The opposition we get in this play is gendered more than based on differences of religious confessions since it lays the stress on four generations of women, but it will be difficult to define it as being stereotyped since their attitudes are not particularly stereotypical.

### 1.3 ‘Existential’ competence

The last but one general competence mentioned in the European report is qualified to be “existential” and is defined as follows:

The communicative activity of learners is affected not only by their knowledge, understanding and skills, but also by selfhood factors connected with their individual personalities, characterised by the attitudes, motivations, values, beliefs, cognitive styles and personality types which contribute to their personal identity.

(CEF: 105)

This skill largely depends on the personality of the student and his/her reception of Mitchell’s play. He/she may feel some kind of empathy or not and then reflect upon the play, draw comparisons between the way this family lives in Belfast, and the attitudes of their own family in their French city. This competence aims at creating some sense of intercultural on the student’s part and giving way to an “intercultural personality”, which can be part and parcel of the teacher’s educative goal consisting in motivating students learn a language through drama.

### 1.4 Ability to learn

The last general competence the European commission defines is the ability to learn. It has to do with “the ability to observe and participate in new experiences and to incorporate new knowledge into existing knowledge, modifying the latter where necessary.” (CEF: 106).

Among its various components, this ability comprises the awareness of “language and communication”, which seems to be the most important for our demonstration in so far as

theatrical exchanges and the theatrical discourse are the places where authors deliver a message, in other words, where they communicate. This is an element students should bear in mind when they study any play, and more particularly Mitchell's play. The other components (general phonetic awareness, study skills and heuristic skills) can be taught through Mitchell's play as well but have to do with the personal capacities of each student to pinpoint, develop and understand them. Indeed, in *La créativité artistique à l'école : refonder l'acte d'apprendre*, Joelle Aden reminds us that the cognitive sciences have shed light on the idea that learning a language is not a linear process but one in a spiral<sup>iv</sup>.

Learning strategies are both developed by the students and by the teachers who must know how to catch their audience's interest. Therefore, resorting to drama to consolidate what learners already know of phonetics, for instance, can be beneficial all the more so as Alan Maley and Alan Duff explain that "much of our feeling, especially in English, is conveyed through intonation, and it's important for students to associate the intonation pattern with the feeling that gives rise to it."(11). This is another piece of evidence of the usefulness of drama and, in this case, Mitchell's play.

In her PhD thesis, "Théâtre et Culture fondamentale dans le système éducatif", Maria Munk Farrugia demonstrates that when it comes to conveying meaning after confronting signs and codes, we naturally resort to our culture and our general knowledge but we also need linguistic competences<sup>v</sup>. This is also what the writers of the European framework had in mind when they wrote the fifth chapter of the report. In fact, after giving the list of the general competences students should be taught and should acquire, they give the list of the communicative language competences. Gary Mitchell's play is also here of the utmost importance when it comes to teaching English to students, particularly if we create language activities based on it.

## 2. Communicative language competences

The coherence and continuity of the CEF has been based on adherence to the following principle:

That it is only through a better knowledge of European modern languages that it will be possible to facilitate communication and interaction among Europeans of different mother tongues in order to promote European mobility, mutual understanding and co-operation, and overcome prejudice and discrimination.

(CEF: 2)

This understanding of the foreign language implies knowledge of three particular communicative competences: linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic.

### 2.1. The linguistic competence

Being aware that no language is entirely mastered by its users and that a language follows an endless evolution, the writers of the report have yet drawn a non-exhaustive list of basic elements that need to be learnt so as to communicate. That is how the linguistic competence can be divided into subcategories that excerpts taken from Gary Mitchell's play also exemplify.

The report first mentions the lexical competence where two kinds of elements should be distinguished: the lexical ones and the grammatical ones. It is no surprise that Mitchell's play becomes a Pandora's Box for university students who need to learn new words and enrich their lexicon. In the report, the lexical elements include words and fixed expressions.

