

Habitus Transformation among French Teachers: A Bourdieusian Study

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the process of habitus change among French language teachers employed in CBSE schools in India, with a particular focus on Rajasthan. Depicting on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus, field, and capital, the study leads past static notions of identity to explore how dispositions are gradually reshaped through everyday social exchanges and cultural encounters. Using qualitative interview statistics, the analysis focusses key stages in the transformation process, incorporating break from primary habitus, hysteresis, reflexive engagement, and partial equilibrium through symbolic capital. The findings demonstrate that habitus transformation is neither straight nor complete but context-dependent and negotiated. This study contributes to sociolinguistic and educational research by foregrounding procedure-oriented habitus switch in foreign language teaching contexts. This paper examines how French teachers in Rajasthan feel and navigate habitus transformation through their career trails

Keywords: Habitus Transformation, Pierre Bourdieu, French Language Teachers, Cultural Capital, Foreign Language Education.

INTRODUCTION:

Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus has been preparatory in comprehending how social configurations are assumed and replicated through daily habits (Bourdieu, 1977). Yet the query of whether and how habitus can transform, remains a central argument within Bourdieusian scholarship. Reviewers have often blamed the concept of determinism, suggesting that habitus greatly constrains agency (Jenkins, 2002). Nevertheless, Bourdieu himself repeatedly stressed that habitus is permanent but not fixed, particularly when individuals meet new social fields that demand complementary outlooks (Bourdieu, 1990).

Foreign language teachers compose a specifically relevant cluster for investigating habitus transformation, as their career-oriented lives require constant mediation between linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical norms. In the Indian context, French language teachers function at the joining of local scholastic traditions and a globally legitimized linguistic discipline. This study investigates the practices in which French teachers in Rajasthan endure and handle variations in their habitus over the passage of their professional journeys.

Rather than aiming on identity consequences, this study focuses process: how habitus is formed, disrupted, and reconfigured over time. By doing so, it associates intently with Bourdieu's relational sociology and reacts to recent calls for more active applications of habitus principle in training.

1. Literature Review

Pierre Bourdieu's models of habitus, field, and capital supply a strong background for recognizing identity creation and social practice (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Habitus refers to durable, yet adjustable outlooks shaped by early socialization, which monitor views, behaviours, and perceptions while staying responsive to changing communal settings. Exposure to new cultural fields often causes hysteresis, an inequality between innate outlooks and novel expectations, producing tension and creating prospects for transformation (Bourdieu, 2000).

In language education, teachers' personal and professional identities advance among repetitive commitment with inexperienced ethnic systems (Kinging, 2004; Pavlenko, 2007). Practice, reflexivity, and symbolic capital are critical devices of transformation: normal interactions, informal social exchanges, and cultural involvement allow new outlooks to become personified, while automatic consciousness allows educators to enquire inherited norms, hierarchies, and language ideologies (Calderhead & Shorrocks, 1997; Norton, 2013). Acknowledgement and involvement in cultural behaviours offers symbolic capital, validating new manners and strengthening confidence (Bourdieu, 1986; Heller, 2003).

Habitus transformation is context-dependent, partial, and non-linear, with personalities transferring between old and new outlooks depending on common locations (Duff, 2012; Kinginger, 2013). This work spreads current allowance by investigative individual habitus transformation among French teachers in Rajasthan,

accenting how social experience, reflexivity, and communal endorsement shape everyday behaviours and identity outside professional instruction settings.

2. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Habitus, Field, and Capital

Habitus implies to an approach of enduring and identical outlooks that guide perception, thought, and action (Bourdieu, 1977). These dispositions are generated through socialization and are shaped by personalities locations within social fields. A field, in Bourdieusian terms, is a constituted social place headed by its own rules, values, and forms of capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

Capital in its economic, cultural, social, and symbolic forms shows a key position in steadying habitus. In learning backgrounds, cultural and symbolic capital often reveal authenticity and authority (Bourdieu, 1986). Habitus transformation occurs when formerly learned dispositions are judged partly incapable within a new field, creating a need for adjustment.

3.2 Habitus Transformation and Hysteresis

Bourdieu established the theory of hysteresis to explain the delay relating habitus and changing field environments (Bourdieu, 2000). When individuals enter a new field, their existing outlooks may no longer align with leading opportunities. This difference generates pressure and releases a space out for alteration. Significantly, habitus does not modify suddenly but through constant exercise and expressed discovering.

