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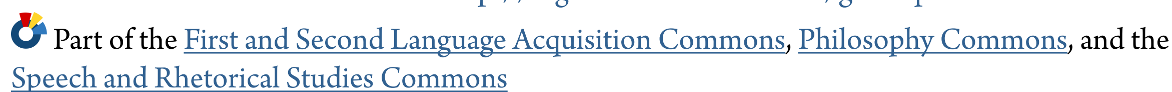
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Fostering Effective French Communication in the Classroom

by

Lindi Brown

A portfolio submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

Approved:

________________________________	________________________________
Dr. Sarah Gordon Major Professor	Dr. Karin de Jonge-Kannan Committee Member
________________________________	________________________________
Dr. John Lackstrom Committee Member	Dr. Bradford J. Hall Department Head

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

Logan, Utah

2011

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ABSTRACT

Fostering Effective French Communication in the Classroom

by

Lindi Brown, Master of Second Language Teaching

Utah State University, 2011

Major Professor: Dr. Sarah Gordon

Department: Languages, Philosophy, and Speech Communication

This portfolio is a compilation of work the author completed while in the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program at Utah State University. It is focused on her beliefs of how French should be taught in a university classroom. It also includes three artifacts addressing how a challenging aspect of the language should be taught, how authentic literature can be utilized in the classroom, and why the French culture should be incorporated into the curriculum. Finally, there is an annotated bibliography of books and articles which have shaped the author's beliefs and opinions about teaching French as a foreign language.

[127 pages]

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank first and foremost Dr. Karin de Jonge-Kannan for her time, effort, and energy. She has been the conductor that organized these instruments into a symphony. Next, I would like to thank Dr. Sarah Gordon and Dr. John Lackstrom, true academics. Their input was greatly appreciated.

Thanks to Jesse who kept me laughing, Kathy who was my support and friend, and Liz whose heart is as French as mine. Without these three people, I may not have been able to finish.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT iii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS iv

INTRODUCTION TO THE TEACHING PHILOSOPHY 1

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY 2

Apprenticeship of Observation 3

Professional Environment 7

Personal Teaching Philosophy 8

ARTIFACTS

Past Tense in French as a Second Language 22

Authentic Literature versus Simplified Literature in the Classroom 41

The Worldwide Effect of French Language and Culture 60

ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION OF TEACHING VIDEO 81

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY 84

LOOKING FORWARD 112

REFERENCES 114

INTRODUCTION

This portfolio is my reaction what I learned while in the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program. While in the program, I read many articles and books. I found that there were various theories on second language acquisition and how to teach a second language. This portfolio is a collection of my views of effective language teaching. Since there is no one standard way to teach a second language, this portfolio is simply how I teach.

To demonstrate how I believe French should be taught, my portfolio themes are: effective French teaching, introducing literature into the classroom, the building awareness of French culture, and how to teach the past tense in French as a more specific example.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Apprenticeship of Observation

I have heard it said that English is the language one uses for business, French is the language one uses for love, and Spanish is the language one uses to speak to God. My favorite thing about this maxim is that it shows how several languages can serve different purposes in a single society or a single person.

I started learning French during my first year of college. Having grown up in an isolated valley, I had never had the opportunity to hear French spoken before my first class. However, once I began forming the phrases, I felt that I would never be satiated. I began to drink in the language, absorbing it like a sponge, always feeling there was more to be learned. However, I didn't have many opportunities to use my newfound knowledge.

During my undergraduate education at Utah State University, I made a goal to find a use for my French. I knew that it was such an important part of my life that I wanted to spark that interest in others. As luck would have it, the chance fell right into my lap. While sitting in Advanced French Conversation one day, a small green sheet of paper began circulating throughout the class. When it got to my desk, I couldn't believe my good fortune. The green paper had an advertisement for English assistants in France. The job, though I didn't fully know it at the time, was to be a junior English teacher at a lycée, or high school, in France. I immediately felt I had an obligation to try this assistantship out. After being accepted into the program, I was whisked away to Grasse, France.

Upon arriving in France, I learned that my French was not where I wanted it to be. I was frequently frustrated by my lack of fluency. I realized that, in so many ways, it was easier not to say anything than to try and explain what I was thinking. When I would get in front of my students, I would explain a concept in English. However, my students would roll their eyes and state that they couldn't understand my American accent. In an effort to meet my students half way, I began to give explanations of a grammar point in French. I would still require them to respond in English, and I would force them to listen to me speaking my native tongue, but I would help them understand how the English language worked by getting on their level. I believe this approach had several effects.

First, I was able to improve my French. Being required to give presentations daily in French made me less nervous to speak. Not only that, but it forced me to learn a wide array of new vocabulary words. It required me to think on my feet and taught me that languages aren't always straightforward. But mostly, it made me comfortable again. It allowed me to open up my mind for the possibility of learning new things.

Second, it taught me patience. I have always considered myself patient with everyone else besides myself. In France, I would get so frustrated with my lack of fluency that I would just give up. Being in front of a class, I couldn't just quit talking and sit down. I had to learn to calm down, take things one at a time, and just patiently try again.

Third, and maybe most important, I learned that I could learn from my students. We were in a situation where, in order to understand one another, we had to develop a mutual understanding and a desire to learn. I began to see that the teacher doesn't always have to have all of the answers. The students would ask me questions that weren't always easy to answer. I had to have the humility to tell them that I didn't know, but that I would find out. In seeing that I didn't know everything all the time, the students developed the idea that, if they didn't know the answer, it was ok to take some time to think about it. It lowered their anxiety and contributed to an environment that was conducive to learning.

After enriching my own knowledge of the French language, the people, and the culture, I returned home. I continued learning French. I also noticed a marked difference in the way I attended classes. I had come to realize that I would love to teach French. I hungrily watched the professors in all of my French classes. I began to see the reasons behind some of the activities that I was required to do. They were no longer boring, mindless busy work, but they developed instead into a chance to grow.

My professors, though entirely different in their teaching methods, had several characteristics in common. They loved their subject. They wanted to share their knowledge with their classes. They may have had different approaches to doing this, but each activity that they required had a strong foothold in at least one of the Five Cs. I could clearly see that, though they had mastered the French language, they created a

classroom environment free of condescension and full of respect. I learned that they wanted the best for their students and would make a sincere effort to see us succeed.