Similarly we find some set expressions in *Loyal Women*; for example act 1, Brenda Ford, the

main character, says angrily about her husband: “he might as well be dead as far as I’m concerned.” (7). In this example, we have a fixed phrase and a fixed frame respectively<sup>vi</sup>. As for the grammatical elements (that is to say, articles, quantifiers, demonstratives, conjunctions and so forth), *Loyal Women* provides the students with a means to learn or strengthen their grammatical knowledge since grammatical words, including deictics, can be studied as they are used in situations. An instance includes the moment when Brenda refers to a meeting; she is at her place and says “they are having a meeting here tonight”, a sentence full of grammatical words (underlined) used in a particular situation so as to provide understanding. In another context, this sentence would have had another meaning. Paul Davies pinpoints the idea that drama provides meaning in context in a useful way:

Drama bridges the gap between course-book dialogues and natural usage, and can also help to bridge a similar gap between the classroom and real-life situations by providing insights into how to handle tricky situations. (96-97)

This naturally leads to a study of the grammatical competence, the second communicative skill students should be trained to master. The objective for the level we are interested in (B2, the vantage level) is to have a good grammatical control so as to deliver the good information; in case there are slips or mistakes, they should not lead to misunderstanding as the European report says. The analysis of chosen sentences extracted from Mitchell’s play is an efficient way to teach students about both word-formation, syntax or the use of tenses, for instance.

The third linguistic competence is referred to as the “semantic competence”, and has to do with “the learner’s awareness and control of the organisation of meaning.” (CEF: 115).

This question is of course central to communication. A precise analysis of Mitchell’s play will help demonstrate that lexical and grammatical words interrelate so as to convey meaning, as

for instance in scene 2, where the phrase uttered by Heather “I say we do her” exemplifies this idea. In fact, we need to replace the phrase in its context, the situation being as follows:

Brenda has been discussing with colleagues from the WUDA, the strange behaviour of a Protestant girl from her neighbourhood, Adele, who has been dating a boy from the Catholic community; a boy that is suspected to be a spy from the IRA. They do not agree on the treatment they should give her, then Heather states this sentence. It is only in this situation that the relation between these words provides the meaning Mitchell aims at conveying. This play is an accurate means to enable students to acquire both forms and meanings, especially if we approach the text from a semiotic angle. The role of the spectator, here the learner, in understanding “depends upon the extra-theatrical and general cultural values which certain objects, modes of discourse or forms of behaviour bear” in Elam’s words (11-12) and also lies on the spectator’s general knowledge as we demonstrated earlier.

This skill is accompanied by a competence in phonology, that is to say, in the perception and production of sounds (phonemes, allophones) which *Loyal Women* also facilitates since various components of communicative competence (discourse, intonation, pragmatic awareness, and non verbal communication) are practiced in an integrated way<sup>vii</sup>. One of the difficulties that French students encounter when they learn English is the difference between the sounds /ʃ/ and /tʃ/ and the pronunciation of the letter “i”. We may then extract a few words from Mitchell’s play so as to help them practice these sounds. We may work on words like “finished” (15), “she”, “chat” to highlight the difference between the fricatives and affricates, for instance, and “lights” (29), “night” (28), “spinning”(28), “wish” (29) to practice the different pronunciations of the front vowel.

The last two lexical competences of the communicative competence are the orthographic and orthoepic ones. Examining Mitchell’s play help students acquire the proper

spelling of words, especially when they are repeated (after a close analysis of the various lexical fields throughout the play we realise that the word “heart” recurs, for instance), and can also enable them to understand the use of punctuation marks since this play, meant to be performed on a stage, is suffused with them. Once all this work has been done on the play, students are then able “to read aloud a prepared text, or to use in speech words first encountered in their written form, and produce a correct pronunciation from the written form” (CEF: 117) as the writers of the report advocate.

