

Designing Motivational Activities to Rekindle Senegalese Students' Passion of English

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Abstract: *In Senegal, West Africa, students learn English as a foreign language (EFL). French is their first foreign language and the main language of instruction used by all teachers of any subject from kindergarten to university. One decade ago it used to be a pride to be able to speak or write English fluently whatever efforts it needed to take. But as years go by, students' parents, teachers and educational authorities have noticed that students are not keeping up the pace any longer as shown by their grades in national examinations. However, all Senegalese education actors have been active in substituting linguistic competence for communicative competence either in class activities or in coursework assignments in the hope to create a better teaching/learning environment. And yet the problem still remains unsolved if not worse. Students are more and more poorly motivated in learning English properly. In an attempt to circumvent the problem, this paper outlines a number of motivating and interesting activities that could rekindle Senegalese students' passion of English.*

Keywords: demotivation, English subject, interactional activities, passion of English, Senegalese students

1. Introduction

It is no secret that in Senegal students are more and more showing lack of interest in English as a school subject. In March 2021, President Macky Sall even complained about this saying in English "There is something wrong" (Diédhiou 2021). This comment was made in a good humor but it revealed the stark reality that shows English teachers have a heavy responsibility to take over. Students are more and more deserting English for other languages as their first modern language (e.g., Spanish, Arabic and Portuguese) as they keep underachieving in English coursework assignments.

The interest of this paper lies in two research dynamics. Firstly, in the materials and methods section, it demonstrates that improved well-known and motivational activities might strongly make English an attractive school subject again. Secondly, the results section extrapolates the main reasons why students are no more motivated to learn and love English by means of questionnaires submitted to students. As it is very important in language learning, motivation helps make learning successful (Spratt, et al. 38).

So, the problem about getting students motivated and showing interest in English is two-fold. On the one hand, too much stress on the teaching language systems, that is to say vocabulary and grammar becomes boring. On the other, teachers' inability or lack of enthusiasm to design motivational activities give students the negative impression that they always face the same beaten track issues with all the English teachers they have known.

This begs the following questions: what kinds of activities should be designed to help awaken Senegalese students' passion of English? Why are Senegalese students increasingly deserting such a beautiful language as English? Should we improve the way we assess students in class or in

exams? For question one, I will propose four common enhanced activities which I usually give in class to create a warm English learning environment. The questionnaires I submitted to a small sample drawn from students will give relevant answers to the second question. My provisional answer to question three turns around reshaping the way we assess students in exams.

In an attempt to test the truthfulness of my hypotheses, this article will survey and analyze the outcomes of the quantitative and qualitative data collected on the students' demotivation issue after surveying the literature on motivation in the teaching field. Then it will delve into a number of motivational activities that are inspired by several years of practice, observation and research.

2. Literature Review

Motivation is a very important human characteristic that is immensely complex, too (Dörnyei 6). Every learner of a language does need motivation because of various personal reasons (Spratt, et al. 39). After conducting a project-based learning study, Vorholt and Harris concluded that the idea of a classroom full of unmotivated or unenthusiastic students strikes fear into the heart of the best instructor (30). In Senegal, students need more than never before teachers ready and willing to do their best in order to motivate them and rid them of their uncooperative attitudes, complexes and fears through a pedagogic therapy.

Defining motivation is not easy but as Dörnyei purports, motivation is an umbrella-term but as far as teaching and learning the English language is concerned, it can be two-fold (2001). Thornbury argues that motivation is instrumental or integrative (137). As for Vorholt and Harris, it is external or internal as described in Figure 1 below (2014):

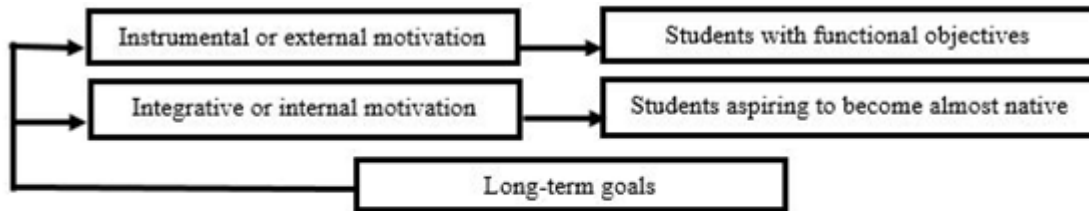


Figure 1: The main motivation types with long-term goals

Source: Thornbury, Scott. *An A-Z of ELT: A Dictionary of Terms and Concepts Used in English Language Teaching*. Macmillan Books for Teachers, 2006.

Sometimes, students are motivated for specific objectives, *i.e.* they want to have a passing grade, succeed in the end of year exam, and so on. They also might be motivated for more ambitious reasons, *i.e.* being as fluent as a native speaker, becoming an English teacher or following a course of study in which English is the language of instruction, etc. Whatever type the motivation is, they always have long-term goals as long as they are motivated.

This work not only highlights students’ responses on their demotivation but also explores four motivational activities practiced in class that could be useful to rekindle Senegalese students’ passion of English. This topic is not of little interest because the practice of English teaching and observation has shown that motivating students is a continuous process that needs innovations and adapted changes. Furthermore, without sufficient motivation, even the brightest students are unlikely to persist long enough to attain any really useful language goal (Dörnyei 5). Given that the classroom is the society in miniature, motivation should take into account the way teachers interact with students. Below, Figure 2 shows two types of teachers’ strategies that have different consequences on the outcomes they must expect from their teachings.