After having spent invaluable amounts of time evaluating my former professors, I have formed an idea of what I believe I would like my French students to learn. I would like them not only to learn the beautiful French language, also to develop a desire to integrate it into their lives. My goal is to foster an environment where they not only learn the building blocks of the French language, but develop a real desire to get to know the culture, utilize French in everyday situations, and share their knowledge with others. I hope to create a craving for French in such a way that my students themselves become sponges like I have.

Professional Environment

Knowing that I want to be French instructor, I would prefer to teach in a setting where French would be the spoken language in the classroom. That being the case, I decided upon teaching at a college level. Therefore, this portfolio is geared towards teaching French on a college level.

Personal Teaching Philosophy

Doing research to develop my idea of what constitutes an effective French language teacher, I read a statement in *How Languages are Learned* (Lightbown & Spada, 1999): “Second language learning is not simply a process of putting second-language words into first-language sentences” (p. 165). While this is obvious to fluent speakers of more than one language, it is not a realization at which beginners have arrived yet. Though I love many things about the French language, the opportunity to instill a love for the language in others is one of my favorites. Teaching, for me, is a way to share my enjoyment of the language with students who are developing the same enjoyment.

I believe in balance in all things. If the students in my classroom are to become proficient in French, they need the opportunity to practice the language through reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Since instructors only have control of the language learning that occurs in the classroom, it is our duty to ensure that the classroom experience is enjoyable, tailored to the ability level of the students, interesting and challenging, dynamic and engaging, and supportive (Lightbown & Spada, 1999). I believe that this can be achieved with an effective instructor.

There may not be one specific type of persona that can be used as the paradigm of the effective language instructor. Instead, an effective language instructor is the sum of many individual parts, and these parts may vary. It has been stated that the main role of the instructor is threefold – modeling, task presentation, and feedback (Dörnyei,

1994). However, I would like to expand that definition by stating that effective language instructors have an in-depth knowledge of the language they are teaching for modeling purposes, provide helpful feedback, know their students, create a dynamic classroom catering to all learners' needs, require student-centered group work, and are continually learning.

Knowledge of the Language

The most important factor in becoming an effective French educator is undoubtedly the instructor's knowledge of the French language and francophone cultures. If instructors have only a slightly better understanding of the subject than their students, they do not react well to unpredictable questions (Beishuizen, Hof, van Putten, Bouwmeester, & Asscher, 2001; Brosh, 1996). It is difficult for instructors to model the language if they do not have extensive knowledge of the subject. Reagan and Osborn (2002) support this claim by saying

> Clearly one must know a subject in order to teach it effectively. In the context of foreign language education, this means that the foreign language teacher should have achieved a high degree of competence in the target language. This would seem to be axiomatic. (p. 18)

Helterbran (2008) asserts that, "students expect professors to be deeply knowledgeable and have the ability to teach [the language] to them in a meaningful, engaging manner" (p. 130). If speaking the target language in the classroom is hindering the instructor due to lack of familiarity, proper modeling is impossible.

Modeling enables the instructor to make grammar salient without using metalanguage. It is also an opportunity to present structured input for students. In French, as with any language, the students must memorize new vocabulary, grammar, idiomatic phrases, and cultural information in order to become proficient. Repetition and structured input can make memorization easier. Additionally, it will make the use of the language easier, and therefore communication. If students hear structured input and vocabulary recycling repeated on a daily basis, it will help them develop the necessary skills to become proficient users of the language.

Modeling also enables the instructor to implicitly teach the grammar associated with reading, writing, listening, and speaking. While I believe in a balance of implicit and explicit grammar, there are times when explaining rules will detract from how the language functions. If students are required to learn a set of rules in addition to the new vocabulary, they may have cognitive overload. Spada and Lightbown (2008) suggest that "*hard* rules are by their very nature too complex to be successfully taught in isolated instruction and thus are difficult to learn through traditional explanation and practice pedagogy that is isolated from communicative use of the language" (p. 198). Through instructor modeling, the students hear structured input that they can then try to produce without memorizing incomprehensible metalanguage such as *gerund* or *direct object complement*.

Feedback

In addition to target language proficiency and proper modeling, students also look to their French instructor for effective feedback. When they attempt to produce the language, the students seek feedback from a superior language user, which in most cases is the instructor. Students have an innate desire to perform well in school to satisfy their superiors, which can include parents and instructors (Dörnyei, 1994). If students feel an attachment to those who have influence over them in the classroom, they are more likely to have a higher motivation in the classroom. This desire to perform well is directly related to instructor feedback (Dörnyei, 1994). Effective language instructors are aware of the feedback they give and make an effort to ensure that feedback is timely and meaningful.

I believe that feedback is necessary from both the point of view of instructors and the point of view of students. While sometimes modeling is appropriate, other times direct feedback is more effective. Either way, according to Herron and Tomasello (1988), students should be encouraged to produce new grammatical structures as quickly as possible. Moreover, Herron and Tomasello state that the errors should be corrected immediately to prevent fossilization. These authors also point out that, in their study to compare modeling versus feedback, the students who learned grammatical structures were more passive and struggled to fully grasp the concept. This docility exhibited by the students takes away the opportunity for students to notice relevant features of the language.

It is important that instructors give students ample opportunity to notice how the language functions. However, we need to be careful in the terminology that we use to provide feedback and to draw student's attention to the language. If instructors are not careful, they may cause more harm than good. For example, the distinction between the *passé composé* and the *imparfait* in French can cause confusion for students. If instructors fall back on English translations during their feedback, they try to fit French phrases into English terms (Dansereau, 1987). This does not work and creates confusion for the students, in addition to requiring them to memorize additional rules. In this case, the feedback from the instructor would be detrimental. Instead, if instructors are careful with their examples and their feedback, students can find standard examples that they can refer back to in the future.

Being cautious of what words they are using to give feedback, instructors can then decide which type of feedback to give to the students. Lightbown and Spada (1999) list various types of feedback including recasts, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, and repetition as examples (pp. 104-105). In keeping with my belief that there should be balance in all things, I use all of these in my classroom.

