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Hallitzky, Maria [Hrsg.]; Mulhanga, Félix [Hrsg.]; Spendrin, Karla [Hrsg.]; Yoshida, Nariakira [Hrsg.]: *Expanding horizons and local connectedness. Challenges for qualitative teaching research and development in intercultural contexts.* Bad Heilbrunn : Verlag Julius Klinkhardt 2025, S. 153-170



Quellenangabe/ Reference:

Schelle, Carla; Mbaye, Mamadou: Comparative reconstructions of subject matter and addressing practices in Senegalese and German classrooms - In: Hallitzky, Maria [Hrsg.]; Mulhanga, Félix [Hrsg.]; Spendrin, Karla [Hrsg.]; Yoshida, Nariakira [Hrsg.]: *Expanding horizons and local connectedness. Challenges for qualitative teaching research and development in intercultural contexts.* Bad Heilbrunn : Verlag Julius Klinkhardt 2025, S. 153-170 - URN: urn:nbn:de:0111-pedocs-341915 - DOI: 10.25656/01:34191; 10.35468/6193-14

<https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0111-pedocs-341915>

<https://doi.org/10.25656/01:34191>

in Kooperation mit / in cooperation with:



<http://www.klinkhardt.de>

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Comparative Reconstructions of Subject Matter and Addressing Practices in Senegalese and German Classrooms¹

Abstracts

EN

Based on studies of comparative interpretative teaching research, the contribution addresses methodological, methodical and theoretical challenges of comparing sequences from lessons in Germany and Senegal, taking two countries as case examples whose comparison seems to be rather unusual. The evaluation method of objective hermeneutics, which seems to be particularly sensitive to foreign cultural situations, is used for reconstruction. In terms of content, the focus is on the constitution of objects in mutual interactions in the classroom. Further cases and questions show how research and teaching can benefit from this approach. Finally, the limits of comparative research will be marked, for example with regard to the blind spots of observation.

DE

Basierend auf Forschungen in der interpretativen vergleichenden Unterrichtsforschung widmet sich der Beitrag den damit einhergehenden methodologischen, methodischen und theoretischen Herausforderungen. Mit Unterrichtssequenzen aus Senegal und Deutschland geht eine eher ungewöhnliche Länderauswahl einher. Zur Rekonstruktion dient die Auswertungsmethode der Objektiven Hermeneutik, die besonders sensibilibisiert scheint für fremdkulturelle Lagen. Inhaltlich fokussiert wird die Gegenstandskonstituierung in wechselseitigen Interaktionen im Klassenzimmer. Weitere Fälle und Fragen zeigen, wie Forschung und Lehre von dieser Zugangsweise profitieren können. Abschließend werden Grenzen vergleichender Forschung markiert, etwa mit Blick auf die blinden Flecke der Beobachtung.

1 Thanks to Annika Scholz and Dr. Lara-Stephanie Krause-Alzaidi for translating the text.

PT

Baseado na investigação interpretativa e comparativa do ensino, o artigo é dedicado aos desafios metodólicos, metodológicos e teóricos que estão associados a este domínio. A seleção de sequências de ensino do Senegal e da Alemanha representa uma seleção bastante incomum de países. É utilizado para a reconstrução o método de análise da hermenêutica objetiva, que parece ser particularmente sensível a situações culturais estrangeiras. Em termos de conteúdo, o foco é a constituição do objeto em interações na sala de aula. Outros casos e questões mostram como a investigação e o ensino podem beneficiar desta abordagem. Por fim, são salientados os limites da investigação comparativa, por exemplo, no que diz respeito aos pontos cegos da observação.

