A Prolegomenon to Ethics in Foreign Language Education

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to confirm the importance of ethical dimension in the fields concerning the teaching and learning of foreign languages. This ethical dimension might be intimately related in a complex way to several specific areas on the part of teachers and learners. In fact, it is legitimized to insist on the importance of the ethical components of foreign language education because of the ethical nature of human communication and natural language in general.

To underline the ethical nature of language, the author refers to the profound thoughts of the French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. In such way, this study pursues two joint objectives: providing a humanistic overview of the reflection carried out on the question of ethics in the didactics of foreign languages in the first place and formulating a few proposals for developing this reflection in the second place. Our historical analysis has allowed us to illustrate the fact that the question of ethics in the teaching and learning of foreign languages is traditionally based on a maximalist conception of morality, as well as a political project far removed from the actual practices of language teachers.

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1. Introduction

The aim of this article is to confirm the importance of ethical dimension in the fields concerning the teaching and learning of foreign languages. This ethical dimension might be intimately related in a complex way to several specific areas on the part of teachers and learners. In fact, it is legitimized to insist on the importance of the ethical components of foreign language education because of the ethical nature of human communication and natural language in general. There are four dimensions in the didactics of the foreign languages: 1. ethics of the teacher 2. ethics of the learner 3. the ethical dimension of the mediation between teachers and learners 4. the ethics of the knowledge of the foreign language. In this short paper, I will attempt to provide the epistemological foundations of this ethical paradigm, which has been relatively neglected in the concerned disciplines. In particular, there are few studies on the ethical dimension permeated in the education and educational culture of foreign language learners.

2. What is ethics in relation to the didactics of foreign languages? Basic references

First of all, it might be necessary to define a theoretical framework concerning the definition of ethics, discuss the major characteristics of ethical competence, and determine the place of this competence in the domain of foreign language didactics. For the sake of clarity, we will start with a definition of ethics from the French dictionary, the *Grand dictionnaire de la philosophie*:

"1. Part of philosophy, which studies the practical ends of man, that is to say the individual and collective conditions of a good life. - 2. Specific doctrine determining the content of this kindness as well as the normative content of the rules allowing its realization. - 3. Awareness of the rules and values that guide the practice of a specific group (business ethics, law, journalism, etc.)" (Blay, 2003: 402).

Consequently, ethics concerns practices, in particular those that provide a certain well-being, relate to both the individual and the society, and may, for some, be associated with specific communities. The second reference, which may be rather speculative but absolutely profound and inspiring for language instructors could be provided by the great French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, who has developed important reflections on the question of alterity in the human society and culture.

According to Levinas, the strangeness and absolute value of the Other are fulfilled as ethics. In the world of knowledge (logos), being is approached in a way that makes its otherness vanish. The knowing being does not encounter anything that might bring to life his ontological and epistemological limits. His (or her) freedom envisions an identification with the Same. He (or She) might renounce the metaphysical desire that lives on the wonder produced by the exteriority. However, the strangeness of the other is irreducible to the ego and the Other could put the exercise of the Same in question. He (or She) could invite this knowing solitary subject into a universe of ethics, which welcomes the Other in his (or her) absolute exteriority. In sum, the modern subjectivity in the Western philosophical concept of sovereign reason knows only itself. By grasping the Other as a concept, in its generality, this reason could thematize and objectify the other. However, even by placing it in the light of its knowing capacity, it reduces it to the Same, and removes its resistance to its sovereign knowledge. Therefore, the knowing subject abandons the Other to nothingness. It is a great betrayal which amounts to bringing one free man under the domination of another. This is how the philosophy of the Socratic tradition proceeds. The Socratic reason might be fundamentally a knowledge of ego, namely an egology.

For Levinas, ethics is not a pre-philosophical notion. It accomplishes the intention that drives the march to truth, without identifying the freedom and the power. We do not wonder about the Other: we tend to face and to question him/her. The relationship with the other as an interlocutor, with a being, precedes any ontology. It is the ultimate ethical relation manifested in the human being. (Levinas, 1971, p.33).