Since students rarely form the exact same sentences, the feedback can never be exactly the same from instructors. Some students will respond better if their incorrect sentence is reformulated and spoken back to them in the form of a recast than if they are told explicitly that they are incorrect. Some students react better if the conversation

is more like a game of charades in which both persons try to use circumlocution around the unfamiliar grammatical concept by asking for clarifications. Personally, I remember things more accurately if I am corrected directly and explicitly. All students seem to respond well to repetition. It has been my experience that certain students like to use metalinguistic correction as a type of word game, not unlike a math puzzle. In any case, it is clear that students will respond differently according to their personality type and the type of error they have made.

No matter what type of feedback is provided, instructors should always keep in mind the end goal. They need to focus on what they are trying to get the students to accomplish. The goal of my feedback is to ensure that the students "get it right in the end" (Lightbown & Spada, 1999, p. 141) and that my feedback does not distract them from the activity at hand.

Knowledge of Students

One of the major roles of an instructor is to be able to assess the language capacity of the students. The assessments may change, and are by no means meant to discriminate between "good" language learners and "bad" language learners. Instead, assessments help instructors determine what level of material the students are prepared to learn. It is the instructor's responsibility to get to know the students.

An instructor who knows the students can better anticipate the needs of the students, is more understanding, more likely to be fair, and attempts to minimize the

discomfort of the students (Beishuizen, Hof, van Putten, Bouwmeester, & Asscher, 2001; Helm, 2006; Mageehon, 2006). An instructor who is aware of student challenges is more willing to remain after class to provide additional explanation and support (Brosh, 1996). Additionally, the instructor who knows students well can tailor activities to the students' interests, increasing motivation in the classroom (Dörnyei, 1994). Lesson plans that cater to all learning styles (Arnold & Fonesca, 2004) ensure that a wider variety of students can learn the foreign language. In personalized instruction, if instructors refer to what is going on in the lives of the students, the students feel more at ease, are more willing to perform for the instructor, and will have a better rate of retention. Moreover, this allows the instructor to plan and organize lessons around the students.

The organization behavior of instructors is a large indicator of their efficacy. According to Dörnyei (2003), students prefer to have "varied and changing activities" (p. 281) which will stimulate their intellectual growth. Most students do not become proficient through, nor are they motivated by, long grammar explanations that don't allow them to utilize their knowledge. An organized instructor prepares well thought out lessons that follow a logical order, and that build on and expand the students' current knowledge. Brosh (1996) supports this idea by stating that "the effective instructor not only teaches the subject matter logically and well but also actively assists […] students to sort out and arrange the various items of learning in order of priority and significance" (p. 132). If instructors create a lesson plan that allows ample time and

attention to important grammatical concepts, they help students to know where to focus their attention.

> Interviews with teachers and students have shown that thorough knowledge of the subject matter ensures that the teacher can devote most of his or her mental energies to organizing the material in such a way that the students will not only understand it but also be stimulated and motivated to continue studying it. (Brosh, 1996, p. 131)

Instructors who are well-organized are better able to cope with the demands on their time (Beishuizen, Hof, van Putten, Bouwmeester, & Asscher, 2001; Sears, Kennedy, & Kaye, 2001), including lesson planning, examples thought up on the spot, corrective feedback, and classroom time management.

Creating a Dynamic Classroom

The best indicator of whether instructors know their students is by how their classrooms function, or how well they can “create conditions conducive to pedagogy” (Freire, 2005, p. 8). While creating activities meant to aid in acquisition of the language, the instructor must take into account different intelligences. Each personality type prefers distinct activities in the language classroom. Such activities include: classroom discussions, working with another student, lab work, observation, sharing personal experiences, pair work, hands-on activities, watching films, assignments that allow students to be creative and imaginative, activities that include feedback, and activities that force students to use decision-making and problem-solving skills (Cooper, 2001). Gardner’s theory of Multiple Intelligences supports varying instruction to include all learners, not just those who have a language aptitude (Arnold & Fonesca, 2004). Moreover, Shrum and Glissan (2010) assert that a focus on “multiple intelligences can

enable [instructors] to understand how certain learners might more easily grasp a linguistic concept "(p. 351). Instructors should choose activities that cater to multiple learning styles (Cooper, 2001) in order to facilitate language learning.

As stated by Cooper (2001), "teachers generally prefer to teach in a way that satisfies their own way of learning" (p. 304). In this study, Cooper established that extroverted instructors prefer class discussions and allow students to share their opinions, personal experiences, and events because it creates student "opportunities to think out loud to clarify and develop their own ideas and thoughts" (p. 304). Conversely, Cooper states that introverts prefer to let students work alone or in small groups and have the students do more writing assignments than oral presentations.

Whether an instructor is introverted or extroverted should not determine classroom activities. Instructors should be aware of their own personality type so that they may force themselves to create lesson plans that cater to all students (Shrum & Glisan, 2010), not just lesson plans that are within their teaching style. Lightbown and Spada (1999) support this assertion stating that there is a "high level of student and teacher satisfaction when students [are] matched with compatible teaching environments" (p. 54). They also claim that "lessons which always consist of the same routines, patterns, and formats have shown to lead to a decrease in attention and an increase in boredom" (p. 57) and that "varying the activities, tasks, and materials can help to avoid this" (p. 57). Instructors can vary their activities in the classroom not only to keep the attention of the students, but also to ensure that all learning types are

reached. If there is no variation in the teaching style, some learning styles are likely not met. If instructors refuse to adapt their teaching style to match more of Gardner's intelligences, classroom learning is likely to be hampered by a mismatch of teaching and learning (Zhang, 2006), causing students to "think twice about continuing [their] learning" (Comanaru & Noels, 2009, p. 150). This is why tailoring activities in the classroom is important for an introvert such as myself because a variation in style would cater to the extroverts in my classroom.

According to Sparks (2006), it is not necessarily beneficial for the instructor to simply teach to the learner's favored style. As learners do not always know what is most advantageous to them, it is up to the instructor to guarantee a dynamic classroom environment that provides a variety of learning styles. Repeating the same types of activities for each lesson may only cater to one individual learning style. Thus, if any of the students' individual personalities do not match that of the instructor, there could be possible implications, such as students feeling forced to do an unappealing activity (Brosh, 1996). If the students do not like the teacher, because of the teacher's personality and/or teaching style, the students most likely will not enjoy the classroom activity and/or the approach (Brosh, 1996; Helterbran, 2008). It follows then, that a mismatch in teaching style and student learning style can create a negative classroom experience.