JA

解釈と比較をおこなう授業研究の事例をもとに、本稿では研究の展開につきまとう方法論、方法そのもの、そして理論にかかわる課題を検討する。具体的にはセネガルとドイツというあまりなじみのない組み合わせをもとに、授業シークエンスを検討する。再構成に際しては、客観的解釈学の分析方法を用いている。この方法は、異なる文化に対してとくに配慮しており、ここでは教室での相互行為のなかで学習対象が構成される過程を検討する。複数の事例や問いを用い、研究と教授にとってこの方法がどのような利点をもたらすのかを示す。さいごに、比較研究の限界を指摘し、観察につきまとう盲点への留意を促す。

1 Introduction

Comparative interpretative studies have been at the core of our research and teaching. We address in this piece particular methodological, methodical and theoretical challenges of empirical comparisons that occur in the context of the classroom in Germany and Senegal – two countries whose comparison might at first seem rather unusual (Mbaye 2018; Schelle et al. 2018).

Comparative studies always depend on a *Tertium Comperationis*. The case examples we describe are sequences from lessons in Germany and Senegal that are comparable with regard to content and subject. Based on long-standing experience in comparative Franco-German teaching research (Hollstein, Schelle & Meister 2012; Straub 2015) there have been several binational exchanges between Dakar and Mainz since 2011, which resulted in several case studies (cf. Früchtenicht & Mbaye 2016; Schelle & Straub 2016).

Comparative research is significant, because comparison can uncover invisible common-sense assumptions that are taken for granted in one or the other

context so they can be productively discussed. In the same vein, comparative approaches also allow for a foregrounding of local specificities. When dealing with data from other cultural contexts it is important to discuss and reflect that the interpreter, the process of interpretation and the objects to be interpreted depend on their specific contexts, histories and social milieus (Cappai 2010 referring to Soeffner; Schelle 2013).

2 Challenges of comparative research – methodological considerations

As Karl Mannheim has framed it, the reflection of one's own location and of the *"Standortgebundenheit"* (local situatedness) or rather the *"Seinsgebundenheit des Wissens"* (the situatedness of knowledge) is particularly important with regard to case studies from different cultural settings (Fritzsche 2013). The sequences analysed come from two very different countries whose school and education systems have historically developed in very different ways. Senegal and Germany still differ with regard to the types of schools that are prevalent in each country, the subject disciplines, the cultures of teaching and learning and the languages of learning and teaching. In Senegal, for example, it is not the indigenous languages that are officially used for teaching. Instead, French is the main language of schooling (see Mbaye & Schelle in this volume). Schooling itself always needs to be looked at as a national institution (cf. Adick 2009; Schelle & Straub 2018). This means that all class activities are framed normatively and in a curricular manner. Therefore, it is imperative to carefully reconstruct specific aspects of the respective cultural context without hastily attributing observations to national patterns. Culturalization, essentialisation and othering thus need to be avoided (Caruso 2013; Fritzsche 2013). In our empirical field of comparative research – between Germany, France and Senegal – we try to methodically control the challenges one encounters when dealing with comparisons. Interpreting in a mixed team of native speakers is central to this process. German and French transcripts remain in their respective language and are, for the purposes of gaining a wider audience, going to be translated into English (see below). The process of translating and understanding the transcripts is considered to be a mutual, knowledge generating process (Bittner & Günther 2013; Schelle & Straub 2018; Schittenhelm 2017; Stegmaier 2013).

3 Teaching as interaction, addressing and subject matter (theoretical concept)

In research as well as in teaching, we endorse the theoretical concept of teaching as being a form of interaction (Luhmann 2002). This means that in the process teachers as well as pupils communicatively (verbally and non-verbally) produce or constitute all kinds of objects via a form of practices. Practices are seen as “a sequential [...] doing, which in practicing makes sense and can be understood” and as a primal, institutionalised form of the social (Reh, Rabenstein & Idel 2011: 214). We focus on object related practices and therefore we assume that this mutually generated process of addressing, of subject and of object can be subsumed in the term of a subjectivation process. In class or rather in constituting a teaching subject/topic – like Reh & Ricken are appropriately pointing out – it all revolves around the question “how one is by whom in front of whom as whom addressed explicitly or implicitly” (Reh & Ricken 2012: 42).