## 2.2 The sociolinguistic competence

The sociolinguistic competence is the ability that is needed to communicate with the outside world; it refers to the sociocultural conditions of language use. As the framework states, “sociolinguistic competence is concerned with the knowledge and skills required to deal with the social dimension of language use.”(CEF: 118). In this respect, it aims at teaching students the differences between the linguistic markers of social relations (for instance, the use and choice of greetings like “hello! How do you do?” among others, which is also what we find in the play), politeness conventions (that can be studied from the play as well, for instance “Are you all right love?” uttered by Brenda, act 5, p.52), expressions of folk wisdom (like proverbs), register differences and dialect and accents. The last two elements are of particular importance in *Loyal Women* in so far as, being written by a Northern Irish author giving birth to Northern Irish characters from his own community, the dialect and accent in it should be reproduced and should appear throughout the text, notably through a reproduction of their pronunciation or through the use of words and expressions only used there. We may here mention the adjective “wee” (3) commonly used in Ireland and Scotland to mean “little”.



Moreover, depending on their addressees, the characters use a more or less formal register. For example, when they talk to Adele, WUDA members can use familiar words or expressions and may utter sentences like: “acting fucking big and talking fucking shit” (50), while most of the time throughout the play, the style remains semi-formal and grammatically accurate. This is a fact students can easily be made aware of. The goal here is that “from level B2, users are then found able to express themselves adequately in language which is sociolinguistically appropriate to the situations and persons involved, and begin to acquire an ability to cope with variation of speech, plus a greater degree of control over register and idiom.” (CEF: 121). As Claire Tardieu writes, social interaction in EFL classroom is crucial. She mentions working in groups to facilitate a cognitive approach of the language<sup>viii</sup>. For all these reasons, Mitchell’s play is a good medium to practice and understand various language registers and is the perfect tool to develop one’s social interaction ability especially through activities in pairs and groups.

### **2.3 The pragmatic competences**

The last communicative competences described in the common European framework are the pragmatic ones and they are “concerned with the functional use of linguistic resources (production of language functions, speech acts), drawing on scenarios or scripts of interactional exchanges.” (CEF: 123). They fall into three categories “concerned with the learner’s knowledge of the principles according to which messages are: a) organised, structured and arranged (called ‘discourse competence’); b) used to perform communicative functions (called ‘functional competence’); c) sequenced according to interactional and transactional schemata (referred to as ‘design competence’).” (CEF: 123). Mitchell’s play,

precisely because it is aimed at being performed, can eventually help students develop these three sub-competences, all the more so as interactions and the cultural environments in which discourses are produced are of primary importance.

### 2.3.1 Discourse competence

If we first tackle the dimension of discourse, defined as “the ability of a learner to arrange sentences in sequence so as to produce coherent stretches of language” (CEF: 122), we may find that the coherence and logics of Mitchell’s dialogues, stage directions, monologues and asides are rather realistic and entail a direct comprehension of the issues at stake within the scenes. Besides, his play meets the requirements of the report when it particularly highlights Grice’s “co-operative principle” which aims at “mak[ing] [our] contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which [we] are engaged, by observing the [...] maxims of quantity, quality, relevance and manner.” (CEF: 123). If we take the example of the following line uttered by Gail, one of the WUDA’s members, we understand that the play aims at enabling students to structure and manage discourse, notably through the study of the conjunctions:

I don’t want to hurt you. I don’t even want to be here but I have to so I’m going to ask you this favour. Make this as easy for me as possible, do what I say and we’ll be out of here before you know it. (51)

The use of such coordinators prevents the spectator from being lost since they provide the sentence with a coherent structure and are highly didactic.

### 2.3.2 Functional competence

The second ability having to do with pragmatic competences is called the functional competence, and “is concerned with the use of spoken discourse and written texts in communication for particular functional purposes.” (CEF: 125). Because drama, including this play, is meant to be performed, we think that any stage production of it, be it with amateur students, is an occasion for them to develop this functional skill. It is all the more relevant since the framework claims that “participants are engaged in an interaction, in which each initiative leads to a response and moves the interaction further on, according to its purpose, through a succession of stages from opening exchanges to its final conclusion.” (CEF: 125). This purpose is reached through Mitchell’s play because the author adopted a realistic perspective when he wrote it. It helps students use the right sentences in the appropriate situations, which is another step towards autonomy.

