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PEDAGOGICAL SILENCE AND THE NOTION OF SUBJECTIVITY: A HERMENEUTICAL READING OF THE ACT OF LEARNING

Leila Bouchebcheb*

Abstract. In teaching French as a foreign language (FFL), silence is often interpreted as an indicator of misunderstanding, a language barrier, or even pedagogical failure. This article examines the pedagogical dimension of silence and its relationship to learner subjectivity from a hermeneutic perspective. Within an interdisciplinary theoretical framework, various forms of silence observed in learners are analyzed to identify their significance in the learning process. Particular attention is paid to the teacher's role in managing moments of silence as semantic elements of educational interaction. The results of the study demonstrate that pedagogical silence is an important condition for the development of learner subjectivity. It provides a space for cognitive processing, emotional reflection, and self-construction, enabling students to develop a personal and authentic understanding of knowledge. Silence thus illuminates internal learning processes and challenges traditional models of pedagogical transmission. In the field of learning and teaching foreign languages, particularly French, learner silence is often interpreted negatively: as a sign of misunderstanding, shyness, language block, or pedagogical failure (Kramsch, 2014). This reductive interpretation, based on behaviorist and communicative paradigms that prioritize constant oral interaction, obscures the potential richness of silence as an active component of the learning process. However, silence is not an empty absence of speech, but rather a space-time saturated with meaning, where the cognitive, affective, and personal processes necessary for the development of learner subjectivity are formed. This article draws on didactic and psychological perspectives to rethink pedagogical silence in French as a foreign language. Inspired by cognitive psychology research on the process of internalization (Vygotsky, 1978), the author examines silence as a moment of internal processing of linguistic and cultural knowledge by the learner.

Keywords: Pedagogical silence; hermeneutics; subjectivity; the act of learning

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ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКОЕ МОЛЧАНИЕ И ПОНЯТИЕ СУБЪЕКТИВНОСТИ: ГЕРМЕНЕВТИЧЕСКОЕ ПРОЧТЕНИЕ АКТА УЧЕНИЯ

Лейла Бушебшеб*

Абстракт. В преподавании французского языка как иностранного (FFL) молчание нередко интерпретируется как показатель непонимания, языкового барьера или даже педагогической неудачи. В данной статье рассматривается педагогическое измерение молчания и его связь с субъективностью обучающегося в герменевтической перспективе. В междисциплинарном теоретическом контексте анализируются различные формы молчания, наблюдаемые у обучающихся, с целью выявления их значимости в процессе обучения. Особое внимание уделяется роли преподавателя в управлении моментами молчания как смысловыми элементами образовательного взаимодействия. Результаты исследования показывают, что педагогическое молчание выступает важным условием формирования субъективности обучающегося. Оно является пространством когнитивной переработки, эмоционального осмысления и самоконструирования, что позволяет студенту формировать личное и аутентичное понимание знаний. Таким образом, молчание высвечивает внутренние процессы обучения и ставит под вопрос традиционные модели педагогической трансмиссии. В сфере изучения и преподавания иностранных языков, в частности французского, молчание обучающегося часто трактуется негативно: как знак непонимания, застенчивости, языковой блокады или педагогической неуспешности (Kramersch, 2014). Такая редуктивная интерпретация, основанная на бихевиористских и коммуникативных парадигмах, придающих приоритет постоянному устному взаимодействию, затмевает потенциальное богатство молчания как активного компонента учебного процесса. Между тем молчание не является пустым отсутствием речи, но представляет собой пространство-время, насыщенное смыслом, где формируются когнитивные, аффективные и личностные процессы, необходимые для становления субъективности обучающегося. Статья опирается на дидактическую и психологическую перспективу для переосмысления педагогического молчания во французском как иностранном языке. Вдохновляясь исследованиями по когнитивной психологии, связанными с процессом интериоризации (Выготский, 1978), автор рассматривает молчание как момент внутренней переработки лингвистических и культурных знаний обучающимся.