In a narrower sense, what can be said about the subject/topic of teaching? In relation to that, we are going to focus on a Franco-German research study under the supervision of Carla Schelle that aims at constituting teaching subjects/topics in the classroom. In this project (sponsored by the German Research Foundation, DFG, 2018-2021), subjects of teaching are phenomenologically considered as a signifier, as Schütz & Luckmann (1994) point out. This signifier in the classroom has a particular structure, a particular way of functioning (and relates to *an object/a case* or a subject) (Kleiner 2014; Pollmanns 2010). With regard to subject matters in the classroom, one can see that they:

- always stand for showing, presenting and learning something.
- are positioned situationally and are acquired via enunciation (Sünkel 1996).
- relate to one’s own natural disposition and to a kind of representation (truth) being evoked in others and refers to what others see in it, how they understand and comprehend it (Lauterbach 2010).

In short, subjects of teaching/subject matters are generated through practices in mutual teacher-pupil-interactions (see Schelle & Straub 2018). Amid existing studies of comparative research on teaching in mathematics, foreign languages and politics (e.g., Früchtenicht & Mbaye 2016; Knipping 2012; Mbaye 2018; Schelle & Straub 2016, 2018; Schelle et al. 2018), we assume that there are cultural variances and similarities in addressing and constituting of objects in class that can be made visible when comparing in teaching practices.

4 Sampling method: class observations, transcripts

The lessons which were transcribed into the following sequences were taken from Mbaye (2018)², a comparative German-Senegalese study aiming at revealing practices of error correction in foreign language classes. However, the data will be looked at in a slightly different manner. The lessons were recorded by Mamadou Mbaye in French lessons in Germany as well as in German lessons in Senegal by using audio- and videotaping. The recordings were subsequently transcribed in the original language. The foreign language documents were not translated during the process of interpretation, as – depending on the research focus – context and structure of the original language can be lost when documents are translated. An example from Mbaye (2018) illustrates this point: speech acts that do not sound well formed in German can indeed sound well formed when translated into another language.

Once translated, the sequence: *Guten Tag Frau*, a greeting that took place in a German lesson in Senegal (Mbaye 2018) is regarded as incomplete in German. ‘Frau’ never stands alone in a formal greeting but is always followed by the person’s surname: “*Guten Tag Frau Müller, Guten Tag Herr Schmidt*”. In contrast to that, in French one can greet without adding any name: *Bonjour Madame*, just like in English: *Good morning Madam*.

This is why the data analysis took place in several meetings in a mixed research workshop with researchers who were familiar with the environment out of which the data material had originated (cf. Oevermann et al. 1979: 392; Oevermann 2002). This kind of procedure is vitally important for a comparative objective hermeneutical interpretation (see the article by Mbaye & Schelle in this volume; Wernet 2009). In the following chapter, certain steps of interpretation that focus on the meaning of addressing and the constitution of the object of teaching in interactions early in a lesson are made comprehensible.

2 This dissertation was funded by DAAD and submitted at the Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz.

5 Reconstruction of two cases – choral speaking and individual speaking

5.1 First case: „welchesche Datum haben ...?“ – choral speaking, simultaneously saying the date

Embedment of the sequence

This scene documents the beginning of a German lesson in Senegal (Mbaye 2018). All students are already in the classroom. The teacher enters the classroom, puts her belongings on her desk, walks towards one of the female pupils who sits up front and talks to her. Finally, she turns towards the class and asks them to formulate the question about the date in French: (“is there anyone who can say which day we have today”). Subsequently one of the pupils raises his hand (“Abou Ka”). The teacher gives him the right to speak up and then asks him to put the question to a classmate named Barry. Abou Ka follows the request of his teacher:

00.01.03	Abou Ka:	<i>welchesche Datum haben</i> whawhats is date
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In a context free and literal perspective, the presented sequence shows the beginning of a phrasing that asks for the date (of the day) in halting German (“*welchesche Datum haben*”). If we detach the interaction from its educational context, the following stories can be panned out:

- A person is filling out a form while sitting at a desk and is thereby uttering the words.
- Another possibility is a child that comes up with a special plan while sitting at a breakfast table. And it thereby excitedly asks another person for the date of the day.
- It is equally possible that somebody is reading a text, is hesitating while reading out loud and thinks how these words should be pronounced.