If the students feel that they are having a negative classroom experience, they could begin to question a teacher's content knowledge. This may occur if the students

feel that they are not learning enough or if classroom activities do not cater to their learning style (Helterbran, 2008). According to Brosch (1996) and Helterbran (2008), this may indicate any of the following: there is insufficient communication between students and the instructor, students do not like how the instructor is presenting information, the instructor relies too much on the textbook, or the instructor does not get to know her students. All of these reasons can cause students to react negatively to activities in the classroom (Brosh, 1996; Helterbran, 2008).

Since the goal of my teaching is to create a positive classroom experience for my students, I must constantly be aware of what my lessons are communicating. However, I also want to foster the social aspect of learning French. The best way to do this is to have the students work in small groups where they will have the opportunity to speak and to practice the unfamiliar sounds of the language.

Group Work

I believe that the best way to retain information is to use it frequently. Since my classroom should be student-centered, I attempt to create activities in which the students are using the language and I, the instructor, walk around to provide assistance and feedback where needed. This allows students to negotiate meaning of target-language vocabulary and practice the new grammatical concepts immediately. I do not believe that staring at a list of words and memorizing the vocabulary for a quiz or test will create proficient users of French. In fact, Bain (2004) claims “a teacher might scare

students into memorizing the material for short-term recall by threatening punishment or imposing excessively burdensome workloads, but those tactics might also leave the students traumatized by the experience and disliking the subject matter" (pp. 7-8). Instead of threats, I prefer to use social interaction to foster learning of the target concept.

A dynamic classroom is one in which all of the students are encouraged to collaborate with their peers and the instructor to develop language. In my classroom, the students interact and accomplish lesson goals in groups on a frequent basis. According to Lightbown and Spada (1999), "there is good evidence that, if the tasks are well designed, learners working in groups get far more practice in speaking and participating in conversations in group work than they ever could in a teacher-centered class" (p. 168). In my experience, students have more time speaking in small groups or in pairs than they do in entire-class activities.

Moreover, this gives the students the idea that they cannot simply come to class to learn the language. They must be involved in their education. Students become more motivated in a classroom where a competent instructor expects the "students to participate in the process of learning" (Allen, Witt, & Wheeless, 2006, p. 23). This participation in their education is essential for language acquisition. This is not to say that every student will enjoy the group work. In fact, if instructors are not transparent in their use of group work, some students may have an adverse reaction.

> [These types of students] speak of endless small-group exercises that are conducted because the teacher feels that they are somehow expected but that

> serve no clearly discernible purpose. Far from increasing the intensity, connectedness, and richness of the educational event small-group work is often perceived as meaningless busy work. It is sometimes interpreted as a sign of a teacher's laziness, disinterest, lack of expertise, or insecurity. The inference is often made that frequent use of small-group methods indicates nothing so much as a teacher's refusal to do the necessary preparation for proper teaching (Brookfield, 1990, p. 52).

Brookfield states that if an instructor is going to require group work, the motivation behind it must be made clear to the students.

This awareness of classroom functioning accomplishes two goals. Not only does it show the students that they will use their French with their peers, but it will also show that they will be told what the teacher expects of them. Students are attracted to instructors who can elucidate lesson goals and are able to model appropriate use of language (Brosh, 1996). Students appreciate when they are made aware of classroom regulations and what is expected of them (Beishuizen, Hof, van Putten, Bouwmeester, & Asscher, 2001). When teachers are direct about the use of group work, students become aware of the expectation that they will be speaking in class in order to achieve group goals such as problem-solving, negotiation of meaning, and general pronunciation.

Continual Learning

The most important factor in being an effective teacher is the willingness to continue learning. Clearly the goal of an effective instructor should be to have an effective lesson and a supportive environment for their students, but as languages

change, so should instructors. Instructors should be willing to "confront [their] own weaknesses and failures" (Bain, 2004, p. 19) and maintain a commitment to the students.

A commitment to the students can come in many forms. This does not mean that instructors should always have all the answers. In fact, that is rarely the case. According to Hooks (2010), "so much academic training encourages teachers to assume that they must be "right" at all times. Instead, I propose that teachers must be open at all times, and we must be willing to acknowledge what we do not know" (p. 10). The students will surely ask for vocabulary that a non-native speaker may not know. This can only be rectified over time. Freire (2005) urges instructors that acknowledging what is unknown "doesn't mean teach what you don't know, it just means you're obligated to prepare and develop" (p. 32). There should be a continual process of learning and preparing for both student and instructor benefit.

If instructors can keep an attitude of continual improvement, their focus on student achievement will directly mirror their own. This approach to language learning will foster a dynamic classroom, full of group work and student conversations. Thus, the effective language instructor will be able to model correct use of the language, get to know the students, give helpful feedback at all times, and engage in continual learning.

LANGUAGE ARTIFACT

Past Tense in French as a Second Language

INTRODUCTION

Most of the language learners that I have encountered struggle with certain aspects of the language. For native English speakers learning French, this challenge comes in the form of past tense. In this artifact I present a look at teaching the past tense in the French classroom.

Students face many challenges when learning French. While there is no standard formula for teaching difficult concepts, it is considered the job of instructors to develop a system of presenting new concepts and vocabulary in a way that the student can understand and eventually use effectively and appropriately. In this paper, I will discuss how to teach the differences between the *passé composé* and the *imparfait* to English-speaking learners of French by (1) using form-focused instruction, (2) presenting one thing at a time, and (3) guiding them towards connected discourse that effectively distinguishes between the two forms.

Students of French have difficulty with several concepts in the target language. While it is true that the students can memorize multiple rules to explain what to do, how to do it, and when to do it, memorizing multiple rules can cause confusion in itself. It seems that there is always an exception to every rule in French. If students are simply to memorize the rule, they will not know what to do when the exception comes up. Additionally, a student with a tentative grasp on the language will have a difficult time learning additional rules when previous rules still haven't solidified. Moreover, I refer to Spada and Lightbown's (2008, p. 198) claim that "*hard* rules" need to be implemented through use of the language rather than by being memorized in addition to the vocabulary and grammatical concepts that the students are already learning. Giving students a list of rules, especially outside of the context of what they are currently learning, is not going to make the concept salient, nor will it improve proficiency.