### 2.3.3 Design Competence

The report then draws the list of interaction schemata we may follow during a lecture, and we can see that *Loyal Women* can be a good text to work on so that students pinpoint what they need to, then understand and appropriate them so as to use them as accurately as possible in different situations later on. This aspect is supported by Christiane Page. In *Eduquer par le Jeu Dramatique, Pratique théâtrale et éducation*, Page asserts that developing creativity thanks to drama, discovering and learning about dramatic codes and conventions facilitates the understanding of a history, a culture which is not limited to a contact culture with the plays, but is also a means to establish an active relationship with the world<sup>ix</sup>.

This design competence is the last pragmatic skill students should aim to acquire. The two qualitative factors that show they have understood and acquired the functional and interactional skills are fluency and propositional precision. Once they have reached this ability to formulate thoughts and propositions so as to make their meanings clear, students can be sure they are on the good way to master the target language autonomously.

As a conclusion, we may confirm the fact that *Loyal Women* is *the* play to study in the aim to teach students acquire English as the European framework recommends since it meets many of its requirements. Imagining tasks and activities from it and about it is a valuable idea to enable students to reach autonomy in oral and written English. Nevertheless, language teachers must bear in mind that it only deals with one part of the Northern Irish dimension, it does not cover all the problems encountered in this part of the world. Indeed, it does not mention the way republicans welcomed the good-Friday agreement for example. But can any play offer a broad outlook of the situation in Ulster?

Now it would be interesting to know if there is such report as the CEF in Canada, the USA or elsewhere in the world so as to compare them and see if we could also take a particular medium that would possibly have the same ends.

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- <sup>i</sup> We will prefer the phrase “language learning” since our overall approach is learner-centred.
- <sup>ii</sup> “The preamble to R(98)6 reaffirms the political objectives of its actions in the field of modern languages:
- To equip all Europeans for the challenges of intensified international mobility and closer co-operation not only in education, culture and science but also in trade and industry.
  - To promote mutual understanding and tolerance, respect for identities and cultural diversity through more effective international communication.
  - To maintain and further develop the richness and diversity of European cultural life through greater mutual knowledge of national and regional languages, including those less widely taught.
  - To meet the needs of a multilingual and multicultural Europe by appreciably developing the ability of Europeans to communicate with each other across linguistic and cultural boundaries, which requires a sustained, lifelong effort to be encouraged, put on an organised footing and financed at all levels of education by the competent bodies.
  - To avert the dangers that might result from the marginalisation of those lacking the skills necessary to communicate in an interactive Europe.” (CEF: 3-4)
- <sup>iii</sup> “L’approche actionnelle contemporaine tente de briser les murs de la classe, de relier l’activité langagière à la vie, en proposant des tâches socialement et non plus scolairement significatives. En ce sens, la perspective actionnelle représente bien une rupture de paradigme avec l’approche communicative : la compétence de communication n’est plus singularisée mais replacée dans un ensemble, et elle ne se comprend plus dans le vase clos de la classe mais dans le plein air de l’espace social. ” (28-29)
- <sup>iv</sup> “Pourtant, les recherches en sciences cognitives nous précisent qu’apprendre ne consiste pas, comme on l’a cru trop longtemps, à «acquérir» des connaissances, mais à réorganiser ce que l’on sait déjà en y intégrant des éléments nouveaux.” (175)
- <sup>v</sup> “La transposition du sens qui met en jeu des signes et des codes de lectures est donc toujours une question culturelle en même temps que linguistique.”(295)
- <sup>vi</sup> Other examples may well include “Amen” (14), a sentential formulae, or “hit the road” (21), which is a fixed collocation.
- <sup>vii</sup> Based on the idea of Janet Goodwin in “Teaching Pronunciation”.
- <sup>viii</sup> “L’interaction en classe de langue est capitale. Les travaux en binômes ou en groupes sont propices à l’interaction sociale et linguistique et favorisent donc une élaboration cognitive.” (155).
- <sup>ix</sup> “En Jeu Dramatique, le développement de la créativité, en relation avec l’apprentissage/ la découverte des codes et des conventions théâtrales, permet l’appropriation d’une histoire et d’une culture qui n’est pas seulement une culture de contact avec les œuvres, mais une manière d’établir une relation active avec le monde.” (40)