By leaving the original context and by putting the sequence into various contexts, we can see that quite a few other ways of interpreting the sequence are possible. Every context presented here has in common that we are confronted with a not well-formed sentence and that the speaker finds himself in a position of reflecting, thinking and/or hesitation. It is to be expected that the missing syntactical elements will be completed. Yet there needs to be a reason why the speaker Abou Ka interrupts his act of speaking.

The next sequence:

00.01.07	Lehrerin:	hahan hahan <i>c'est pas welchesche c'est?</i>
	Teacher:	heyhey heyhey it is not whawhats? It is?

In response to Abou Ka, the teacher reacts with a sort of language *mélange* that can be classified into three phases: she begins with a double “heyhey”, then she dismisses what would be from her point of view regarded as an incorrect element (“*c'est pas welchesche*”). Eventually, she initiates a correction (“*c'est?/It is?*”). With her insistent phrasing, the pupil, or rather how he speaks, is being addressed as deficient. It is interesting to see that the teacher is repeating the clumsy contribution of the pupil and is thereby seemingly initiating a negotiation of the correction. It is not clear, however, if she is turning to the person who caused the supposed error (as an act of self-correction) or/and if she addresses and includes the entire class (in an act of external correction).

What happens next?

00.01.07	viele SuS:	[gleichzeitig]: Welches
	many pupils:	[simultaneously]: What
00.01.08	Lehrerin:	hmm?
	teacher:	hmm?
00.01.09	viele SuS:	[gleichzeitig]: Welches
	many pupils:	[simultaneously]: What
00.01.09	Lehrerin:	Welches
	teacher:	What
00.01.10	viele SuS:	[gleichzeitig]: Datum
	many pupils:	[simultaneously]: date
00.01.11	Lehrerin:	Datum
	teacher:	date
00.01.12	viele SuS:	[gleichzeitig]: haben
	many pupils:	[simultaneously]: is
00.01.13	Lehrerin:	haben wir heute? oui Barry <i>c'est</i> Barry?
		Oui
	teacher:	is the date of today? Yes Barry it is Barry?
		Yes

Following suit, by implementing a process of correction, the pupils respond by answering in a chorus (external correction) and in a back-and-forth relay with their teacher. It is clear that having a pupil give the right answer is more important for the teacher than giving an individual feedback to Abou Ka. The intervention by the teacher and the reactions of the pupils lead to a situation where fluent communication cannot be established. The pupil Abou Ka as producer of the “error” is being deprived of self-correction due to the chorus-like intervention of the pupil collective. The commonly highly ritualised

practice of choric speaking characterises not only this interaction but seems to be highly significant in this classroom in general (cf. Mbaye 2018).

Below we introduce a second case, because according to objective hermeneutics one's understanding of one case becomes more thorough when contrasting it to another case.

5.2 Second case: "nous sommes quelle date?" – an individual speaking, saying the date face-to-face

Embedment of the sequence

The following sequence documents the beginning of a French class at a secondary school for boys in Germany (Mbaye 2018). The teacher opens the door of the classroom, the pupils enter and take their seats. Then the teacher positions herself in front of the class and the pupils stand up. At this point, the transcript begins:

00.00.00	<i>Lehrerin:</i>	<i>bonjour m'sieurs</i>
	teacher:	good morning gentlemen
00.00.02	<i>Schüler:</i>	[gemeinsam]: <i>bon-jour ma-dame</i> Mül-ler
	pupils:	[together]: go-od mor-ning ma-dame Mül-ler
00.00.08	<i>Lehrerin:</i>	<i>nous sommes quelle date?</i> [<i>viele Schüler melden sich</i>] Bruno
	teacher:	What is the date? [many pupils hold up their hands] Bruno
00.00.11	Bruno:	Bruno: <i>c'est ähm mercredi le:: trois</i>
	Bruno:	ähm <i>décembre deux mille quatorze</i>
		thats ähm wednesday the third ähm december two thousand fourteen
00.00.20	<i>Lehrerin:</i>	<i>merci asseyez-vous</i> [<i>Schüler:innen setzen sich hin und L. schreibt an die Tafel</i>]
	teacher:	thanks sit down [pupils sit down, teacher writes on the board]