Individuals regularly waver concerning previous and developing outlooks, undergoing flashes of hesitation, overcorrection, or symbolic insecurity. It is specifically within this region of distress that the possibility of habitus transformation appears. Through constant experience to the new field, continued rehearsal, and embodied engagement, actors gradually recalibrate their dispositions. Over time, what initially involved determined effort becomes assumed, allowing new practices to look expected and obviously manifested. Thus, habitus transformation is not a break but a collective process, unfolding through practice, reflexivity, and the continuing integration of field-specific logics.

3. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretive research design grounded in Bourdieusian sociology. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten French language teachers working in CBSE-affiliated schools in Rajasthan.

4.2 Participants

Participants had teaching experience ranging from 3 to 15 years. All had completed formal training in French language pedagogy and were actively involved in classroom teaching, curriculum planning, and extracurricular cultural activities. The participants' ages ranged from 25 to 40, with an average age of 34. Eight teachers were female and two were male.

4.3 Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews comprising six guiding questions. Each interview lasted between 15 and 25 minutes and was audio-recorded in its entirety. The recorded data were subsequently transcribed and systematically analyzed in order to address the research questions. Individual interviews were conducted with all participants to gain in-depth insights into their personal and professional experiences.

4.4 Data Analysis and Coding

Data were analysed using thematic coding, guided by Bourdieusian concepts.

Core Codes Identified:

- a. Primary Habitus
- b. Field Disruption
- c. Hysteresis
- d. Embodied Pedagogical Change
- e. Reflexive Awareness
- f. Capital Recognition
- g. Contextual Switching

4. Findings and Analysis

5.1 Primary Habitus and Early Dispositions

“How did your early family, school, and community experiences influence your tendency to speak, remain silent, or question authority in your everyday life?”

The statements of 10 French language experts showed that their initial outlooks in day-to-day life were formed by their family upbringing, education, local schooling, and the kind of community norms they had learned, for example, hierarchy, restraint, and conformity. Most participants explained that their childhood environments had impacted them where the elders were rarely questioned and the sentimental and emotional expression had a limited approach. As one participant noted, *“At home and in society, we were taught to listen more than to speak openly”* (Participant 3). These initial observations structured and shaped their social engagements, their interpersonal communication styles, and their overall self-presentation. In the course of time, the openness and the exposure to new cultural and traditional contexts created the subtle tensions and changes with these imbibed habits, initially initiating a slow and a gradual personal transformation beyond their official roles and responsibilities.

5.2 Entry into the French Cultural Field and Hysteresis

“Can you describe moments when French social norms made you feel uncomfortable or hesitant to express yourself, and how you responded to that discomfort in your personal life?”

For these total 10 participants, the entrance into French cultural and social field created some observable hysteresis in their own lives. Exposure to French social orders and modes of instruction and daily cultural practices generated a mismatch with their inherited outlooks. Many teachers said that they felt some discomfort and non-formal experience, an open disagreement, and relaxed social hierarchies. One participant shared, *“I felt awkward speaking freely or expressing opinions; silence felt safer to me”* (Participant 6). These personal experiences generated feelings of

uneasiness and self-doubt, showing that there was a mismatch between the deeply ingrained thoughts and the new set up. Thus, the social habits and the freshly observed aspects, represented new cultural expectations, thereby creating a space for slow personal change.

5.3 Practice, Repetition, and Embodiment

“How did repeated everyday interactions gradually change the way you speak, act, or feel in social situations?”

With the span of time, repetitive interaction on a daily basis with a French influence on the social and cultural context, facilitated the personalized changes among these 10 participants. With the process of daily interactions such as informal conversations, travelling experiences, and other behaviours and social exchanges that initially was considered as something unknown, unfamiliar, had started to sink in and became quite natural. Many teachers described transforming themselves into more spontaneous, comfortable, with a bit of uncertainty in some social situations. As one participant noted, *“Earlier I used to think before every word; now conversations flow more naturally”* (Participant 1). This change shows that the habitus change occurred through a non-stop bodily involvement at the everyday life level rather than a purposeful copying, reinforcing Bourdieu's view of habitus as a gradually reformed through practice.

5.4 Reflexivity and Critical Distance

“Did exposure to French culture make you question previously unquestioned social or linguistic hierarchies in your everyday life? If so, how?”