I believe that explicit grammar teaching should be avoided whenever possible. Instead I prefer to provide multiple examples to the students. Thus, I aim to foster clarity in my teaching rather than befuddle the students with difficult rules. Though the material may be difficult, the students in my class will be required to learn only one thing at a time. They can focus on the form while I keep the meaning in focus. As Spada and Lightbown (2008) discuss, the instructor needs "to include instruction in which teachers anticipate that students will have difficulty with a particular feature as they engage in a communicative task and plan in advance to target that feature through feedback and other pedagogical interventions, all the while maintaining a primary focus on meaning" (p. 186). If the instructor pays attention to meaning, with a focus on the semantic rather than the syntactic, then the students will be able to focus on form.

It is necessary for language instructors teaching any difficult concept to take Spada and Lightbown's research into consideration. In presenting past tense to the students, the instructor should learn not to add additional rules, but utilize numerous examples. It is also advantageous to present only one thing at a time to the students as mentioned by Lee and VanPatten (1995). Several lessons might deal simply with the *passé composé* while others will deal exclusively with the *imparfait*. If both forms are presented to the learners simultaneously, the instructor may create a processing overload for the students. It is exhausting for students to process too many things at once and they will not be able to remember the material as well. Omaggio describes Krashen's (1982) *input hypothesis*, "which maintains that we acquire more language only when we are exposed to "comprehensible input" – language that contains

structures that are "a little beyond" our current level of competence (*i* + 1)" (2000, p. 61). No language instructor should burden the students with information that is too far beyond a student's current level of competence.

To prevent cognitive overload, the *passé composé*, which is by far the simpler form of past tense for native English speakers, ought to be presented first. Since it is structured similarly to the composed past in English, the student's native language helps in the acquisition of this concept. Again, according to Lightbown and Spada (2008), avoidance of "hard" rules is valuable, and in this case the past tense can be described without using too many metalinguistic terms. In order to review what the students have already learned, the instructor can go back to a previous chapter and begin with a tense other than the present. Anticipating that the students are going to have a difficult time with the different tenses, the instructor will attempt to get the students thinking in a different tense than the present tense. For students in the first semester of French, conjugations of verbs present a bit of a problem. For example, the present, formal or plural second person conjugation of *aller* (to go) is *allez* (you go). Written, the two forms are clearly distinguishable. However, spoken, there is no difference in pronunciation. In the near future conjugation, *aller* become *allez aller* (you are going to go). It may initially be confusing for students to hear the same sound duplicated. By giving the students a written form of the verb, the students will be more likely to know that the verb is in the *passé composé* and will not be as easily confused.

In order to avoid confusing the students, the instructor ought to use a form-focused instruction approach à la Spada and Lightbown (2008). While pointing out what the students already know, the instructor can lower the affective filter (Krashen, 1982). This will enable students to pay attention to the new tense. An additional factor that will make the learning easier is key words that the students have previously learned such as *demain* (tomorrow), *hier* (yesterday), and *ce week-end* (this weekend) which indicate a timeframe that the students will understand.

Though it may seem out of place according to the standards of processing instruction to use different key words to indicate the tense of the verb, a study discussed by Shrum and Glisan proves otherwise.

> Adair-Hauck (1993) found that when learners were presented with contextualized sentences (examples taken from the "Le lion et la souris" story with sentences both in the present and in the past using the new past-tense verb form) and were asked by the teacher what they noticed about these sentences, the learners were unable to answer. Instead, they responded with puzzled looks. However, when the teacher provided responsive and graduated assistance and included the words *aujourd'hui* (today) and *hier* (yesterday), which are semantic, not syntactic, clues, learners were able to articulate the differences in the meanings of the sentences. After paying attention to the *semantic clues* (focus on meaning), the learners were able to attend to the *syntactic clues* (focus on form) (Shrum & Glissan, p. 197).

When the instructor introduces the story with these additional key words, the students can focus on which tense is currently being discussed. The syntactic clues allow the students to focus on form. Though the forms may sound the same, *aller* (to go), *allez* (you go), and *allé* (gone), the students will be able to maintain a grasp on what is going on through the key words that have been provided for them during the first reading of the story. After the students have heard the key words the first time around,

the key words can be eliminated. The students will still understand the timeframe during the second reading or interaction even though the key words have been removed, but the instructor will be able to wean the students away from the key words in an effort to focus on the form of the verb.

Using key words again in order to create a flow and clue the students in to the change in tense, the instructor can begin to introduce the *passé composé*. With the additional focus on meaning, the students can immediately pay attention to the verb endings. Though they have formerly heard the similar sounding verb, the students have the timeframe to rely on. It will be the task of the instructor to focus on the auxiliary verb that sets the *passé composé* apart from the other tenses.

The instructor may now begin to use the *passé composé*. It would be good for the instructor to point out the different usage of the verbs that have been previously used in the future tense. It would also be good for the instructor to ask questions about things that would have happened in the past. The instructor might start a conversation with a student in the following pattern:

I: J'ai mangé le petit déjeuner. As-tu mangé le petit déjeuner?
(I ate breakfast. Did you eat breakfast?)
S: Oui.
(Yes)
I: Tu l'as mangé? Quand?
(You did? When?)
S: Ce matin.
(This morning)
I: Tu as mangé le petit déjeuner ce matin?
(You ate breakfast this morning?)
S: Oui, j'ai mangé le petit déjeuner ce matin.

(Yes, I ate breakfast this morning)

Though the student will most likely make mistakes according to time and when they did what, those mistakes will be ironed out as we continue to work together as a class. Given enough structured input and practice, students will begin to use the past tense in the correct form.

To only present one thing at a time, instructors must introduce only the *avoir* (to have) auxiliary verb forms of the *passé composé* in the beginning. Though there are certain verbs that are conjugated with *être* (to be) in the past tense, this will be the following lesson for the students. Once they have heard the new tense in sentences, they can turn to the book in order to see what is being done, scaffolding on prior knowledg. Instead of introducing a rule, the students will be exposed to numerous examples. In the first-year beginning college textbook *Vis-à-vis*, there are often dialogue boxes that introduce the students to the new concept. Students can take turns reading to one another from the dialogue box in a form of role play. This creates a contextual task that will help the students when recalling the forms later. For after all, McKeachie and Svinicki (2006) have explained that

> simply listening to or repeating something is likely to store it in such a way that we have difficulty finding it when we want to remember it. If we elaborate our learning by thinking about its relationship to other things we know or by talking about it—explaining, summarizing, or questioning—we are more likely to remember it when we need to use it later (p. 36).