The third reference comes from another French philosopher and social scientist, the founder of the concept of "Complex Thinking", Edgar Morin. According to him, one of the seven skills necessary for the education of the future might cover the domain of what he calls "anthropo-ethics or the ethics of the mankind". (Morin, 2000, pp.121-130). The author has devoted an entire chapter to this concept. One can summarize the main characteristics of ethics conceived by Morin as follows: complexity, consensus, diversity, creative conflictuality (which refers to the management of conflicts and the negotiation), autonomy and empowerment, liberty of expression and of opinion, responsibility and responsabilization (of individuals and groups).

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Therefore, the relationship that a set of individuals have with a language can be a criterion that makes it possible to characterize a community, its practices and its own ethical dimension. As a guide to plural citizenship, the CEFR (Council of Europe, CECRL (Conseil de l'Europe, 2001) has been elaborated for the needs of the European community, and focuses on some of its practices, in particular:

- learning languages other than those used daily in the place (s) of belonging

- the use of these other languages for communication, training or transactional functions

Rather than a work of didactics of languages, the CEFR represents, according to French foreign language specialists, an ethical contextualization. Of course, this contextualization might involve recommendations on how to access other languages. These represent a potential vector of cultural and linguistic openness and respect for other languages and cultures through foreign language learning.

3. Ethics and Language

To explore the fundamental bond between ethics and language, I refer once again to the theories of the French philosopher Levinas on language. For him, the ethical essence of language is prior to any unveiling of being, and by this principle, expression and responsibility are intimately linked through an ethical bond. "Thou shalt not commit murder" is the original expression, the first word in the Western divine law. In this theological context, something completely different, purely ethical, might be revealed and manifested, that is the epiphany of the face of another, which paralyzes the murder. This sacred face presupposes the transcendence of expression. A human being might invoke the sacredness of the interlocutor, and exposes himself to a fundamental question and answer. "You are free and responsible at the same time." The ethical dimension of human discourse leaves no room for contradiction or silence. From the beginning, the responsibility is irrefutable and there is no interiority to avoid it.

The expression is an ineffable event that bears witness to oneself. This self-attestation can only occur as speech, that is to say as a face. It produces sovereignty, which unconditionally commands. Without this originality of the face, without this uprightness of the face to face, language could not begin, and speech would not go beyond an ordinary level of physical activity, namely pronunciation and gesture.

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(Levinas, 1971, p.219).In language, as the presence of the sacred face of the interlocutor, the invisible third-party commands me like a master: all humanity looks at me and cries out for justice, reminds me of my obligations and judges me. Language does not invite complicity. It is justice. In it, and in its eyes, the face of the other is present and expressed, and it is the third party looking at me. In its nakedness, the poor or the stranger are my equals. Their destitution calls for my powers; they target me, they question my freedom and refer to the third-party present in our encounters with the others. Others join me so that I get rid of the desire of possession that surrounds me.

The epiphany of the sacred face opens humanity and invites me to preach exhortation, the prophetic word. Through language, the face establishes a human community where the interlocutors remain absolutely separate, but fraternal. (Levinas, 1971, pp.234-237). The ethics of Levinas is established without epistemic justification, without any coercion or violence. It is a man-to-man relationship, irreducible to any other kinds of mediation. Without an obligation to be taught, the ethical dimension of human languages is taught through a powerful spiritual message. It does not require any concept or law, and its

first commandment, thou shalt not kill, does not depend on any revelation other than that of the sacred face of the other. It suffices for a strange but dignified face to look at me, and my responsibility towards it is fully constituted. Ethics is the peaceful essence of language. It neither passes through logos nor through reason. When the face, in its purity and spirituality, resists powers, speech unfolds, and the voice produces exteriority. In the thoughts of alterity elaborated by Levinas, language is not a question of an impersonal duty, but of a personal relationship with all being where the strangeness of others is fulfilled.