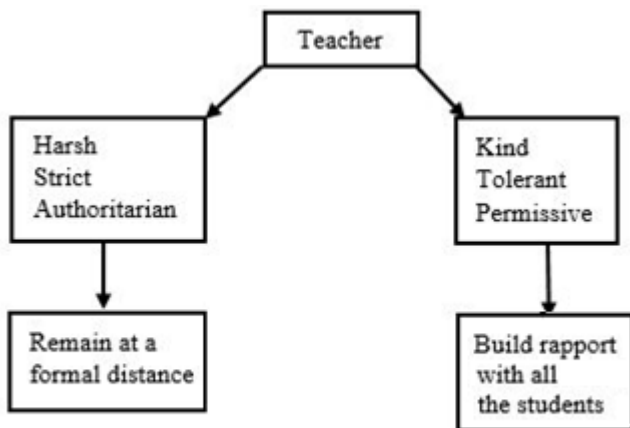


Figure 2: Teacher’s different strategies

Source: My own observations.

The first contact teachers make in their classes is significant. It is the door which opens up two rooms. The classroom must be either a close-tight family or a dislocated society. The first option is the precious gift all teachers aspire to offer in their careers. To make it happen is not a thorny enterprise. English teachers and language teachers in general need strategic and technical devices. They should avoid being authoritative and should use kinesthetic means and visual supports in the teaching/learning processes (Diop 14).

Using the different learning styles in class foster motivation and stimulate interest among students. In Figure 3 below, different types of interactional communication are displayed to put the stress on how each communication type impacts the class.

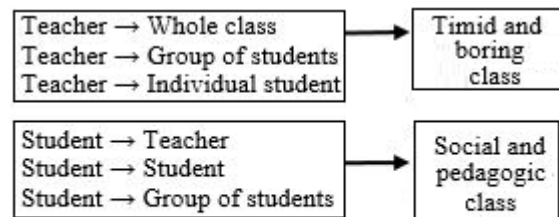


Figure 3: Types of communication in an English class

Source: My own observations.

The three figures above show that sometimes teachers’ attitudes in class, and not their poor performance, are the sources of students’ failure. Despite the tremendous efforts made in English language teaching (ELT) in Senegal, both communities of teachers and students have a long way to go. Several Senegalese English language experts question “the legacy of structural linguistics supported by behavioral psychology”(Thiam 167) and advocate a communicative approach but students in Senegal are ironically forestalled by their elders who were taught English with Charles Fries and Robert Lado’s method of the 1960’s (Thiam 167).

3. Materials and methods

I measured students’ own perceptions, feelings and attitudes regarding the English language they learn in class bearing in mind that they live in a French-speaking environment as far as school is concerned. It is important to emphasize that Wolof, the first national language of Senegal, prevails over any other local or foreign language in the country. Besides, people speak Wolof in administrative and professional services where French should be spoken and in neighboring countries like Mauritania and the Gambia (see also Ba 2021 and Naudé 2011). Hendricks also underscores this language clash encountered in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa where 83.4% of the population speak Xhosa (2010).

In 2011, in Senegal, a study found out that Wolof is spoken by 90% of the population whereas the Wolof ethnic group represents only 45% of the population (Naudé 2011). In the streets, via audio-visual media, at Cheikh Anta Diop University, in offices as well as the political sphere, the common language of Senegal has gradually whittled away Moliere’s mother tongue, that has become a mere additional, mixed, triturated and largely abused idiom (Ba 2021).

These facts reinforce historian and Egyptologist Cheikh Anta Diop who defends the need to develop African languages. According to him:

It is more efficient to develop a national language than to artificially cultivate a foreign language; a teaching that would be given in a mother tongue would help avoid years of delay in acquiring knowledge. Very often, the foreign phrase is like a sealant that prevents our mind to access the content of words that is the reality. So the development of reflexion gives way to that of memory. The very day the young African enters school, he has much logical sense to understand the grain of reality in the phrase: a moving point creates a line. However, since we have chosen to teach him a reality in a foreign language, he will have to wait at least 4 to 6 years, at the end of which he will have to learn enough vocabulary and grammar, received, in one word, an instrument of knowledge acquisition, for him to be taught a bit of reality (405).¹

English, like French, Arabic, Spanish, etc., may be used as foreign languages in appropriate situations while Senegalese national languages such as Wolof, Pular, Serer and Diola, etc., remain the first official languages that will be so developed that people will be using them as they would with Western languages. Moreover, since Wolof is spoken by 90% of the population in Senegal (Naudé 2011), why not make it the main language of instruction in schools as Cheikh Anta Diop so relevantly suggests?

So I carried out this research taking into consideration the belief that motivation is the thoughts and feelings we have which make us want to do something, continue to want to do it and turn our wishes into action (Spratt et al.38). The following lines share four student-centered interactional activities on listening comprehension, pronunciation, sketch and oral presentation. Each activity combines two or three skills and each one has an introduced lesson plan composed of the lesson preparation, procedure and outcomes.

3.1. Sing it!

Sing it goes out of the formal or classic way of teaching English. It is well known that we are always successful in things we love and excited about it. And almost everyone loves music. Bob Marley sang, "One good thing about music, when it hits you feel no pain" (1973). It is not a bad idea then to seize this opportunity to teach a beautiful lesson. As an example, here is a lesson plan on Bob Marley's "Real Situation" (see Appendix A).