For the instructor, it will be necessary to do a great deal of repetition with the students. In talking about the past tense, since there is more than one verb used as the

auxiliary in the past tense, the students will need the opportunity to understand which verbs take *avoir* and which take *être* as the auxillary verb in the *passé composé*. By using the verbs immediately, the students can analyze the verbs being used and can create a meaningful association with the words. In doing so, the information becomes more salient, which will aid in the retrieval process during upcoming past tense discussions. Role play may allow students an opportunity to investigate what is being presented to them.

After the students have role played the conversation in pairs, the instructor may begin to present the different forms of the verbs. Typically, there is a diagram, chart, or list of the new terms in the *Vis-à-vis* textbook and other similar textbooks. In order to demonstrate my point, I give an example from page 192 of this book.

The regular past participles are presented in a chart. The chart indicates that –er verbs usually change to -é in the past tense, like *trouver* (to find), which becomes *trouv**é**.* Verbs that end in –ir usually change to –i, like *choisir* (to choose), which becomes *chois**i**.* Verbs ending in –re become u, like *perdre* (to lose), which becomes *perd**u**.* In addition, some common irregular past participles are presented to the students. The chart shows the verbs *avoir,* which becomes ***eu***, *devoir* (to have to), which becomes ***dû**,* and *vouloir* (to want), which becomes *voul**u***.

As the students have this page in front of them, the instructor can do a little one-on-one conversation with the students using the new tense. One such exchange may look like the following example.

Instructor: Monique, as-tu passé un bon week-end?
Monique, did you have a good weekend?
Monique: Oui.
Yes.
Instructor: Qu'est-ce que tu as fait?
What did you do?
Monique: Je mange.
I eat.
Instructor: Tu **as mangé?**
You ate?
Monique: Oui, j'**ai mangé.**
Yes, I ate.

As the instructor is presenting the new tense, a focus on form is going to be repeated several times. This will also help students differentiate between *je* and *j'ai* which sound identical to most listeners. The instructor must make an effort to use several examples, repeating herself many times over to minimize confusion. The key is to present one thing at a time in order to allow process time for the student. This will be especially important for the irregular forms. After much practice and feedback, it will be less challenging for the students to use the correct form of the verb. The instructor needs to aid the students in their task of schemata building so that they will remember more quickly in the future.

This is not to say that the students will not make errors. These errors are part of the learning process. However, it is important to note that the instructor does not want to overburden the brain of the student. While attempting to show the contrast between the *être* and *avoir* verbs, the instructor may want to focus on only one or two verbs. Creating a controlled activity for the students is more beneficial than creating information overload.

In another lesson, the students will be able to move on to the *passé composé* forms using *être*. The same exercises may be duplicated, emphasizing which verbs utilize the verb *être*. However, it should be noted that the students will need to memorize which verbs use *être*, but this doesn't need to be done with the explicit presentation of any grammatical rules. After all, our brains are good at memorizing irregularities, "because they are quirky, have to be stored in the mental dictionary as roots or stems; they cannot be generated by a rule. Because of this storage, they can be fed into the compounding rule that joins an existing stem to another existing stem to yield a new stem" (Pinker, 1994, p. 140).

By using multiple exercises to teach which verbs take *être* in the passé compose, the instructor creates stability for the students. Through duplication, the students will begin to build a strong foundation for the *passé composé*. The goal is to avoid overwhelming the students and to eliminate confusion. The instructor may use the following format for conversational exchanges with students:

I: Je suis sortie de la maison. Es-tu sorti de la maison?
I exited the house. Did you exit the house?
S: Oui.
Yes.
I: Tu es sorti de la maison? Quand?
You exited the house? When?
S: Ce matin.
This morning.
I: Tu es sorti de la maison ce matin?
You exited the house this morning?
S: Oui, je suis sorti de la maison ce matin.
Yes, I exited the house this morning.

Once this lesson has been completed, the students will be able to recognize and produce the different forms of the *passé composé*. Having processed the *passé composé* with each verb, *être* and *avoir*, in separate lessons, the students should have the chance to see them operating simultaneously. However, in an effort to present only one thing at a time, the instructor should limit the lesson to only the previously used vocabulary.

Using familiar vocabulary and selected verbs, the students could be asked to produce a paragraph differentiating between the different verbs that take *avoir* and *être*. This is a common idea in teaching the *passé composé* and many grammar books will have past tense exercises that will include verbs requiring either *avoir* or *être*. As an example, *The Ultimate French Review and Practice* (1999) by Stillman and Gordon uses a small description of a day in the life of a typical family:

> [M. Vaillancourt] _____ (3. monter) la rue de la République, comme toujours. Mais aujourd'hui il _____ (4. voir) qu'il y avait des travaux (p. 58).
> *[M. Vaillancourt] _____ (3. to ascend) Rébublique street, as always. But today, he _____ (4. To see) that work was being done [on the street].*

This type of exercise, which can easily be created or found in various French grammar books, allows students the opportunity to practice using the different auxiliary verbs in the *passé composé*. In order to differentiate between the two, the students can draw on their use in context and previous knowledge that they have of the verbs.

Comparing the use of the two verbs side by side will allow the students to form associations regarding when use which verb. Since *être* is typically used to convey

motion or a change in state, the instructor should exaggerate this concept. It will solidify the idea for the students and help them distinguish when to use it. Moreover, a picture can be used to show this idea knowing that visual aids help with motivation (Maun, 2006). Often in French, there is the concept of *the house of être* because a house is drawn showing the different activities, or verbs, that take *être*. Omaggio (2008) describes the *house of être* with a photo depicting the different activities of the characters, giving the students the visual representation of a change of state or motion. This concept is not only described by Omaggio, but other French instructors as well. Certain verbs, such as *venir* (to come), *monter* (to go up), and *mourir* (to die) to name a few, are changes of state and therefore shown in the drawing. If the students are required to summarize when they use which verb, *être* or *avoir*, this will help them store the information in a useable format that may be more easily retrieved later. As they begin to see how the verbs function in the context, they will add to the schema that they have already built.