Language establishes the absolute difference in the relationship with the other. The otherness of others, namely the alterity does not depend on any quality that would distinguish him from me. It does not fit into and epistemic and logical hierarchy. The Other is infinitely transcendent, infinitely strange and foreign. The face of the stranger might break with the world that is common to us. His word does not proceed from a simple relation of dialogue, but from absolute difference. By calling out to me, the stranger confirms his exteriority. Language breaks the continuity of being and of history. In the relationship that he establishes, the terms are dissymmetrical and separate: the ego is called into question

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and the other's presence does not allow itself to be included in language. The interlocutor frees himself from the theme that the locutor attributes to him and it goes beyond representation. Discourse does not make a system, a totality, or a cosmos. The word is in the being and overflows the being. In the linguistic philosophy of alterity, representation is not based on the clarity of thought, but on the enjoyment of exteriority.

Language escapes from me, the closure of linguistic system, and from meaning. It goes beyond the objective representation of the reality to move to the other side. Even when it remains silent, speech preserves its transcendence. Language is completely different, absolutely different, beyond any formal knowledge system. The voice produces exteriority where language is deployed. By the presence of the face, the third-party commands me and reminds me of my obligations. Before any experience, before any unveiling of being, verbal expression and responsibility are linked. Language begins with ethics.

Language is a relationship of the Same and the Other, where the other is not in my power, but absolutely remains as an otherness. If the world in which he stays is only an extension of himself, how can the Ego come into contact with the Other? The

All-Other, we must not look for it in a distant elsewhere; it is not necessary to use big words such as God to designate it, it should not be imagined in an inaccessible Absolute. He is there, very close. It is others, my neighbor. Otherness is its content. We do not have a common homeland or even a common concept; he is free, I can do nothing about him, he is the Stranger, and that is enough for him to be absolutely other. I can relate to him through language. Speech maintains the distance between me and him, a radical separation that prevents the reconstitution of the whole.

4. The question of ethics in foreign language teaching and learning

1) The General Problematic of Interculturality: An Ethics of Otherness

The notion of interculturality refers to a methodology, to principles of action, rather than an abstract theory. The basic idea is to be interested in what happens during the interaction between interlocutors who belong, at least partially, to different cultural communities, and are therefore bearers of different cultural schemas, even if they communicate in the same language. Interculturality consists of preventing, identifying, regulating misunderstandings, and understanding communication

difficulties, which happen as a result of discrepancies in interpretative schemes, even prejudices (stereotypes, etc.). In this context, certain researchers would opt for personal ethics and professional ethics, which recognize otherness and difference, and integrate them into their teaching procedures, both as an object of learning and as a means of establishing productive professional educational relationships.

The teaching and learning of "other" languages and cultures (the preferred term "foreign" might be reductive and connoted) then gives itself to a mission, beyond the object language-culture itself, to participate in a general education that promotes mutual respect through mutual understanding. The need to integrate a strong cultural dimension in the teaching of languages has been widely accepted for several decades. The purpose of this teaching is to make active communication with speakers of the target language, in particular in their everyday contexts, and in other countries. This is the so-called "communicative" competence, which is significantly popular today. However, it is not possible to communicate in a real-life situation without sharing a certain degree of cultural knowledge and practices.

Language is inseparable from culture; the two comprise "two sides of the same coin",

as the eminent French linguist E. Benveniste has remarked. (Benveniste, 1976, p.263). Indeed, any language conveys and transmits, through the arbitrariness of its lexicon, its syntax, and its idiomatic expressions, the cultural schemes of the people who speak it. It offers a specific "vision of the world", different from that offered by another language.