Aim: At the end of this activity, students should be able to

- improve their general knowledge on war,
- rediscover cardinal lost values, and
- be able to understand English words in a song.

Level: Pre-intermediate to Advanced

Time: 1 hour

Materials: Worksheet, wireless loudspeaker and Smartphone.

Preparation: Make enough copies of the worksheet (the song lyrics with 8 to 13 gaps) for all the students and make sure the wireless loud speaker will be loud enough for the whole class to hear.

Language functions: Reading between the lines and translating from English to French and to Wolof.

Language skills: Listening and writing.

Language areas: Strong and weak forms, /ʃ/ sound pattern in pronunciation.

Procedure:

- Pre-listening phase: Write on the board: "Causes and Consequences of War in Africa."
- Brainstorm with students the keyword "war" and give examples of wars in Africa.
- Tell students to use their dictionaries, Smartphones or Tablets to do research and list several causes and consequences of war.
- While-listening phase: Give students the worksheets containing the first exercise.
- Exercises 1: Select 8 or 13 relevant words you want students to guess when listening.
- Play the music one time.
- Ask students their impressions.
- Write the first letters of missing words as prompts if you are sure students will have a hard time filling the gaps correctly.
- Play the music two times.
- Tell them to give the answers.
- Play the music again to give non-responsive students the chance to find good answers, too.
- Play the music one more time to check all the answers.
- Exercise 2: Tell students to find the four life lessons in the song.
- Ask students to translate their answers into French and then into Wolof as they give the correct answers (see Appendix B).
- Ask students to explain the true meaning of each life lesson.
- Post-listening phase: Pronunciation and writing.
- Ask students to list all the words in the song lyrics that have the /ʃ/ sound.
- Tell them to give other examples of words having the same sound pattern.
- Sing the song together.
- Give students the topic below for homework.
- Topic: "Total destruction, the only solution". What do you need to destroy in your family, city or country to change things in the positive way?

As years go by, my own personal experience and observation make me assert with absolute confidence that mostly teachers shun doing listening comprehension activities. In the past, teachers had to carry a heavy radio with loudspeakers and a tape recorder, all integrated into one. The task was tiresome as some teachers would often carry it from home to school. Today, no excuse is possible. All the materials needed are simple wireless, portable, easy to take away gadgets that prove to be as efficient as their

¹My own translation from French.

former versions as well. The only thing teachers need is to be willing to do it.

A listening comprehension lesson with a song has a particular importance inasmuch as it encourages weaker students to catch up on stronger ones. I usually noticed that weaker students tend to give up and end deserting English thinking there is no use making efforts. So, listening to the song, doing the exercises related to it and singing it definitely invigorate the duller and most silent classroom but this also changes the negative perception weaker students have on teachers or English as subject. After having done this activity many times, I saw really excited students who met me at the staff room to ask me if I might tell them how to download more songs in English.

3.2 Twist it!

Twist it is not an edutaining activity though it makes students laugh and gesticulate. It helps improve pronunciation skills and develop confidence and autonomy among students. In reality, when students become familiar with a sound pattern, their pronunciation issues regress little by little. In this lesson plan, “Tom threw Tim three thumbtacks” is the selected tongue twister.

Aim: At the end of this activity, students should

- Be motivated to focus on the day’s lesson,
- Learn the sound pattern /θ/ as in “thick”, and
- Be able to recognize and pronounce correctly English words that have the same sound pattern.

Level: All levels

Time: 10 minutes

Materials: No specific material.

Preparation: Use color chalk or color marker. Choose one tongue twister.

Language functions: Pronouncing words with clarity and rapidity.

Language skills: Listening and speaking.

Language areas: Phonetics.

Procedure:

- Say “Tom threw Tim three thumbtacks” as quick as possible.
- Write it on the board.
- Ask students to repeat after you. They will realize it is very difficult.
- Write /s/ on the board and ask students to pronounce it as in the French word “serpent”².
- Ask students to put their tongues between their upper and lower teeth and pronounce /s/ again.
- Monitor students to read the tongue twister, from a slow to a fast pace.
- Monitor students to read each word of the tongue twister.
- Ask students to read the tongue twister row by row as most classrooms have the columns configuration.
- Ask students again to read the tongue twister in chorus and fast.

²Serpent: snake

- Make students produce examples of words having the same sound pattern.
- Write the words students give.
- Have students read the words from right to left and from left to right.

After practicing this funny activity, students will be laughing. As they stretch and strengthen the muscles which they use to speak, they will feel the difference between the English language pronunciation and French, Spanish or Wolof pronunciation. Personally, I do this activity as warm-up for two things: to create a favorable teaching and learning environment and to practice the pronunciation of a specific sound pattern. The good news is it always works.

Ask students to read a text and you will realize how much precious time you have lost because it will be long and boring. So should we teach English without caring about pronunciation? This activity offers an eloquent answer. One recommendation for teachers is to transcribe the sound pattern correctly according to the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) since we teach standard English. Ann Wentlent’s *Alfred’s IPA Made Easy* (2014) helps master the IPA and once students familiarize with it, they even finish learning how to pronounce words correctly using only a dictionary that has the IPA transcription. The same pronunciation process of the selected sound pattern in “thick” /θ/ will be the same as the sound pattern in “leather” /ð/ through /z/.

3.3 Sketch it!

Sketch it aims to bring into real life a dramatic history or a milestone event students have read in a text. This activity has two advantages: to motivate the shiest and weakest students and to encourage students to speak English as naturally as possible. As the two activities above, this lesson plan showcases an integrative approach that combines speaking with a reading task on a text entitled “Thiaroye 44” (see Appendix C).