The next lesson will continue with the *imparfait*. The instructor can continue in much the same way as with the *passé composé*. The students will likely be grateful that there is no need to memorize which verbs take *avoir* and which verbs take *être* since there is simply one way to form the *imparfait*, without a helping verb.

The instructor can begin by telling the students a story, or in effect, setting the scene. Since this is the prime reason to use the *imparfait*, to provide background, context, or setting, it will be beneficial for the students to hear a context in which it

might be used. For example, the following exchange can be found in *Vis-à-vis* on page 266.

> Mme Chabot: Tu vois, quand j'**étais** petite, la télévision n'**existait** pas.
> *You see, when I was little, television didn't exist.*
> Clément: Mais alors, qu'est-ce que vous **faisiez** le soir?
> *But then what did you do in the evenings?*
> Mme Chabot: Eh bien, nous **lisions**, nous **bavardions**; nos parents nous **racontaient** des histoires…
> *Well, we read, we chatted; our parents would tell us stories.*

A similar story may be presented to the students referring to the instructor's life. The students can then begin to hear the difference in pronunciation while seeing it in the book in front of them. The book, of course, gives the students the different conjugations of this tense. Again, the students will be better able to retain the information and produce it themselves if they use it. So, they can be put in pairs or small groups to describe their childhood. In addition, in order to focus on the form, the instructor may offer practice in listening comprehension. The professor can give several examples of sentences using either the present tense or the imperfect and have the students tell which one they hear. Listening and distinguishing between the differences helps increase awareness, which is the first step in learning. The new knowledge begins to solidify in the minds of the students.

Now that the students have begun to build a framework for both of these tenses, the time will come to compare the two. Again, the main focus of this comparison is not on creating any rules that may confuse the students, but on an abundance of examples. Learning the distinction between *passé composé* and *imparfait*

is going to take some time. All that can be done is repetition in order to help students notice and build awareness. The instructor should take the time to create activities that will use both forms of the past tense. According to Folse (2004), "learners need exercises that not only promote but actually require learners to retrieve the form of the word or the meaning of the word. [The instructor] want[s] materials that have vocabulary presentation and vocabulary practice" (p. 133). Alternatively, the two forms of the past tense can be viewed as vocabulary. Certain verbs collocate (Folse) with *être*, so it is not bizarre that the tense is considered a vocabulary word, much like *will* in English. Though the word itself is a tense, it is also used as vocabulary to talk about the future. Sometimes these key words are more salient for learners and the verb endings are less salient. The two forms of past tense can be made more salient, then, using the key words and vocabulary. Though there are technically two concepts here, one thing can still be presented at a time as a series of steps.

First, it would be beneficial for the instructor to remind the students of the uses and meaning of the *passé composé*. Then, demonstrating a couple of small examples, the instructor can let the students hear how it sounds. The students can then be asked questions to get them back into the action. Shifting gears a little, the teacher can review the *imparfait*, getting students used to the conjugations and beginning to hear the difference between the two. Next, the instructor can have the students read some discourse that contains examples of both. A beneficial exercise would be to ask the students why each verb was given a certain tense. This exercise builds awareness of the contrast between the two tenses. Though the students will still have difficulty figuring

out when to use which, it begins to "break up the concrete in [their] head[s]" (McNamara, 2008, p. 302).

Though the students will initially have trouble comparing the two, the instructor should continue to give examples for when to use each. The goal of the examples is to begin to create a frame of reference on which the students can learn to rely when creating the sentences independently. Since the students are headed towards connected discourse, they will need to create a solid base for when to use each of these tenses.

While the students are using these new tenses, they will begin to create a schema system (Hauptman, 2000). Thus, they will have a point of reference when they try to recall this information at a later date. These schemata can be applied using examples that the students have read, written, and spoken. The more the students use these tenses in communicative tasks, the stronger schemata they will build, and the easier it will be to recall this information at a later date. This will, after practice, allow them to connect individual sentences into longer discourse.

Since real application of the language requires multiple sentences, this skill is essential for the students. According to the ACTFL guidelines of proficiency, in order for students to be at the "advanced" proficiency level, they will need to be able to "narrate and describe with some details, linking sentences together smoothly" (1986). Students will need to start constructing such sequences of linked sentences even at the novice proficiency stages of language learning.

The instructor, then, needs to help the students in their transition to discourse. Exercises may be provided that use both forms of the past tense. This can be done in a story form so that the students can become aware of why each form should be used. Wong (2004) indicates that the students ought to be able to do something with the input in order to make the forms more salient. As the instructor, I would give my students something like the following example resembling a fairy tale:

> Il _____ une fois une reine et un roi qui _____ très malheureux parce qu'ils _____ d'enfant. Ils _____ les fées de les bénir avec un enfant et un jour, la reine _____ au monde une petite princesse.
> *(Once upon a time, a queen and a king were very unhappy because they didn't have any children. They asked the fairies to bless them with a child and one day, the queen gave birth to a princess.)*

They would be given a list of useable verbs off to the side of the page with the story. They would be required to fill in the blanks with the applicable verb conjugated accordingly. Though this is only a small excerpt of the exercise, it can be longer than this. If the instructor has presented one thing at a time, the students will be able to complete this simple fill-in-the-blank exercise.

The next step is to have the students talk about a memory from their childhood. They will have schemata that will help them in this task. They will have completed multiple examples and exercises that will aid them in this process. Moreover, the students will be doing this task using examples from their own life, so the subject will be familiar. After the students have completed this task, they will be better equipped to remember the use of the *imparfait* in the future because they have related it to their own experiences.

The difficult thing about this follow-up exercise is that the students will not have a fill-in-the blank formatted worksheet as their framework. They may find it difficult to generate the entire narrative themselves. However, they still have the basic information needed to succeed with the task. As the instructor, I will still be focusing on the forms that they use. I will emphasize to the students that the point of the exercise is to utilize both forms of past tense. If the students are able to use the target forms in a contextualized exercise, they will be able to create a framework for future use of these forms. They will be creating schemata with the tenses and therefore, make them more meaningful.