Therefore, the integration of the cultural dimension into the didactics of foreign languages might allow the learners to open up their mind to other cultures and consequently to promote a more objective view of things, a more tolerant state of mind and more respectful towards foreign cultures and languages. Thanks to this dynamic cultural interaction, learners will then be able to eliminate stereotypes and banalities of the target culture by comparing them with the cultural elements observed in different lifestyles, conventional behaviors within the target culture during the teaching and learning dispositive composed of discursive and non-discursive dimensions.

2) Didactic Definition of Cultural and Linguistic Identity

As a first step in our approach, we will construct the following definitions: Culture

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is a set of interpretative schemes, that is to say a set of data, principles and conventions that guide the behavior of social actors and constitute an analytical grid on the basis of which they interpret others' behavior (behavior in our research refers to verbal behavior, i.e., language practices and transferred messages). This definition includes culture as knowledge (data), but adds a concrete and active dimension to it, by putting the emphasis on implementing culture during interactions.

An identity (here cultural) is a feeling of collective belonging (therefore, belonging to a specific group), while at the same time, being aware of the specific characteristics of the individual and the group; this feeling of collective belonging is recognized by the group itself, as well as other groups (which differ from it). There is an identity that is desired, accepted, and assumed in a specific culture. Identity is a process, under construction and constantly evolving, always open and adaptable, which does not establish a boundary between groups, whose identity-related characteristics (especially cultural) overlap in part. It manifests itself through emblematic indices, in particular linguistic, but not limited to them. Finally, individuals and groups always come with multiple affiliations and multiple identities, which

overlap or encompass partially, in a complex and nuanced whole. There is not necessarily an exclusive and total correspondence between cultural identity and linguistic identity, although most cultural differences are manifested through linguistic differences (between different languages or varieties of the same language) (Blanchet 2004-2005).

The cultural identity might be a polymorphic concept, shared by both scientific approaches and ordinary knowledge; identity is a complex element to understand due to its disciplinary transversality as well as the dialectical relations that found the networks with which it can be associated. There are many disciplines that mark the continuum from singular experiences, which are the basis of personal identity with collective affiliations, which catalyze the social construction of identity. The approaches of philosophy, psychology or anthropology - which have inspired historians, linguists, sociologists, lawyers and other specialists in the humanities - help better understand the interaction between psychological mechanisms and social factors, which is constitutive of the identity process (Blanchet 2004-2005).

One invariant factor might be manifested through these approaches: the

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"Paradoxical" character of identity. From Heraclitus' assertion, which claims that is not possible to bathe twice in the same river in the aphorism of the French poet Rimbaud: "I am an another", one does not count the formulas underlining that this identity is constructed by the confrontation of the same and the other, of similitude and otherness. Edgar Morin devoted the entire volume 5 of *The Method* to "the human identity", to which he applies a necessary "Complex Thought" (Morin, 2001). Other dialectical relationships are the basis of the identity dynamics. They invite to consider identity as an ongoing process, rather than a frozen given, and to thus favor a constructivist approach rather than the essentialist vision (or substantialist) which formerly prevailed philosophical domains.

After examining the above-mentioned important concepts that organizing the affective dimensions as well as the social and cognitive aspects of identity construction, we will address the issue of relationship between identity and culture. We will then broaden the reflection to interculturality, a privileged context for the emergence of complex identifications. We will also discuss the question of the relationship between languages and collective identities.

5. Ethics and Didactics of Languages-

Cultures: The Ethical Competence

1) The Responsabilization

In an article with a very revealing title, "Don't the ethical issues of language-culture teaching call for a 'new discourse on the method of studies of our time?'", Jean-Louis Le Moigne invites languages instructors to question the ethical purposes of their teaching:

[…] Everything that concerns aid for action and aid for teaching is too often expressed in terms of method and never in terms of ends, rarely in terms of project. We are all wondering "how do I do it?" And rarely are we in the position of "why am I doing it?" And yet, if I don't have an answer to the "how", I'll be able to find it on my own. On the other hand, the answer to why am I doing? 'Is not often given in advance, and we do not like it being forced on us. Doesn't it therefore deserve careful consideration? (2005: 422)

This quote is to be compared to that of Christian Puren on the need to define clear ethics in the domain of foreign language didactics. Changing the social environment of language teaching in schools requires a parallel change in our strategy: like all professionals, we need a reassuring collective conscience for teachers and a

reassuring collective image for leaners, and this requires an explicit reflection on ethics specific to the discipline of language teaching, to promote it among instructors/researchers in the first place and share it with others in the second place (1994: 5).