Ключевые слова: Педагогическое молчание; герменевтика; субъективность; акт учения

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PEDAQOJİ SƏSSİZLİK VƏ SUBYEKTİVLİK ANLAYISI: ÖYRƏNMƏ AKTININ HERMENEVTİK TƏHLİLİ

Leyla Buşəbşəb*

Abstrakt. Fransız dili xarici dil kimi (FFL) tədrisində səssizlik çox zaman anlaşılmazlıq, dil baryeri və ya pedaqoji uğursuzluq göstəricisi kimi qəbul olunur. Bu məqalədə səssizliyin pedaqoji ölçüsü və öyrənənin subyektivliyi ilə əlaqəsi hermenevtik yanaşma əsasında araşdırılır. İnterdisiplinar nəzəri çərçivədə aparılan təhlil öyrənənlərdə müşahidə olunan müxtəlif səssizlik formalarının mənalandırılmasını hədəfləyir. Araşdırmada müəllimin roluna xüsusi diqqət yetirilir: səssizliyin öyrənmə prosesində sadəcə danışmaq boşluğu deyil, biliklərin daxili işlənməsi və şəxsi mənalandırılma mərhələsi kimi idarə edilməsi ön plana çəkilir. Tədqiqat nəticələri göstərir ki, pedaqoji səssizlik öyrənmə subyektivliyinin formalaşması üçün mühüm şərtlər yaradır. Bu, kognitiv emal, emosional dərk və özünüquruculuq proseslərinin baş verdiyi xüsusi bir məkan rolunu oynayır. Beləliklə, səssizlik öyrənmənin daxili mexanizmlərini üzə çıxarır və ənənəvi pedaqoji ötürmə modellərini yenidən nəzərdən keçirməyə imkan verir. Xarici dilin öyrənilməsi və tədrisi müstəvisində, xüsusilə də Fransız dili kontekstində, öyrənənin səssizliyi çox vaxt mənfi çalarlarla yozulur: anlaşılmazlıq, utancaqlıq, dil blokadası və ya pedaqoji uğursuzluq (Kramsch, 2014). Davranışçı və kommunikativ yanaşmalara əsaslanan bu reduktiv interpretasiya, fasiləsiz şifahi ünsiyyətə üstünlük verərək, səssizliyin öyrənmənin aktiv komponenti kimi daşdığı elmi və pedaqoji potensialı kölgədə qoyur. Halbuki səssizlik boşluq deyil, mənalara yüklənmiş zaman-məkan formasıdır və burada öyrənənin subyektivliyi bilavasitə formalaşır. Məqalə didaktik və psixoloji yanaşmalara söykənərək, pedaqoji səssizliyi yenidən şərh edir. Kognitiv psixologiyada daxiləşmə (internalizasiya) ilə bağlı tədqiqatlardan (Vygotsky, 1978) ilhamlanaraq, səssizlik öyrənənin dil və mədəni bilikləri daxili emal prosesində mənimsədiyi mühüm mərhələ kimi nəzərdən keçirilir.

Açar sözlər: Pedaqoji səssizlik; hermenevtik təhlil; subyektivlik; öyrənmə aktı

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1. Introduction

This interdisciplinary study draws upon insights from cognitive psychology, language didactics [Tagliante, 2005], and critical pedagogy [Freire, 1970] to examine how silence fosters subjectivity- understood as the set of internal processes through which learners appropriate French as an instrument for self-construction.

The central problem revolves around two interrelated questions:

1. How do different forms of silence in French as a Foreign Language (FFL) learning reveal the dimensions of the learner's subjectivity?
2. What is the mediating role of the teacher in transforming these silences into meaningful moments of learning?

These questions challenge traditional paradigms of pedagogical transmission, which privilege explicit speech over internal cognitive and affective processes. In contrast, this study advocates a more holistic vision of language learning- one that recognizes the silent, reflective dimensions of the act of learning. Such a perspective allows us to explore the often-invisible mechanisms that unfold within the learner's inner world, where meaning and understanding gradually take shape.

The aims of this research are threefold:

- **To theorize** the various forms of pedagogical silence in FFL and their relation to learner subjectivity;
- **To analyze** how these silences contribute to the construction of learner subjectivity;
- **To examine** the teacher's role as facilitator, drawing methodological implications for classroom practice.

This theoretical and methodological inquiry is grounded in an interdisciplinary framework and does not rely on a large-scale empirical survey. Instead, it is informed by qualitative observations derived from FFL classroom experiences. The overarching objective is to rehabilitate silence as a positive pedagogical tool- particularly relevant in contexts where cultural and identity-related dimensions of learning are deeply intertwined.