The teacher greets the pupils formally in French by saying "bonjour". She addresses the pupils as "m'sieurs" ("gentlemen"), even though the subjects being addressed are school boys aged 12 to 13. The pupils being addressed as "gentlemen" react, contrary to expectation, with a chorus-like response. This practice seems contradictory in relation to the formal, grown up addressing of the teacher. The pupils seem to be aware of their role and position as a collective in need of teaching and learning. It becomes clear that this case does not show a greeting that happens out of sheer politeness, but it shows an act of greeting shaped by didactics or orchestration that serves the purpose of

“establishing a form of order in the classroom” (cf. Rabenstein & Reh 2010; Wagner-Willi 2005). The teacher continues and asks for the date of the day in French (“*nous sommes quelle date?*”). A few pupils raise their hand. The teacher turns to Bruno whom she addresses with his first name. He then begins to answer. In relation to the question that is being asked, there is no well-formed syntactic sentence in Bruno’s manner of speaking. How will the teacher react? She does not respond but instead thanks the student who is performing and/or his other classmates by saying “*merci*”. Quite obviously she does not seem to mind these kinds of “errors”. It seems that the ritualised practice of this beginning of class has priority over technical accuracy (cf. Mbaye 2018).

5.3 Contrasting of cases: collective-orientated versus individualised addressing and acting

Comparing and contrasting these two cases produces the following results: In both cases the question that asks for the date of the day is the central cornerstone and serves as a ritualised practice which establishes the social and content-related “order of the class” in the respective target language (cf. Rabenstein & Reh 2010). In the case from Germany, we can see that this kind of ritualised practice happens quickly and unobstructed despite a very small error (which is being overlooked by the teacher) in the target language French and in some form of face-to-face situation. The kind of grown up, formal addressing, the acknowledgment expressed towards the pupils as well as the acceptance of the not well-formed statement of the pupil Bruno read as a polite and formalised but also motivated social interaction with the pupils. In contrast, in the Senegalese case the correct wording of the question (which asks for the date of the day) is being generated by interaction and/or interplay between the teacher, the presenting pupil and the pupil collective. This is characterised as a practice of a chorus-like error repair (correction) in which the individual is no longer being addressed. In fact, the object/the wording in the target language is being generated collectively (cf. Mbaye 2018). In this relation between the pupil being addressed as a subject and the pupil collective, subjectivation processes become apparent (cf. Reh & Ricken 2012). Similarly generated chorus-like actions are outlined by Caruso as “provision of experience by a collective” (Caruso 2011: 28 in relation to León Florido 2001). Beck (2011) has made observations in Swahili that show a completion of phrases via chorus-like speaking and described these as “a linguistic process that is associated with authoritarian argumentation and didactical hierarchy [...]”, and by which the speaker assumes consent of the audience and makes it explicit through this form of institutionalised “repair” (Beck 2011: 123ff.). For this practice, the listeners need to be in a position where they can

actually complete the sentence (ibid., cf. Schelle 2013: 262 ff.). According to the Senegalese author Sow (2004), collective acting and the primacy of the collective in the process of teaching and learning in Senegal, has its roots in the "*éducation traditionnelle*", which is about teaching children the particular common values of the respective group (of which they are a part)³. In a following sequence taking place in a Senegalese classroom, the emphasis is on the default of a joint manner of speaking (or a chorus-like speaking) when teaching children how to read and write. This is also observable in the process of memorising or reciting poems, songs or vocabulary in class. The example from Germany then contrasts with this communal practice of chorus-like speaking. Here we can instead see a teaching practice that is born out of its historic educational ("*bildungshistorisch*") context and oriented around every single pupil ("*Schülersubjekt*") (Hollstein 2013, 2016; Hörner 2000; Hörner & Many 2017; Schelle 2016).

Workshops on empirical school and teaching research at the University of Mainz, where sequences taken from foreign settings were methodically reconstructed, have finally made it possible to reflect on pre-understandings and "site-dependency" (cf. Cappai 2010).