Aim: At the end of this activity, students should

- be able to work in groups outside school,
- be able to get rid of their emotional barriers,
- be able to make creative innovations, and
- be able to practice the English language in a natural way.

Level: All levels.

Time: 10-15 minutes

Materials: Any relevant materials.

Preparation: Make sure students have read an interesting text in class which the sketch topic will be taken from.

Language functions: Expressing one’s feelings, emotions and fears, demanding justice, claiming one’s rights and complaining.

Language skills: Writing and speaking.

Language areas: Idioms.

Procedure:

- Tell students they must perform sketches in one week.

- Ask them to form groups of 5 to 7 members.
- Give the stage direction.
- Example: You are a group of African soldiers claiming their pensions after participating in World War II. But your French superiors do not intend to pay you and are even planning to kill you.
- Note the names of all group members.
- Give a number to each group.
- Remind students they have one week to prepare the sketch performance at home.
- Tell students they can bring in class all necessary objects for the sketch.
- Insist on the need for all students to participate in the group work.
- Specify strictly that all performances will be graded.

I have never seen students so excited and engaged in class until I started asking them to prepare performances of sketches. The sketches my students presented in 2019 on the mass massacre of African soldiers by the French in 1944 phenomenally proved successful.

3.4 Talk about it!

Talk about it is an activity that encourages individual oral presentations on a personal business or project. Unlike the usual oral presentations in groups of 5 to 7 members. This activity is more original and it makes sure students will do a work of their own without being mere onlookers of a panel in which only stronger students will take the floor. This lesson plan also presents an integrative approach that combines speaking with a reading task on a text titled “The Café Touba Business in Dakar” (see Appendix D).

Aim: At the end of this activity, students should

- be able to do research on a particular topic,
- be able to get rid of their emotional barriers,
- know how to make an oral presentation, and
- be able to defend their own arguments or choices in real life situations.

Level: Pre-advanced and advanced

Time: 5-10 minutes

Materials: Any relevant materials.

Preparation: Make sure students have read an interesting text on entrepreneurship or business that will inspire them to prepare individual oral presentations.

Language functions: Presenting a personal project or a business plan.

Language skills: Speaking and writing.

Language areas: Oral presentation tips.

Procedure:

- Tell students they must prepare homework on a personal project or a business plan.
- Give them a project or business plan presentation template they can adapt as they see fit (see Appendix E).
- Tell them they will have to present their work in class in one week.
- Ask them to use pictures or any other relevant visual aids on presentation day.

- Specify strictly that all presentations will be graded.

On presentation day, show students how to make an oral presentation putting the stress on voice intonation, speaking aloud, clearly and at a regular pace, and adopting a standing position to face all their classmates. On every presentation, the audience should be listening carefully and taking notes if necessary in order to ask pertinent questions to the presenter. There is no point insisting on answering other students' questions if the presenter is not comfortable with some of the questions. But do help reformulate questions and prompt the presenter to answer as many questions as possible.

While individual oral presentations explore a myriad of passive and active learning styles, timid students will still lag behind. In case of refusal from some students to make an oral presentation, you can ask them to remain on their seat and make their presentations. If this still does not work, just focus on students willing to present their work, encourage them with standing ovation that engages the whole class. And always take notes when students are making oral presentations. When the presentations are over, give impersonal feedback applicable to all students.

4. Results

In addition to the four activities proposed above that aim to motivate students and to make English as both subject and language attractive again, the Senegalese students' demotivation issue will be dissected in this section thanks to questionnaires distributed to 59 participants. My target populations are students in high school that are supposed to sit for the end of high school exam that leads to the general certificate of education (GCE/A-Levels). The participants are aged between 17 and 22. They have two different English teachers and attend two different schools.

The questions submitted to students are composed of seven closed questions and three nominal questions with possibilities of justifying four responses. I designed the questionnaires abiding by the increase response rate factors and variables: advance warning, explanation of selection, confidentiality, anonymity, appearance, length and rapport (Oppenheim 1992).

4.1 Data Presentation

Counting and going through the questionnaires on paper is mind-boggling. This explains the reason why I just submitted 59 questionnaires to students. I am aware that a larger sample size yields more reliable data. However, with the advances in technology it should be possible to submit a large number of questionnaires for a various audience in terms of intellectual level or age. Technology helps avoid printing so many papers. Additionally, responses are counted automatically and fast. However, the old-fashioned method works best in a developing country where 50% of students might not have free access to Internet. In the following tables, F means frequency of the participants' responses and P means percentage of the participants' responses. N refers to the number of the participants surveyed.