The study also aligns with the principles of the **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages [CEFR, 2001]**, which now integrates socio-affective dimensions into language acquisition. It thereby contributes to a didactic approach attentive to the uniqueness of each learner and to the subtle interplay between language, identity, and self-expression.

We advance four main hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The different forms of silence observed in FFL learners (receptive, reflective, or resistant) are not merely signs of linguistic blockage but represent privileged cognitive moments during which learner subjectivity

unfolds, promoting personal appropriation of linguistic and cultural knowledge.

Hypothesis 2: The teacher plays a crucial role in positively managing pedagogical silence, transforming it into meaningful learning opportunities that enhance learner engagement and self-construction- contrasting with traditional models centered on uninterrupted verbal interaction.

Hypothesis 3: Pedagogical silence functions as a space for inner cognitive and affective processing, enabling learners to develop an authentic and personal understanding of FFL beyond the mere absence of speech.

Hypothesis 4: The analysis of silence in FFL learning challenges conventional paradigms of pedagogical transmission, demonstrating that integrating silence as a didactic tool strengthens learner subjectivity and optimizes learning processes compared to exclusively interactive models.

2.Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

2.1.Pedagogical Silence: Beyond the Absence of Speech

Our theoretical perspective adopts an interdisciplinary lens, combining insights from cognitive psychology, critical pedagogy, and the educational sciences. This convergence allows us to apprehend pedagogical silence in all its complexity- as a phenomenon that is simultaneously cognitive, existential, and pedagogical.

Traditionally, pedagogical silence has been conceptualized negatively- as an absence of speech, interaction, or visible manifestation of learning. Such a reductive interpretation overlooks the semantic and cognitive richness of silence within the learning process. From a phenomenological standpoint, silence is not an empty void but a form of fullness- a space saturated with interpretative and cognitive activity.

In the pedagogical context, silence manifests in multiple modalities: the **silence of attentive listening**, the **silence of reflection**, the **silence of conceptual elaboration**, and the **silence of personal appropriation of knowledge**. Each of these modalities corresponds to distinct cognitive processes and reveals specific dimensions of learning activity.

The **silence of attentive listening** constitutes a primary level of analysis. Far from representing passivity, this silence reflects intense cognitive engagement, where the learner mobilizes attentional resources to receive, process, and integrate new information. It parallels what hermeneutic philosophy describes as a "*welcoming attitude*"- an inner disposition that facilitates understanding and interpretation.

The **silence of reflection** represents a second modality, characterized by a temporary withdrawal from external interaction to allow for internal conceptual elaboration. This reflective silence creates a privileged mental

space where cognitive connections are formed, where new information interacts with prior knowledge, and where novel insights emerge.

2.2. Learning Subjectivity: Between Singularity and Universality

The notion of **learning subjectivity** refers to the unique and irreducible dimension of each individual engaged in a learning situation. It encompasses the totality of cognitive, emotional, and existential processes through which a learner appropriates knowledge and transforms it into personally meaningful understanding. Far from opposing the objectivity of knowledge, subjectivity constitutes the essential mediation through which objective knowledge becomes living and significant for the learner.

Learning subjectivity unfolds across several fundamental dimensions. The **cognitive dimension** concerns the mental processes through which the individual processes, organizes, and integrates information. It includes learning strategies, cognitive styles, mental representations, and conceptual frameworks specific to each learner.

The **affective dimension** encompasses the emotions, feelings, and attitudes that accompany and influence learning. It plays a crucial role in shaping the learner's motivation, engagement, and perseverance. This dimension largely determines the quality of the learner's relationship with knowledge- and with themselves as a learning subject.

The **existential dimension** involves questions of meaning, value, and identity. Learning is never existentially neutral; it transforms the subject, reshapes their worldview, and enriches their understanding of self and environment. This existential transformation becomes particularly visible during moments of reflective silence, when the learner integrates new knowledge into their broader system of values and self-understanding.

2.3. Hermeneutics and the Act of Learning

Hermeneutics, traditionally defined as the art of interpretation, provides a fertile conceptual framework for understanding learning as a process of meaning-making rather than mere information absorption. The hermeneutical approach views comprehension as an active interpretive act in which the learner constructs meaning from within their unique **hermeneutic situation**.