He adds that this reflection is based on two criteria:

[...] the emergence of an ethical debate among language teachers, trainers, material designers and didacticians makes (or at least should make) a direct effect of their awareness of the following elements:

- on the one hand, the social expectations specific to this education (and therefore the need to define their specific responsibilities towards students and society);

- on the other hand, the specific way in which the ethical problem arises in their discipline (and therefore the need to build a particular ethics regarding various problems/situations) (ibid. 2).

According to Puren, to deal with the question of ethics in the didactics of foreign languages, teachers must reflect on the objectives and purposes of their teaching as well as their responsibility, which we can

call professional ethics, and which refers to Morin's affirmation on the school as a privileged place for the development of "anthropo-ethics". In addition, as Puren always emphasizes, teachers must also define an ethics specific to their discipline (disciplinary ethics). These two aspects of ethics (professional ethics and disciplinary ethics) must be studied in more details in future research on the place of ethics in the domain of the teaching foreign languages.

Other authors, such as Chantal Forestal and Emmanuel Antier, have examined the question of ethics in language teaching. While emphasizing its importance, both warn against possible abuses to be avoided. For Forestal, there are various examples of "satisfactory", "fairly satisfactory" or even "deficit" ethical functioning in the didactics of foreign languages (Forestal 2006). The author campaigns for the creation of an "Ethics Committee for Languages-Cultures and for the implementation of an ethical and deontological approach to the field of the didactics of foreign languages" and speaks of the concept of "ethical competence" (ibid).

Antier, for his part, questions "the legitimacy of the intercultural approach to founding the professional ethics of language-culture teachers" (2011) and denounces "the aporia of an ethical vision

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unilaterally dedicated to avoidance of intercultural conflict, as well as the risk of making teachers feel guilty" (ibid). He pleads for the empowerment of teachers and "an internal reflective approach to the professional ethics of language-culture teachers" which would be based on a pedagogy of negotiation and "could promote the access of all teachers to the ethical competence required by the practice of their profession" (ibid: 50).

In sum, ethical competence, which lies at the heart of the relationship between teachers and learners, requires and promotes the empowerment of teachers. As Puren writes: "The simultaneous management of the responsibility of the teacher and that of each learner necessarily involves something similar to what some have called the "pedagogy of the contract" or "the pedagogy of negotiation". Such pedagogy puts at the center the moral principle of respect: respect (by the teacher) of the other (the pupil) and respect (by the pupil and the teacher) of the commitment taken (by student and teacher). This pedagogy precisely directs - this is of course not a coincidence - towards a new ethics, which are rather similar to the one that Gilles Lipovetsky is currently seeing emerging in societies. Lipovetsky calls this emerging ethics, 'the ethics of

responsibility', and defines it as follows: "a 'reasonable' ethics, animated not by the imperative of tearing away from its own ends, but by an effort to reconcile values and interests, between the principle of the rights of the individual and the constraints of social life" (1994: 5).