Table 4: Participants’ responses to the 7closed-ended questions

Questions	Participants’ responses (N=59)			
	Yes		No	
	F	P%	F	P%
1. Do you love English?	49	83.05	10	16.94
4. Do you think the English class is boring sometimes?	48	81.35	11	18.64
5. Do you do group work in the English class?	27	45.76	32	54.23
6. Do you have listening comprehension sessions with songs in the English class?	1	1.69	58	98.30
7. Do you perform sketches in the English class?	1	1.69	58	98.30
8. Does your English teacher encourages students?	32	54.23	27	45.76
10. Do you think English tests are difficult compared to the other languages tests?	36	61.01	23	38.98

Source: Quantitative field data (July 2022)

Table 5: Participants’ justified responses to questions 1, 2, 3 and 4

Questions	Participants’ justified responses
1. Do you love English? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English is an interesting language. - English is a universal language and offers opening to the world. - The language is difficult for me. - I once had a teacher I hated and this made me dislike the subject. - I love English and it is the most spoken language in the world. - English has become a must for higher studies and for some jobs.
2. What skills do you prefer in class? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Writing and speaking allow me to communicate with foreigners and travel all around the world. - The way people speak English is really beautiful. - Writing, listening and speaking help me improve my level. - Writing and listening because I mostly listen to music in English and I have pronunciation problems. - Listening because songs in English are very good. - Listening helps me remember words and understand their meaning. - I would like to speak without any difficulty. - When reading you can correct your mistakes. - Speaking is the most important skill. - Listening because the way people pronounce words in English is enchanting.
3. Choose your first modern language. Justify your choice if it is not English. Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spanish is easier to learn. I learn words fast and it is not difficult to pronounce. - Spanish because the tests given to us reflect what we learn in class. - I always have better grades in Spanish. - English because I have no other choice. - Even though you are tired, when the Spanish teacher comes in class, you forget your tiredness. He is motivating and prompts us to love the subject. - Spanish is close to French. - I am comfortable with English. - I am more comfortable with Spanish. - I understand Spanish faster. - Spanish because the teacher explains well. - I would like to go to Spain and meet football player Lionel Messi and the teacher does his job so well.
4. Do you think the English class is boring sometimes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The teacher is so boring and cold. This makes us get unmotivated and sleep during class. - In class, we are under pressure and we are afraid of having problems with the teacher. - The teacher speaks in a low voice. So, we remain silent instead of participating. - Classes are boring because the teacher spends all his time giving us exercises, especially in grammar and tenses. - The teacher is too silent and is not dynamic. - Classes are boring because we do not do activities such as debates. - Classes are boring because the teacher does not give us interesting activities. - The teacher does not liven up the classes and this makes us unmotivated. - The teacher spends all his time doing grammar lessons and exercises. - When we ask questions in English incorrectly, the teacher tells us we must not reformulate the questions in French. - The teacher just teaches and leaves. He is not accessible. - The teacher does not look motivated himself and this has become boring. - The teacher does not make the classes pleasant and does not help us with speaking activities. - The teacher mostly speaks French and this does not urge us to speak English. - The teacher is too shy. - The teacher speaks English only. - The fact of learning the same grammar lessons every year makes English a boring subject.

Source: Qualitative field data (July 2022)

Table 6: Participants’ responses to the 3 nominal questions

Question 2: What skills do you prefer in class? Why?

Participants’ responses (N=59)							
Reading		Writing		Listening		Speaking	
F	P%	F	P%	F	P%	F	P%
8	13.55	15	25.42	31	52.54	14	23.72

Question 3: Choose your first modern language. Justify your choice if it is not English. Why?

Participants’ responses (N=59)									
English		Spanish		Arabic		Italian		German	
F	P%	F	P%	F	P%	F	P%	F	P%
19	32.20	13	22.03	1	1.69	0	0	0	0

Question 9: What activities do you mostly do in the English class? Choose two responses.

Participants’ responses (N=59)													
Listening		Writing		Grammar		Vocabulary		Reading		Debate		Other, specify	
F	P%	F	P%	F	P%	F	P%	F	P%	F	P%	F	P%
8	13.55	31	52.54	44	74.57	14	23.72	6	10.16	0	0	0	0

Source: Quantitative field data (July 2022)

4.2 Data Analysis

As you can see in Table 4, 83.05% of the students say they love English for different reasons: it is an interesting and universal language; it is a must for opportunities and higher education. 16.94% of the students say they dislike English because it is difficult and their teachers make them dislike the language. These remarks support the justifications of question 3 which asks students to choose their first modern language. Students have been learning English as modern language since their second year in junior high school (7 years if no class repeated). They have been following classes in Spanish, Arabic, German, etc., only since their third year in junior high school (6 years if no class repeated). So, English is the subject they have learnt for more years.

32.20% of the students have chosen English as their first modern language, 22.03% of them have opted for Spanish and 1.69% of them have preferred Arabic. A few of them say they have chosen English because they have no choice. To justify their choices to the detriment of English, 13 out of the 59 students think Spanish is easy as it is close to French and their Spanish teachers do all their best to motivate them. So English teachers need to catch up on their colleagues teaching Spanish.

Even though English is having less audience, it is still a very beautiful language that combines cadence, rhythm and intonation. To question 2 on the skills students prefer most, 13.55% opt for reading, 25.42% for writing, 23.72% for speaking and 52.54% for listening. 31 students out of 59 prefer listening because of the beauty of the language and especially music hits in English. According to a research, the most popular singers in the world are of nationalities that speak English as their mother tongue (Saini 2021). Besides, musicians such as Jamaican Bob Marley and American

Marvin Gaye always find their place on the top ten. Therefore, teachers ought not to find any pretext to avoid designing music-based listening comprehension activities.

Now the low percentages of the preference as to reading (13.55%) and speaking (23.72%) is disquieting. Students increasingly lose interest in reading and dodge speaking. Reading should not be a burden. Instead, it should be the main channel of knowledge. Through reading, you unconsciously acquire knowledge and start being a self-taught person. You cannot speak a language when you develop mental and emotional complexes and when you are not self-confident. This raises the question on materials development because it is important to teach people through things they love (Drame 2010).