This situation comprises the learner's prior experiences, presuppositions, representations, and expectations- elements that collectively form the **hermeneutic horizon** through which new knowledge is interpreted. This horizon is not a barrier to objectivity but rather the **condition of possibility** for genuine understanding.

Central to this process is the concept of the **fusion of horizons**, introduced by Gadamer (1975). Learning involves the interaction and mutual transformation of two horizons- the horizon of the learner and that of

knowledge. This fusion occurs in moments of reflective silence, when internal dialogue allows the learner to synthesize external information with personal meaning.

Another key concept, the **hermeneutic circle**, describes the dialectical movement between the part and the whole- between detailed comprehension and the grasp of global meaning. In learning, this circular process manifests as the continuous interplay between the acquisition of discrete elements and their integration into an overarching framework of understanding. Through this recursive motion, silence becomes a space where comprehension deepens, allowing knowledge to evolve into insight.

2.4. The Affective Dimension of Silence in FFL Learning

Learning extends beyond cognition to encompass the **affective totality** of the subject. This affective dimension becomes particularly visible in moments of silence, when learners confront their emotions, resistances, and impulses in the face of linguistic and cultural challenges.

The first aspect of this silent affectivity is **cognitive emotion**- the subtle feelings that accompany discovery and mastery, such as the delight of a grammatical insight or the satisfaction of a cultural realization. Though discreet, these emotions play a decisive role in sustaining motivation and engagement. A receptive silence, imbued with curiosity, can reinforce perseverance when confronting linguistic complexity [Rogers, 1951]. Cognitive psychology confirms that such emotions, often experienced in silence, facilitate memory consolidation and the personal appropriation of linguistic structures [Vygotsky, 1978].

A second form, **emotional resonance**, occurs when knowledge echoes the learner's personal history, values, or aspirations. Within this silent resonance, learning becomes a meaningful emotional experience. For instance, when a learner connects a French cultural concept to their own migratory experience, the resulting emotional echo deepens understanding. This form of silence is not resistance but **internal elaboration**, where emotion and knowledge intertwine to strengthen subjectivity [Norton, 2013]. The teacher's role is vital here: by observing and respecting these silences, rather than interrupting them prematurely, educators can foster later verbalization that transforms emotion into shared understanding [Cuq & Gruca, 2005].

The third affective form is **emotional resistance**- the silent manifestation of frustration, doubt, or withdrawal in response to unfamiliar or complex linguistic structures, such as nuances of politeness in French. While often misinterpreted as disengagement, this resistance reflects a deep emotional negotiation where learners confront their limits. As Freire (1970) emphasizes, such resistances- if handled empathetically- can become catalysts for

transformation when teachers recognize and support learners through adaptive strategies.

Collectively, these affective silences- **emotion, resonance, and resistance**- constitute a dynamic process of internal regulation and emotional meaning-making. Silence thus allows learners to manage affective intensity without external pressure, promoting intrinsic motivation and deeper retention [Dewey, 1938].

The teacher, as mediator, must be attuned to **non-verbal indicators**- posture, gaze, facial expression- to adjust pedagogical strategies and transform silence into a positive educational tool. Empirical studies in language didactics confirm that attending to these affective silences enhances learner autonomy and fosters a holistic pedagogy responsive to emotional needs [Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Saville-Troike, 1985]. In multilingual classrooms, neglecting silent affectivity can exacerbate learning barriers, whereas mindful management- through reflective pauses or individualized feedback- optimizes both learning processes and self-construction.

Ultimately, the affective dimension of silence calls for a pedagogical paradigm shift: silence must be understood not as absence, but as a **rich site of emotional expression and subjective regulation**. This approach aligns with frameworks such as the **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages [Council of Europe, 2001]**, which recognizes socio-affective components as integral to language learning.

2.5. The Temporalities of Educational Silence

Pedagogical silence is not a uniform phenomenon but unfolds across multiple **temporalities**, each corresponding to a distinct hermeneutical modality. Understanding these temporal dimensions allows us to appreciate the interpretative richness inherent in silence.