All the 10 participants informed to have experienced an increased reflectivity and a critical distance that had developed in their personal lives, shaped and transformed by the exposure to French society and culture through its practices. They started to question deeply rooted assumptions about language, society, its norms, hierarchy in everyday interactions. One participant reflected, *“I started questioning why English or French is considered superior, and why we follow certain unspoken rules”* (Participant 8). This increased awareness made it possible for them to reconsider about their habits and to question the inherited expectations at social level and to negotiate some new different ways of thinking and acting. Their reflexive involvement helped the conscious personal development beyond the professional or the official contexts, highlighting the transformative strength of cultural integration and exposure.

5.5 Capital Accumulation and Stabilization

“How did recognition through cultural or social experiences outside the classroom influence your confidence and the way you interact in everyday life?”

All the ten teachers expressed their personal experiences and acknowledgement in non-professional setup. Achievements such as finishing the cultural tasks, participating in workshops, or taking part in community programs related to languages and social events augmented their self-confidence and sense of pride. One participant noted, *“After attending a cultural immersion program, my confidence in social situations completely changed”* (Participant 4). New thought to communication,

interpersonal involvement, and adaptation to the culture, to a new culture. With the passage of time, these reinforced experiences led to the stabilization of individual and personal habitual transformation, allowing participants to personify new outlooks naturally in day-to-day life basis beyond their professional commitments.

5.6 Partial and Contextual Nature of Transformation
“How do different social contexts influence when you maintain inherited dispositions or adopt new ones?”

All the participants informed that there was a personal level change that was partial and context related. While many of them had taken up new outlooks through exposure to the culture and societal changes adopted through French, they reported switching between different behaviours as per the social situations. For instance, one participant shared, *“At family gatherings, I follow traditional norms, but with friends from diverse backgrounds, I behave more freely”* (Participant 9). Others also noted that the previous and the old habits, they were still instilled in their familiar or hierarchical environment. These new practices emerged as informal intercultural settings, and these accounts confirm that habitus transformation is situational, nuanced, and is non-linear that shows that there is an ongoing process of agreement and negotiation between the inherited outlooks and the evolving personal experiences, which are outside their professional duties.

5. Discussion: Habitus Transformation among French Teachers

The conclusion of this whole study reflects that the personal habitus of French teachers experiences continuous and manifold change when it is exposed to new cultural parameters and perspectives. The early dispositions are shaped by local schooling, family, community, hierarchy, restraint, compliance. And the other parameters, for example, the social behaviour and the interaction patterns that take place in a structured manner. The entry and the presence into the French cultural field generates visible hysteresis, as the French teachers who participated in this study practiced attention between basic habits and the norms of informality, quality, and openness.

The passage of time, repeated daily interactions through social exchanges, traveling, conversations, and other interpersonal interactions enabled the embodied change, allowing the teachers to become more expressive, relaxed, and spontaneous with a specific range of uncertainty in their personal settings. At the same time, the reflexivity and the distance of critical approach emerged as the key factors for the personal change and transformation, prompting these French teachers to question the already set assumptions about language prestige, social norms, and hierarchy.

The symbolic validation through the community participation, social recognition, and cultural experiences was further stabilized by these changes, strengthening the confidence and new modes of interaction. Importantly, the transformation lasted for a partial way, and it was context dependent. The French teachers, they selectively enacted in the new dispositions and settings depending on the social environments, balancing the conventional

behaviours, and they were more adaptable in their intercultural practices elsewhere. This confirms the Pierre Bourdieu's view of considering that habitus as a durable, yet adaptable and is shaped through constant reflexivity, social reinforcement, and commitment, which are beyond the personal domains.

6. Conclusion

This whole study proves that the transformation of habitus among the French teachers in French. The investigation in this study proves that the transformation of habitus in the French language teachers is a gradual process and is dependent on the context, stretching outside their professional domain and enters to their personal domain. The initial transformations or the ideas that are shaped by

schooling and family, community norms, they all act as the primary habitus, which is weakened and relaxed, to integrate the new cultural and linguistic environments, generating the moments of hysteresis. And the irregular and the persistent encounter with these new contexts leads to the transformations which are represented in the cultural, social, and expressive behaviours. The findings also put into highlight that the role of reflexivity and symbolic capital are important in developing outlooks. The overall study contributes to the Bourdieusian scholarship by exhibiting that habitus is a dynamic negotiated and reformed process through the social practice and experience of culture.

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