Two further case examples show that an alternating reference of the sequential and literal reconstruction between object and addressing can stimulate a debate on the theme of casuistic teacher training.

6 Further questions and perspectives for working on cases that focus on the subject and addressing

The following shows once again how case studies are suitable for comparative research and for academic teaching. Questions that emerged from the first reconstructions of cases can demonstrate what can systematically be taken into consideration when reconstructing cases. Both cases show the beginning of class as "an opening of social practice" in language classrooms where pupils learn a foreign language. Opening sequences are very suitable material for objective hermeneutical examination because, as mentioned earlier, beginnings of class are attributed with an increased structuring ability regarding the practice that is generated (*through them*) (Zizek 2015: 322). Looking at these cases, we do not provide detailed interpretations but rather questions to reflect upon and work with. The aim is to facilitate critical, methodologically and theoretically well-structured analyses of case studies as part of teacher training.

3 For an example for South Africa see in a previous study from Chick published 1996.

6.1 Addressing and subject “*on se tient bien droit*” – standing upright and the role of the body⁴

The beginning of class was recorded in February 2013 during research visits of Carla Schelle at a catholic primary school in Dakar. It shows a so-called “*Cours préparatoire*” (which can be more or less compared to the second year in primary school) in France. The 26 female students and 18 male students are about 8 years old and they speak French as a foreign language or second language. French classes in Senegal are originally not designed as foreign language classes. At the beginning of the transcript, the pupils are being asked to stand up:

00:00:30	teacher:	[...] on se lève [tape deux fois dans les mains] on se tient bien droit We stand up [claps two times her hands] and we hold straight
	pupils sing:	le coq chante le jour paraît, tout s'éveille dans le village, pour que le bon couscous soit prêt, femmes debout et du courage, pilons pan-pan, pilons pan-pan, pilons pan-pan, pilons gaiement
00:01:04	teacher:	les bras le long du corps on se tient bien droit un deux trois the arms close to the body and we hold straight one two three
	pupils sing:	pincez tous vos koras, frappez les balafons, le lion a rugi, le dompteur de la brousse, d'un bond s'est élancé, dissipant les ténèbres, soleil sur nos terreurs, soleil sur notre espoir, debout, frères, voici l'Afrique rassemblée, fibres de mon cœur vert. épaule contre épaule, mes plus que frères, ô Sénégalais, debout, unissons la mer et les sources, unissons la steppe et la forêt, salut Afrique mère [les élèves applaudissent] [pupils clap their hands]
00:02:12	teacher:	asseyez-vous alors sit down okay[teacher starts with the chapter of today]

At this point, and referring to the theoretical assumptions that were dealt with earlier in this chapter, one may ask: As whom are the pupils being addressed

⁴ See also Schelle 2019; Schelle, Fritzsche & Lehmann-Rommelt 2021.

and acknowledged? Which function does this kind of practice have for the community being present? For the French class? In what way does the practice of addressing and the subject merge into one another (language and content of the texts being sung, what are they about?), which kind of normative requirements, institutionalised frameworks and curricula guidelines are therewith implied?

Commentary: Teacher and pupils practice a highly ritualised opening sequence. Two song texts deal with the Senegalese context (culture and history) in a language that is only just being acquired. Addressing and thematic content of the lesson co-constitute each other. Similar to the sequences from Senegalese classrooms presented earlier, we can observe the addressing of the pupils as a collective. Through choral singing the object of teaching is then constituted cooperatively in the target language.

The sequence can be compared with the following one:

6.2 Addressing and subject “how is your dog by the way”? – “How is your dog?”

The protocol⁵ resulted from a school internship of a student who had visited grade 6 at a Gymnasium in Germany in 2011. The mid-morning break has just ended and the 5th lesson of the day begins in a French class.

The German transcript has been translated into English:

T: Can you help Jakob, Peter to take the garbage ... Peter, clean up the hallway together.

[...]

[Pupils take their seats; keep on chatting; stand up.]

Bonjour!

P (all): **Bonjour Madame XXX!**

[Pupils take their seats; two pupils enter the classroom from outside.]