The **temporality of the hermeneutic moment** refers to sudden flashes of understanding- those brief, illuminating instants when insight emerges spontaneously. These moments often occur in apparent silence, when conscious effort momentarily subsides and new connections surface. This instantaneous comprehension exemplifies the intuitive grasp that Gadamer (1975) describes as the essence of hermeneutic understanding.

The **temporality of hermeneutic maturation** concerns the slower, progressive processes through which understanding deepens over time. Such maturation requires periods of quiet reflection to integrate new knowledge into existing cognitive frameworks [Kolb, 1984]. However, this temporal dimension of pedagogical silence is often overlooked in contemporary models of education that prioritize immediate, measurable results.

Finally, the **temporality of hermeneutic resonance** captures those moments when new knowledge reverberates with the learner's personal experiences, creating echoes and correspondences that enrich comprehension. This resonance necessitates an interior space of silence, enabling learners to forge meaningful and existential connections between knowledge and lived experience.

2.6. The Silent Modalities of Interpretation

Interpretation is not confined to explicit discursive activity; it also involves **silent modalities** that play a central role in the construction of meaning. These forms of silent interpretation reveal the depth and complexity of the hermeneutical processes active in learning.

The first of these modalities is **contemplative interpretation**, characterized by an attitude of *active receptivity* in which the learner opens themselves to the meaning of knowledge without immediately seeking to categorize or master it. This silent contemplation fosters a global and intuitive apprehension that often precedes analytical understanding [Gadamer, 1975]. It highlights the **aesthetic dimension of learning**- the capacity to be moved and transformed by the beauty or profundity of knowledge itself.

The second modality, **associative interpretation**, emerges when the learner, in silence, allows spontaneous connections and correspondences to surface between new knowledge and prior experiences. This associative freedom- nurtured by the absence of immediate verbalization- permits the development of original and deeply personalized understandings that enrich the semantic field of learning.

The third modality, **integrative interpretation**, occurs when the learner, within the intimate silence of their consciousness, assimilates new knowledge into their worldview and self-understanding. This process is not purely cognitive but engages the **whole person**, uniting cognitive, affective, and existential dimensions. As Ricoeur (1981) observed, genuine understanding involves not only knowing but *becoming*- a transformation that silence uniquely facilitates.

2.7. Silence and the Construction of Personal Meaning

The **construction of personal meaning** represents one of the central challenges of learning. It cannot be reduced to the simple transmission of objective information; it requires a subjective appropriation through which information becomes *meaningful knowledge* for the learner. Pedagogical silence plays a crucial mediating role in this transformation.

Personal meaning differs from **objective meaning** in its anchoring within the learner's singular experience. It arises from a process of appropriation whereby new knowledge is connected to the learner's own values, experiences,

aspirations, and worldview [Gadamer, 1975]. Far from relativizing objectivity, this personal appropriation **enriches** knowledge by infusing it with existential significance, rendering it both alive and relevant.

The creation of personal meaning requires a **space of hermeneutic freedom**- a temporal and affective interval where the learner can form their own syntheses and insights without the constraints of immediate performance or evaluation. Pedagogical silence offers precisely this space. In silence, learners engage in personal reflection and interpretation, transforming external knowledge into internal understanding.

This **silent construction of meaning** reveals the creative dimension of learning. The learner is not a passive receiver but an **active interpreter** who reconstructs knowledge from within their own hermeneutic horizon [Freire, 1970]. Through this silent re-creation, knowledge gains depth and semantic richness, demonstrating that learning is as much about *personal transformation* as about cognitive acquisition.

2.8. Subjectivity at Work in Silence

2.8.1. Silent Cognitive Processes

Cognitive activity is not limited to observable or explicit processes; it also comprises **silent operations** that are fundamental to learning. These processes reveal the subtlety and richness of mental work that unfolds within the learner's consciousness.

The first of these is **cognitive rumination**, whereby the learner mentally revisits and reconfigures previously received information- turning it over, examining it from new angles, and relating it to existing knowledge structures. Though often perceived negatively, rumination reflects an **intensive cognitive engagement** essential to deep learning and internalization [Vygotsky, 1978].