81.35% of the students’ responses reveal a tense, cold and aloof relationship with their teacher and a teacher-centered classroom. The students surveyed make snap judgements about their teachers. In fact, a great number of them say their teachers are boring and behave apathetically with them, others complain about their teachers’ coldness and aloof manners. This results in students sleeping during class. This is also due to too much grammar (74.57%) lessons and exercises and almost no extracurricular activities such as sketches, debates, games, etc. In the discussion session, solutions and resources will be shared for teachers to make English grammar fun and attractive.

5. Discussion

Through four interactional activities that combine two or three skills, this paper has demonstrated how important and easy it is to motivate students. Also, by the intermediary of quantitative and qualitative research methods with questionnaires, it highlighted the main reasons why students are increasingly being demotivated to be successful in English as subject and language. This paper proposes solutions to teachers’ professional development (e.g., materials selection), motivational attitudes and resources to consult.

Sometimes, the success of text-based interactional activities takes shape thanks to the text selection. This must be done upon specific critical criteria, namely: content relevance, linguistic relevance, conceptual relevance, cultural relevance, teaching/learning relevance, skills relevance, procedural relevance and activity/task relevance (Drame 148). All these criteria may not apply at the same time in one text therefore it is up to teachers to adopt the criteria that help them achieve their objectives. Figure 7 below shows the different steps involved in the text selection process.

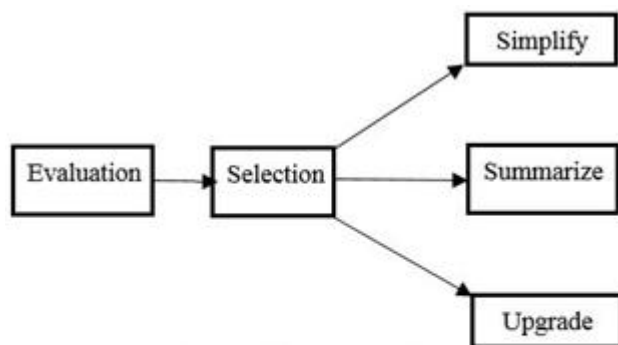


Figure 4: The text selection process

Source: Adapted from Drame, Mamadou. "Teacher Training in Materials Development: A Competency-Based Approach." *LIENS*, no. 13, 2010, p. 145.

After evaluating the different relevance factors of a text selection, teachers should adapt the selected text by simplifying it, summarizing it or upgrading it according to the class environment. Nonetheless, the specific critical criteria of a text selection and the text selection process are also valid for any material type for listening comprehension. Next to the text selection, teachers should display an exemplary behaviour for students often make an intrinsic link between their teachers and school subjects. A motivating teacher should take into account these ten recommendations:

- Set a personal example with one's own behavior.
- Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.
- Present the tasks properly.
- Develop a good relationship with students.
- Increase students' linguistic self-confidence.
- Make the language classes interesting.
- Promote student autonomy.
- Personalize the language process.
- Increase students' goal-orientedness.
- Familiarize students with the target language culture (Spratt et al. 39).³

Motivation goes beyond teachers' attitude. Teachers' pedagogy is part and parcel of motivation. Sometimes, teachers must design their own motivational activities inspiring by other teachers, by their practices in class or by activities they feel they can improve. For instance, teachers may even create their own tongue twisters. When creating a tongue twister, I combine logic, sound sequence and humor. The following seven tongue twisters are my own creation:

- Daesh rushed to the bomb rubbish like a flash.
- Ted tracked and trapped twisted Trump.
- Paul and the tall wall fall like a ball.
- Mummy mumbles when mopping the muck.
- Political punk pundits pray for pocketful politicians.
- A surly, burly, curvy, dirty, shirty girl.
- Brown in town found a gown as round as a crown.

However crucial it may be for teachers to adopt a motivating attitude towards students and to design motivational

activities, they do not always have time for materials development. But hundreds of resources in ELT exist. Jill Hadfield and Zoltán Dörnyei propose many must-read activities that foster learning in *Motivating Learning*, and for task-based learning homework, one-week projects and group work David Seymour and Maria Popova did a Herculean work in *700 Classroom Activities*. Concerning communicative grammar teaching, Jim Scrivener shares his experience in *Teaching English Grammar*, among other interesting and inspiring teachers' books.

Students' demotivation issue cannot be limited to a regrettable absence of motivational activities and English teachers' aloofness in the classroom. The way we assess students deserve consideration. I have been taking part in the GCE/A-Levels examination in Senegal for 8 years. The rumbling and simmering in the teachers' community come back. Complains about the way the tests are designed, unclear instructions, spelling mistakes and many other unprofessional errors are often harshly criticized.

According to Kone, students should be involved in the assessment process through self and peer-assessment (135). This will make them develop interest and start engaging in the classroom. Innovative initiatives are always welcome but students' self and peer-assessment is not without risks. Objectivity as a fundamental criterion might not have the same appreciation among students if the latter have already developed a culture that urge them to focus on the final grade and not on their own training.