2) A Semiotic Perspective

The didactics of foreign languages must be based today on an ethical objective in order to defend one's anthropological and axiological posture. It might be therefore legitimate to associate (foreign) languages with their human dimensions, such as the beauty (esthetics), the good (ethics), the truth, imagination, shared values and creative actions. We are now in an increasingly intercultural and globalizing period where the emphasis is on an anthropological practice defined by the strength of the links between the speaking subject, the interrelationship of languages-cultures, and speakers' ethical competencies. It should be underlined that during the learning process/learning activities in foreign language classes, the learning subject (student) might experience an active presence and a "body" in action beyond the lexical, syntactic and semantic understanding of foreign languages. This is the reason for which certain semioticians in language didactics prefer the term "subject-

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body" when referring to learners (cf. Shairi 2008). An existential and phenomenological perspective in the learning of foreign languages is opposed to the formal perspective. In this phenomenological and semiotic angle, the question of learning is linked to the "meaning of life". In his seminal work [Structural semantics], Greimas alluded to the fact that "the human world seems to us to be defined essentially as the world of signification. The world can only be called "human" insofar as it signifies something "(Greimas, 1995 (1966), p. 5). Testifying about the existential character of the current condition of mankind, this definition goes in the direction of a well-founded didactic: well-founded on cultural values on the one hand, and on "the values of the universe" on the other hand (Fontanille and Zilberberg, 1998).

In such way, in the invention and the common sharing of values, all human activity has an ethical dimension in the moment it collides with the definition and appreciation of values in relation to others, and when the practical action has effects which lead to the intercultural consequences of this same action. It is exactly in this sense that a didactic ethics of foreign languages might be pivotal. The didactics of foreign languages, in fact,

establishes a link between the activity of the learning and the socio-cultural practices of the "speaking subject bodies", on the one hand, and their identity development, on the other. Such a link goes beyond the restricted framework of linguistic interaction to introduce the other and his/her culture into its scope of practice. One could say that the "pragmatic aim" has put in place the dimension of the other through contact and socio-cultural bond. Thus, through the integration of the other, ethics appears as a "common sense" which depends on itself from an "original belief", as Bourdieu (1980) asserts.

The teaching and learning of languages should therefore begin with an "immediate adhesion," which relates to the body, and which is antecognitive, antépredicative and antelinguistic. Likewise, any didactic activity, before being included in a linguistic, intellectual and symbolic target, is an adhesion by the body to other bodies, that is, other actors, other cultures and other "Life forms". A collective force is active to create in men a dynamism of invention and a sharing of values: Symbolic effectiveness could find its principle in the power that it maintains on others, especially on their bodies and beliefs, the collectively-recognized ability to act by a wide variety of means on the most deeply buried

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subjects, either to neutralize them or to reactivate them by making them operate mimetically (Bourdieu, 1980, 116).

Given this understanding and this co-ordination of bodies, a human solidarity governs didactic activities, whose aim is a meta-methodological generalization. The common sense (*sens commun* in French), which serves as the foundation for all actions regarding the teaching and learning of foreign languages, is based on the feeling of human solidarity, which itself has its source in a "generalized affective contagion" (Landowski, 2004). As remarked by the eminent Iranian semiotician, Shairi (2008), this feeling of solidarity, which resides at the heart of ethics, is responsible for the existence of the trans-individual.

Overall, believing that the didactics of foreign languages is a didactic of acting and interacting with others, namely learners, is once again returning to the question of ethical origins, without which it would be unthinkable to go through the phase of trans-individuality. Therefore, by definition, the transcultural such that the didactics of foreign languages might embrace the transcultural dimension and construct its epistemological and ontological prorblematics. Yet, the ethical dimension of foreign languages didactics

constitutes something beyond a conventional physical and cultural contact, as it is located, in the terminology of Hjelmslev, at a level of connotative languages. Inspired by Shairi's (2008) insights, one could even consider the entire process of teaching and learning of foreign languages as a didactic event, which consists of traversing the limits of the individual to encounter the Other. For me, this might be an ethical event. The subject of such an event, after having realized and then surpassed his individual status, would end in integrating himself into a collective identity. Through the realization and constant crossing over of individual status, we also hear the back and forth between the mother tongue and new foreign languages. This is what guarantees not only the successive and happy passage from oneself to the other, but also and above all, the evolution of the speaking subject-body who gains access to a new ethical identity. The transcultural approach is explained therefore by this mutual recognition. It is based on an ethical belief, which is the only one through which one can create the didactic event, the course of which ends in the transcultural presence. As the Communicative Approach is based on contact, intercultural and the "culture-action", and as the Action-based Perspective is based on a culture of