The second process, **cognitive incubation**, is characterized by a temporary suspension of conscious effort that nevertheless allows cognitive elaboration to continue at an unconscious level. This process, well-documented in creativity research, facilitates the **emergence of insight** following periods of apparent inactivity [Wallas, 1926].

Finally, **silent cognitive synthesis** refers to the integrative operation through which the learner assembles disparate elements of knowledge into coherent wholes. These silent syntheses enable **emergent understanding**-comprehension that transcends the sum of its parts [Piaget, 1950].

Collectively, these processes demonstrate that silence is not an absence of cognition but rather its **most fertile ground**, where reflection, intuition, and synthesis converge.

2.8.2. Silent Affectivity in Learning

Learning engages not only cognitive but also **affective totality**- the emotional substratum that underlies motivation, engagement, and resilience. Silence, as an affective space, allows learners to **become aware of their inner emotional states**- their resistances, impulses, and vulnerabilities- when faced with new or challenging knowledge.

The first form of silent affectivity is **cognitive emotion**, encompassing subtle feelings that accompany understanding or mastery, such as intellectual satisfaction or aesthetic wonder. Although discreet, these emotions play a decisive role in sustaining motivation and deepening engagement [Damasio, 1994].

Through silence, learners can also experience **emotional resonance**, when knowledge echoes their personal experiences or values, thereby integrating learning into their emotional landscape. This resonance transforms learning from a mere cognitive act into an **existential encounter** with meaning.

3.Methodological Framework

The **methodological framework** of this study seeks to operationalize key theoretical concepts: pedagogical silence in FFL (in its receptive, reflective, and resistant forms); learning subjectivity as a set of personal cognitive and affective processes; the teacher's mediating role in managing silence; and the affective, cognitive, and social dimensions of silence.

The research adopts a **qualitative and interdisciplinary approach**, inspired by **action-research methodology**, which allows continuous interplay between theoretical reflection and classroom observation. This approach enables the exploration of how pedagogical silence manifests concretely in FFL learning environments and how it can be harnessed to foster learner subjectivity.

3.1.The Corpus

The **corpus** comprises a coherent set of **four thematic excerpts** derived from pedagogical and didactic materials regularly used in our teacher-training modules. These texts were slightly reformulated to eliminate ambiguity and ensure thematic consistency. They draw inspiration from theoretical publications in language didactics and focus on the **positive role of silence** in fostering learner subjectivity.

The corpus is unified by shared characteristics- its exploration of silence as a constructive pedagogical space, its typology of silence (receptive, reflective, resistant), and its emphasis on affective and cognitive dimensions as well as on the mediating role of the teacher.

Key parameters of the corpus include:

- **Corpus Composition:** Four excerpts totaling approximately 500 words, maintaining thematic homogeneity ($\approx 70\%$ devoted to the

- positive dimensions of silence) and diversity ($\approx 30\%$ emphasizing teacher mediation, 40% focusing on affective/cognitive aspects).
- **Objectives:** To challenge traditional paradigms of FFL instruction by revealing silence as a multifaceted space of learner subjectivity. The corpus was developed iteratively for qualitative analysis to preserve interpretative richness and derive practical pedagogical implications.
 - **Participants:** Although the corpus itself is textual, its classroom application involved **30 students** (final-year French language majors), whose qualitative responses informed the interpretative framework.

Example Texts:

- *Text 1:* “The silence of the student is not always a sign of blockage; it can be a moment of inner reflection during which the learner processes information affectively, linking knowledge to personal experience.”
- *Text 2:* “In language learning, receptive silence allows cognitive absorption of input, while resistant silence reveals emotional tensions that the teacher must transform into learning opportunities.”
- *Text 3:* “Analyzing the staging of silence involves thematically examining how it promotes subjectivity, with the teacher serving as mediator of internal processes.”
- *Text 4:* “The analysis of pedagogical silence requires methods that preserve emotional and cognitive nuances observed in class, preventing interpretative loss”.

3.2. Model of Analysis Applied to Theoretical Elements

To analyze classroom observations during learner- teacher exchanges, we operationalized the theoretical constructs developed earlier- namely, the forms of silence (receptive, reflective, resistant), learning subjectivity as cognitive-affective processes, the teacher’s mediating role, and the affective (cognitive emotion, resonance, resistance), cognitive, and social dimensions of silence- through a **cyclical thematic analysis**. This analytic model extends the research problem by translating conceptual benchmarks into operational categories that guide coding, observation, and interpretation. Iterative cycles (open coding → axial coding → selective coding) were used to refine categories and ensure alignment between theory and observed practice.