As a last recommendation to teachers, when designing a test these 6 characteristics must be included:

- Validity: the test should reflect the content of the course of study; you must test what you teach; some questions in the test are criteria-based because they aim to separate the weaker from the stronger students in order to have a better knowledge of students' performances; there are content and criteria validity, among others.
- Reliability or consistency: a test is deemed reliable when students get the same scores for a number of questions even if they did the test in different places and at different times; equally performant students should have the same scores whoever the teachers who have trained them are; a test is reliable, too, when it is correctly invigilated to make sure students have worked honestly.
- Objectivity: a test is objective as long as it avoids personal judgements because students' competencies should be equal to their results; e.g., when asked to write an essay, the student who copies and pastes passages from a text has the same merit as the one who does not write anything; none of them makes efforts and if rules are strict even, plagiarism must be forbidden.
- Comprehensiveness: this mostly applies to instructions; a test should cover the entire course of study; questions should be diverse, clear and easy to understand.
- Absence of ambiguity: ambiguity in a test is not fair; so implicit and trick questions have to be avoided at all cost; a question can be criteria-based to select the stronger students without being confusing even for teachers.
- Appropriateness of time: students should have all the time necessary to read both the text and questions,

³Slightly adapted for stylistic reasons.

understand them and answer the questions appropriately without feeling any time pressure (Nasr 2021).⁴

6. Conclusion

This paper has firstly illustrated through four student-centered interactional activities on listening comprehension, pronunciation, sketch and oral presentation as examples that designing activities that motivate students to love and learn English is possible. Interactional and motivational activities are essential in an English language classroom. Teaching does not need to be limited to grammar lessons and exercises, and reading activities only. So many features of the language must be discovered as well but only innovative teachers who care for professional development will go for it.

Secondly, this paper has advanced the idea that the teachers' behavior in class influences his teaching, the classroom atmosphere and the students. According to the small data we collected, 48 students out of 59 find their English classes boring because of teachers who show a detached attitude that suggest discouragement and apathy, which is indignant of educators whatever the subject.

This paper has also unveiled the stark reality of underachieving students who think that other languages are easier to learn. Even though English is a language and a school subject as Spanish, Arabic, French, etc., it is the most used language in the world and the world lingua franca that adamantly need to be learnt. This paper has suggested solutions to help improve the assessment issue that is also a factor that explains the reasons why Senegalese students are deserting English.

One other factor of students' underachievement is poor writing skills. In actuality, in exams and during tests in class, 80% of the students either skip the writing activity or just copy and paste passages from the text. Writing is graded out of 6marks whereas reading-related activities and grammar-related activities are respectively graded out of 8 and 6.⁵ All of these 80% of students just lose 6 marks hoping to have their exam papers graded leniently. So writing needs some serious exploration.

Appendix A: Song Lyrics of Bob Marley's "Real Situation"

Check out the real situation:

Nation war against nation.

Where did it all begin?

When will it end?

Well, it seems like: total destruction the only solution.

And there ain't no use: no one can stop them now.

Ain't no use: nobody can stop them now.

Give them an inch, they take a yard.

Give them a yard, they take a mile (ooh).

Once a man and twice a child.

And everything is just for a while.

It seems like: total destruction the only solution.

And there ain't no use: no one can stop them now.

There ain't no use: no one can stop them now.

Ain't no use: no one can stop them now.

There ain't no use: no one can stop them now.

Check in the real situation (check it out, check it out).

Nation fight against nation.

Where did it all begin? Wo-oo-o-o-oh!

Where will it end?

Well, it seems like: total destruction the only solution.

Ooh! No use: can't stop them.

W'ain't no use: yacan't stop them.

Ain't no use: no one can't stop them now.

Can't stop them now (no one can't stop them now).

There ain't no use: no one can't stop them now.

Everybody strugglin': ain't no use, ain't no use.

Ain't no use you even try.

Ain't no use: got to say bye-bye!

Ain't no use! Ain't no, ain't no use: no one can stop them now.

(No one can stop them now).

Source: Marley, Bob. "Real Situation." *Uprising*, Bob Marley and The Wailers, 1980.

Appendix B: Answers to Exercise 2 of the "Sing it!" Activity

Lesson 1: "Total destruction the only solution."

Lesson 2: "Give them an inch, they take a yard. Give them a yard, they take a mile."

Lesson 3: "Once a man and twice a child."

Lesson 4: "And everything is just for a while."

Appendix C: Thiaroye 44

Awa: Grandpa, you know so much about our history... Can you tell me about Thiaroye 44?

Grandpa(looking sad): Well, granddaughter... The story of Thiaroye is a long and sad one! It's a story of injustice, of ingratitude and of betrayal.

Awa: Please tell me about it. Please, Grandpa!

Grandpa: Have you heard of the "Tirailleurs Sénégalais"?

Awa: I think they were martyrs...?

Grandpa: They were African soldiers, but they weren't all Senegalese. The soldiers were recruited into the French army in Saint-Louis in Senegal. They fought fiercely to defend the French people during the first and second world wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945.

Awa: Which countries did the soldiers come from? And what does "tirailleurs" mean?

Grandpa: In English a "tirailleur" is rifleman or a soldier with a gun. The soldiers came from Mali, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Chad, Central African Republic, North Africa...

Awa: But what was Thiaroye 44?

Grandpa: In those days, there was discrimination between the African soldiers and the white French soldiers. They fought in the same wars together. They were not, however, treated equally. At the end of the war, the white soldiers were honoured and they received pensions. The Tirailleurs Sénégalais, however, were not honoured and they did not receive pensions. The Tirailleurs Sénégalais therefore organized rebellions in many parts of France to protest against this injustice. So the French Army decided to

⁴My own observations as an experienced English teacher are also included.

⁵Senegal uses the same grading system as France that is based on a 0-20 scale. To pass a subject, students will need to get 10 marks.

transfer them to Senegal by force. This was in November 1944...

Awa: Grandpa, please go on.