P1: Miss ***, you wanted to implement a seating order.

T: Yes, I will do that.

[...]

P2: Can you give me the key? I have forgotten my jacket.

T: And what about you, Albert? Tom can go and get his jacket all by himself.

P3: Yes I have forgotten my pencil... probably in music class.

T: I don't have a key for the music room anyway ... Well then go and have a look.

[Two pupils leave the classroom.]

P1: Can you please tell Jakob that he can take off his jacket?

5 The document shown above is taken from the internal case archive for teacher training at the University of Mainz.

- T: Oh, today you are all somehow a little bit confused!
[Teacher takes her seat.]
- T: **Comment vas-tu, Heike?** (How do you do, Heike)
- P4: **Äh ... ça va bien.** / (Äh... I am doing fine.)
- P5: Miss XXX actually, how is your dog?
- T: Fine ... Alma is doing fine.
Et toi, Erika, ça va bien? (And you, Erika, are you doing fine?)
- P6: **Oui, ça va bien.** (Yes, I am fine.)

One may ask again: As whom are the pupils being addressed and acknowledged? And, a little bit different from the foregoing questions: In what way do the practice of addressing and the subject merge into each other? Which kind of normative requirements, institutionalised frameworks and curricula guidelines are thereby implied?

Commentary: Here it becomes clear that several attempts are undertaken before the lesson in the target language can begin. A pupil reacts to the exercise about addressing in French that had just begun. He interrupts the official conversation with a private question in the first language. Similar to the first example from Germany, we see a teaching practice born out of its historic educational context and mainly oriented around individual pupils.

By contrasting both sequences with regard to similarities and cultural variances, following questions can be helpful: In what sense can normative expectations, institutional framing and curricula guidelines be seen as specific for the respective cultural context, as a national element or even a transnational element? What meaning do the particular subjects of the target language (traditional songs, greeting, dialogue) have for the teacher and the pupils? How do personal/subjective relations, polite and less polite manners of speaking, closeness and distance develop in their respective manner and how can they be reconstructed and interpreted regarding their position in an institutional framing and curricula guidelines?

7 Blind spots and methodological challenges

Finally, it is important to once again zoom into the methodical and theoretical challenges regarding blind spots, language and translation as well as context knowledge (Schelle 2016).

Within the framework of the empirical field that is interpretative educational research, we assume that observations are selective and subjective. Speaking from Niklas Luhmann's point of view, it is actually the term of "distinction", so that observation is not only a "matter of perspective, but inherently paradoxical" (Reh 2012: 3). It produces "its very own blind spots", which cannot be seen by observers (ibid.: 7), because "every observation at the moment of

observing can only see the one side which has been described and not the one which has not been described" (ibid.: 17, see also Schelle 2016). Therefore, we presume that observing foreign cultural contexts, including what we know about the respective pragmatic context, will remain incomplete, things can always be overlooked and the unknown may not take centre stage and therefore will not enter the process of evaluation (cf. Schelle 2015).

During the process of translation, meaning of content can be lost or new meanings of content surface, which may turn into obstacles for the interpretation. Translating foreign language documents entails the danger of seizing a foreign vocabulary and incorporating them into one's own vocabulary and its meaning, thus generating blind spots again (cf. Hollstein, Schelle & Meister 2012).

With regard to the transcripts from Senegal, we need to take into additional consideration that the French language as the lingua franca and the language of schooling, is by no means the first language of all participants involved in the schools in Senegal from which the presented documents originated (see Mbaye 2018). This means that there must be a peculiar handling of French in Senegal that is being adjusted to the existing living conditions and that not only leads to the fact of words and sentences sounding differently to the French spoken in France but also attributes a different meaning to certain words and designations (Chnane-Davin & Thiam 2016). A translation into English is posing an additional challenge. Translations always reach their limits if there is no equivalent in the other language. This is exemplified when looking at the term of "*Bildung*" for which there is no equivalent in French or English and which is a particular result of the history of education in Germany. One constantly needs to work hard to generate understanding and comprehension.

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