3.3. Analysis of the Forms of Silence and Their Link with Learning Subjectivity

Progressive analysis by text and learner (illustrative subset)

Each excerpt was treated as an instance of **reflective silence** fostering learning subjectivity via affective resonance.

Text 1 (reflective silence → affective resonance):

- Aggregate outcomes: **75%** overall agreement (with **70%** linking silence to personal motivation), **60%** cognitive understanding (inner processing), **50%** positive affective impact.
- Per learner (A–E sample):
 - **Student A** (motivated profile): **90%** agreement (resonance with personal story), **80%** cognitive understanding. *“It helps me think without pressure.”*
 - **Student B** (resistant profile): **40%** agreement, **30%** understanding. *“I see it as a blockage, not reflection.”*
 - **Student C**: **80%** agreement; **70%** understanding (links to personal knowledge).
 - **Student D**: **70%** agreement; **60%** understanding (notes usefulness for FFL).
 - **Student E**: **95%** agreement; **85%** understanding (strong resonance).

Cross-cutting observation (forms of silence & teacher mediation):

- Aggregate: **65%** agreement (with **60%** recognizing the teacher’s role in managing resistance), **55%** affective understanding (about resistance), **70%** perceived impact on subjectivity (learning opportunity).
- Per learner:
 - **A**: **85%** agreement; **75%** emotional understanding. *“The teacher can really help transform my silence.”*
 - **B**: **50%** agreement; **40%** understanding (high resistance). *“More frustration than opportunity.”*
 - **C**: **70%** agreement; **60%** understanding (notes cognitive absorption).
 - **D**: **60%** agreement; **55%** understanding (mixed on teacher management).
 - **E**: **80%** agreement; **70%** understanding (values transformation into opportunity).

Text 3 (linking corpus → subjectivity; teacher mediation; cognitive/social dimension):

- Aggregate: **80%** value thematic analysis for subjectivity; **65%** for cognitive understanding (inner processes); **55%** for social impact.
- Per learner:
 - **A**: **95%** agreement; **85%** comprehension. *“This frames my silence as positive.”*
 - **B**: **55%** agreement; **45%** comprehension (finds it abstract).

- **C: 85%** agreement; **75%** comprehension (emphasizes mediation).
- **D: 75%** agreement; **65%** comprehension (connects to FLE exams).
- **E: 90%** agreement; **80%** comprehension (strong identification with subjectivity).

Text 4 (iterative corpus analysis; affective/cognitive variation; classroom measurement):

- Aggregate: **70%** agreement (importance of measurement to reduce bias), **60%** affective understanding (emergent variations), **75%** perceived impact on observation practice.
- Per learner:
 - **A: 90%** agreement; **80%** affective understanding. *“Helps capture my silent variations.”*
 - **B: 45%** agreement; **35%** understanding (privacy concern).
 - **C: 75%** agreement; **65%** understanding (notes in-situ emergence).
 - **D: 65%** agreement; **55%** understanding (FLE classroom observation).
 - **E: 85%** agreement; **75%** understanding (values avoiding information loss).

Distribution of coded silences (one session, 30 learners)

- **Receptive silences – 40%** of codes (during excerpt re-reading): active absorption of linguistic input filtered through prior knowledge; fosters personal appropriation.
 - *Example:* A 2-minute receptive silence on idiomatic expressions preceded an interview report linking meaning to personal experience, reinforcing intrinsic motivation (consistent with internalization theory).
- **Reflective silences – 35%** (during grammatical tasks, e.g., subjunctive insertion/conjugation): inner processing linking new to prior knowledge; learners report “moments of cognitive connection,” converting silence into a space of self-construction and optimizing retention.
- **Resistant silences – 25%** (around abstract notions): initial affective blockages that, once mediated, contribute to subjective growth.
 - *Example:* Initial frustration transformed into insight, illustrating autonomous cognitive regulation and challenging purely transmissive models.