Grandpa: The French Army transported all the African soldiers to Thiaroye, a military camp not far from Dakar. Instead of honouring them they changed their uniforms into ordinary ones and forced them to wear red hats. The African soldiers thought that this was a sign of disrespect and dishonour. They continued to demand their pensions. When their superiors refused to pay them, the Tirailleurs Sénégalais rebelled and took a French general as a hostage.

Awa: And then... what happened?

Grandpa: They freed the general because he promised to sort out their problems. Instead of helping them, the general used the French Army and the police force to attack the Tirailleurs Sénégalais. The soldiers were massacred at 3 a.m. on the morning of the 1st of December 1944. They were sleeping and they were unarmed!

Awa: That's terrible... What cruelty! How many were killed?

Grandpa: I can't tell you. The number was between 30 and 40.

Awa: Were there any survivors?

Grandpa: There were quite a few. They were all sent to prison.

Awa: Now I understand why these Tirailleurs Sénégalais are called "martyrs". I hate injustice, discrimination and lies. I'll fight them all my life.

Grandpa: You're right granddaughter; you're right! People should be honoured for their accomplishments, and not just because of the colour of their skin or because of their wealth.

Source: *Keep in Touch 3e*. Edicef, 2010.

Appendix D: The Café Touba Coffee Business in Dakar

In Senegal, the lucrative business of brewing Café Touba has lured hundreds of young men and women. The vendors have a secret ingredient that enables them to win the hearts of their customers. The ingredient is a mixture of coffee, pepper and other spices that are blended together to give it a unique taste. The business has changed the lives of many young Senegalese. The coffee vendors are usually seen in dozens along the streets in the markets and even religious gatherings. "We are selling Café Touba of high quality. Everyday we use an average of 100 to 200 kilos of coffee. We do make a profit between FCFA 60,000 and FCFA 80,000 per day. So far the business is progressing very well and I'm now targeting to employ more young people," said a vendor. Passion has been the fundamental attribute that has pushed the coffee businesses to excel in Dakar. The beverage is prepared using a filter, similar to that of regular coffee.

The choice of coffee is also important with the dark color determining the quality of the beverage. Sugar is often added

before drinking. Saliou Wane, a young Senegalese vendor wakes up early in the morning everyday to prepare coffee for his clients. "I wake up early in the morning between 4.30 and 5.00 to prepare coffee to the first customers who arrive at 6 am. Some buy to drink at the office. I work with a team of five people. I am also able to meet my personal needs and those of my family," he said. Café Toubais locally sold in bags and stocked in stores and shops in the neighborhoods within the city. The price varies between FCFA 2,500 and FCFA 3,000 per kilogram. The name Toubais derived from the name of a holy city of Senegal. Vendors claim that the pepper used to prepare Café Touba has therapeutic qualities. Source: Adapted from Gnahouré, Christina. "Senegal: Touba Coffee Touching Hearts in Dakar." africanews, 24 April 2016. <https://www.africanews.com/2016/04/28/senegal-touba-coffee-touching-hearts-in-dakar/>. Accessed 4 August 2022.

Appendix E: Business Plan/Project Presentation Template

<i>Title of business plan/project:</i>	Café Touba Shop
<i>About the promoter:</i>	My name is Fatou NDIAYE. I'm 25 and single. I live in Patted'Oie Builders.
<i>Reasons of the business plan/project:</i>	I've noticed that Dakar inhabitants use Café Touba a lot. Actually, an official estimate indicates 2 million people in Dakar drinks at least 3 to 5 cups of Café Touba a day. This is the reason why I decided to set up this business. On the other hand, since my dad passed away, I've become the only bread-winner of my family. I must pay the tuition fees of my siblings and help my old mother who cannot work any longer.
<i>Target customers:</i>	People who go to work on foot from 6 a.m., students, and street vendors.
<i>Budget needed:</i>	FCFA 300,000
<i>Expected daily expenses:</i>	FCFA 10,000
<i>Expected profit per month:</i>	FCFA 250,000
<i>Expected risks:</i>	I'm aware nowadays a great number of people do the same business and most of them are street Café Touba vendors. So I expect hygiene, competition and reputation risks.
<i>Risk management:</i>	To manage the risks, I'll make sure my customers have a hygienic service. The coffee will be served in disposable cups with lids and a piece of tissue will be kindly offered with a warm smile.

Appendix F: Questionnaire for Students

Dear student,
 In the framework of a research project on the English language as a school subject, I submit this questionnaire for your consideration. I rely on your collaboration for the success of this project. Do not mention your name please.
 Age: __
 1. Do you love English?
 Yes __ No __
 Why: _____
 2. What skills do you prefer in class?
 Reading __ Writing __ Listening __ Speaking __
 Why: _____

3. Choose your first modern language. Justify your choice if it is not English.

English __ Spanish __ Arabic __ Italian __ German __

Why: _____

4. Do you think the English class is boring sometimes?

Yes __ No __

Why: _____

5. Do you do group work in the English class?

Yes __ No __

6. Do you have listening comprehension sessions with songs in the English class?

Yes __ No __

7. Do you perform sketches in the English class?

Yes __ No __

8. Does your English teacher encourages students?

Yes __ No __

9. What activities do you mostly do in the English class? Choose two responses.

Listening __ Writing __ Grammar __ Vocabulary __ Reading __ Debate __ Other, specify: _____

10. Do you think English tests are difficult compared to the other languages tests?

Yes __ No __

NB: When giving your response put a cross in the relevant blank provided next to each question.

I thank you for your collaboration.

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