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common action, the co-cultural and tasks, the Transcultural Approach is based on an ethical dimension, which reveals itself at the origin of a trans-individual aim nourished by a diverse and common action, and which is also responsible for a "Didactic event". The skills identified thus far would require adding the ethical competence, perceived as an appropriate platform for the invention of values, and as the founding principle of the transcultural process. Thanks to it, an ethical journey begins, which leads us from pre-individual to the individual, while linking us to the trans-individual and the transcultural. This perspective draws the portrait of a didactic approach, whose teaching and learning process, neither predetermined nor predefined, is defined as an open, transformational activity that is always in the making.

6. Conclusion

Becoming a teacher of foreign languages involves continuous learning. This learning supposes changes that require different processes of cognitive and cultural mediation. Initial training cannot probably provide all the answers to the questions that future teachers continue to ask during the first years of their formal training and certainly later in their practice. The initial training can, on the other hand, propose a

reflective framework, on which the teacher can come back and adapt as he/she accumulates diverse experiences. In my opinion, from the phase of initial training, teachers might explicitly take into account the ethical dimension specific to the teaching activity, which would include content such as:

- an awareness of introspection and empathy and an ability to integrate the gaze of learners in order to be able to take them into account;

- ways to measure teacher's responsibility for providing various learning possibilities and discovering language learners' diverse potentialities, in particular by reflecting on their impact on individuals' different practices such as correction, groups constitution, distribution of speech, or the dis/encouragement of learner initiatives.

Raising an awareness of the ethical dimension of foreign language teaching requires, on the one hand, that the teacher questions what this activity awakens and provokes in him/her and, on the other hand, that he/she has the means to understand the place of teachers and learners within the learning process, in order to understand the

complex interactions and mutually determine the actions of a teacher and those of learners in the domains of foreign languages didactics. In order to be able to answer these questions, it is important that the teacher develop clear ideas about his/her representations concerning education in general and that of foreign languages in particular. It is also important that the teacher be aware of the learners' feelings provoked by/in particular teaching situations. This emotional awareness can develop over time and through experience. It can also be the subject of conscious and supervised work, from the beginning of future teachers' initial training. The use of formative practices that integrate not only an analytical reflection, but also mediation and companionship dynamics (Tanghe and Park, 2016) seem to be particularly adequate in this regard.

Our study pursued two joint objectives: first, to provide a humanistic overview of the reflection on the question of ethics in the didactics of foreign languages; and then to formulate few proposals for developing this ethical reflection. Our historical analysis has allowed us to illustrate that the question of ethics in the didactics of foreign languages is traditionally based on a maximalist conception of morality, on a political project far removed from the real

practices of teachers.

Against the monism of the didactic program, and against the logic of the expertise characteristic of the conventional paradigm of the didactics of foreign languages, we finally propose the idea of a complex education program in ethics for teachers and learners, which supposes a diversification of the moral options available in the didactics of foreign languages and, consecutively, the development of research carried out from an empirical perspective.

In accordance with the idea of applied ethics, we believe that it is only in the light of such an ethical education program that it will be possible to propose moral options in line with the constitutive heterogeneity of the act of teaching. In the current state of reflection on ethics in the didactics of foreign languages, thinking about training in ethics for language/culture teachers consists above all of trying to free oneself of the trap represented by a moralist and ethnocentric conception of the educational act and learning activity in the foreign languages. In matters of ethics, more than in other areas, it is urgent to resist the sirens of grandiloquence and incantatory dogmas disconnected from the truly ethical experience of teachers.

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