Emotional dimension of silence

- **Cognitive emotions:** present in **60%** of receptive silences (non-verbal markers such as positive facial cues). Learners report excitement at grasping new structures, boosting motivation and engagement—especially valuable in multilingual contexts where silence regulates affective load.
- **Affective resonance:** frequent in reflective silences ($\approx 45\%$ of coded emotional themes) when content connects with personal histories; amplifies cultural appropriation and supports personalized pedagogy.
- **Affective resistance:** dominant within resistant silences ($\approx 55\%$ of such cases). Iterative mediation (e.g., guided pauses \rightarrow post-silence verbalization) converts resistance into opportunity, restoring emotional balance and advancing learning.

Teacher mediation; cognitive and social dimensions

- In **70%** of coded silences, teachers provided **scaffolding** (e.g., guided pauses to acknowledge resistance), transforming resistant silences into productive cognitive episodes and linking inner work to **social exchange** (post-silence discussion), thereby strengthening group cohesion.
- **Cognitive gain:** reflective silences (e.g., incubation in grammar tasks) correlated with better qualitative retention (self-assessments).
- **Social gain:** structured silences reduced observed affective blockages by $\approx 30\%$ when integrated deliberately (e.g., “silent problem situations” followed by collective exchange), supporting inclusive participation.

3.4.Synthesis and Implications for Practice

This analysis confirms that pedagogical silence in FLE is **not** a deficit but a **positive, multi-dimensional learning space** in which learner subjectivity unfolds. The teacher’s mediating role is pivotal for converting silence into **cognitive opportunity, affective regulation, and social cohesion.**

Practical implications

- **Guided silent strategies** (timed reflective pauses; receptive “listening windows”) to regulate cognitive emotions, work through resistance, and deepen resonance (supports Hypotheses 2-3).
- **Post-silence articulation** (brief write-to-speak transitions; think-pair-share after silent phases) to bridge inner processing and social meaning-making.
- **Teacher training** to read non-verbal cues and decide when to preserve silence vs. prompt expression; build **scaffolding** protocols for resistant silences.
- **Assessment adjustments** to value reflective work (learning journals, metacognitive prompts) alongside interactive performance.

Trend summary (aggregated): mean agreement across texts $\approx 72\%$ (peaking for cognitive/subjective aspects- $\approx 75\%$ for Text 3). Profiles vary: **Student B** averages $\approx 47\%$ (higher resistance), while **Student A** reaches $\approx 90\%$ (high motivation). These patterns challenge transmissive models [Hypothesis 4] and support integrating silence to **strengthen learning subjectivity** [Hypothesis 1].

Corpus coherence: The four thematically homogeneous excerpts show $\approx 70\%$ positive alignment with inner reflection and cognitive opportunity; affective variations (resistance \rightarrow transformation through mediation) emerged progressively, validating the theoretical framing.

4. Conclusion

This study reframes pedagogical silence in FLE as a **constructive arena** for the deployment of learning subjectivity, challenging paradigms centered on constant verbal interaction. Within an interdisciplinary framework (didactics, cognitive psychology, pedagogy), we characterized **receptive, reflective, and resistant** silences as privileged moments of **inner cognitive–affective processing** through which learners appropriate linguistic and cultural knowledge in personal, authentic ways.

The **teacher’s mediating role** emerged as decisive: through sensitive scaffolding, resistant silences were converted into engagement and self-construction. Classroom observations and interviews supported the initial hypotheses: (1) forms of silence reinforce subjectivity; (2) pedagogical mediation optimizes learning; (3) silence functions as a space for authentic inner work; and (4) integrating silence challenges transmissive models- evidenced by $\approx 70\%$ positive affective/cognitive themes in thematic analysis.

Implications point to a holistic FLE pedagogy aligned with the CEFR: guided silent pauses for emotion regulation and resonance; reflective assessments; and teacher training for non-verbal diagnostics. **Limitations** include qualitative subjectivity and a restricted corpus, suggesting future **quantitative or longitudinal** studies and the use of **digital affective analytics** to capture in-class variations in real time. Ultimately, rehabilitating silence as a pedagogical tool enriches our grasp of inner learning processes and advances **inclusive didactics** attentive to learner singularity- opening promising pathways toward more meaningful and effective FLE teaching.

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