In presenting the differences between the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*, the method that I have described falls in line with the ACTFL standards (1986). The students will be able to use connected discourse while describing past memories, recognize the semantic and syntactic differences between their native language and French, and exemplify the rules of the target language using their schematic knowledge base.

In this artifact, I have described how to help students differentiate between the *passé composé* and the *imparfait* in French past tenses. This technique can also be applied to other challenging aspects of French, such as for example the subjonctif (subjunctive) and the *conditionnel* (conditional) in French. While the students will face many challenges as learners of French, it is the job of the instructor to facilitate the overcoming of these difficulties. In taking on each difficult task, presenting one thing at

a time, focusing on both form and meaning, and helping the students to connect this all into discourse, the instructor will aid the students to become more proficient in French.

LITERACY ARTIFACT

Authentic Literature versus Simplified Literature in the classroom

Introduction

I learned to read at an early age and believe that is one reason that I am so fascinated by languages. Much of my language learning came from books. While learning French in my undergraduate career, I was eager to find authentic materials from which I could glean new vocabulary words, new verbs, and new grammatical structures.

This artifact was written for a literature class that I took during my graduate career. It deals with introducing literature early on in order to involve students and teach them how the language functions. I wrote the first draft of this paper with Anna Alexander, a fellow MSLT student. I have since made revisions.

Reading and writing are large components of learning a foreign language. Textbooks frequently include literature sections to introduce students to written discourse in the target language. Yet, opinions on whether *only* authentic literature should be presented to students are divided. In this paper I will define what I consider to be authentic texts and support why they are more beneficial than simplified texts for students in the L2 classroom.

Simplified Material

In defining authentic literature, it is sometimes easier to define what it is not. Simplified texts belong to a genre that is artificial and contrived by speakers of the target language. These texts frequently lack the natural language that is found in quotidian situations (Crossley, Louwerse, McCarthy, & McNamara, 2007). Simplified texts attempt to eliminate the higher-level vocabulary and sentence structures found in authentic texts. In order to present an easily digestible format, the authors may select the most common words in the language to introduce connected discourse. The challenge for second language learners, then, is that these common words may have multiple definitions, lending to confusion created by polysemy. In addition, these simplified texts replace the more challenging and precise words of the target language with more common, ambiguous words. This lexical bait and switch creates not only a sentence structure with more components, but a false use of discourse, requiring a high processing fee from students (Crossley, Louwerse, McCarthy, & McNamara).

Since the vocabulary in simplified texts is deliberately kept basic, the language used in these texts is no longer natural. According to Nadeau and Barlow (2006), language users in general "write as they speak (informally, favouring effective communication…)" (p. 178) rather than attempting to replace more challenging words with more common forms. The effect is a more natural text. Simplified texts, on the other hand, are "not representative samples of the kind of texts the foreign language student will eventually encounter in the country of the target language" (Geltrich-Ludgate & Tovar, 1987, p. 80). Instead of introducing the language as it naturally functions, simplified texts are a creation of structured input that is not realistic.

This is not to say that simplified texts haven't played a vital role in the second language classroom. Simplified texts provide a structured learning tool. Students find simplified texts to be beneficial because they imitate the language spoken by the teacher, which is fairly controlled and well thought-out (Tweissi, 1998). However, simplified texts tend to contain shorter sentence structures, eliminating the cohesion that is naturally present in authentic discourse. Instead of creating long and complicated sentences that contain conjunctions, simplified texts separate the sentences into a more digestible format. They may sacrifice richness of plot and concept development for unproblematic configuration (Crossley, Louwerse, McCarthy, & McNamara, 2007). Historically, it seems to have been common practice to use these simplified texts in the language classroom. I prefer to introduce authentic materials into my classroom.

Authentic Material

In order to understand what constitutes authentic material, it is helpful to turn to scholarly authors who have defined the concept.

> [Authentic materials are] language samples—both oral and written—that reflect a naturalness of form, and an appropriateness of cultural and situation context that would be found in the language as used by native speakers (Villegas Rogers & Medley, 1988).
>
> Authentic materials are those that have not been specially written or recorded for the language learner but were originally directed at the native speaker. They are genuine cultural artifacts such as timetables, newspapers, magazines, letters, hotel guides, restaurant menus, bills, essays, leaflets, recorded interviews, radio and television broadcasts, advertisements and films (Kienbaum, Russell, & Welty, 1986).
>
> [Authentic] materials [are] written to be read by native speakers of the language rather than materials written only to teach the language (Maxim, 2002).

After reading the above definitions, it would seem that authentic material can be chosen directly from the target culture. This would suggest that authentic material is any material that has not been modified for the language classroom, but can be found in the target culture. It is written or spoken for fluent speakers of the language. It often contains visual illustrations or diagrams and fulfills a certain social function within the culture. According to this definition, not only is it acceptable to use newspapers, magazines, restaurant menus, etc., as listed above, but it is also of use to add to the definition comic books, fairy tales, product labels, junk mail, and the like.

After defining what type of material is authentic, it is more easily seen how authentic material can be incorporated into the current language classroom. Authentic materials have a natural redundancy. For example, a bus schedule will have several platforms, several times, and several buses from which to choose. A student can negotiate meaning through the duplication of these important items. Some poem or songs, as well, might have a natural duplication of certain items such as repeated lines, words, rhymes, tenses, or images.

Often such repetition reflects language as it occurs naturally and has a genuine cohesiveness to it. Instead of shortening sentences, eliminating or rearticulating idioms, or restructuring syntax that may be difficult (Long & Ross, 1993), the authentic material provides an accurate representation of the living language. It is the "raw data of a culture" (Kienbaum, Russell, & Welty, 1986, p. 8) and is thus representative of the types of material that the students will encounter upon traveling to the country. In our classrooms, it is important to equip our students with the input and practice opportunities that they will need when preparing to travel to the target culture. Instructors working with carefully selected authentic literature provide students with the input and practice opportunities they need.

Authentic Material versus Simplified Material in the Foreign Language Classroom

Although it has been the trend to use simplified material in the second language classroom, it is time to re-examine that trend. Students who desire to become proficient in a second language according to the ACTFL standards can utilize authentic

material to build proficiency. It is necessary that instructors choose material that will "lead the student to a functional, realistic use of the language, both in its linguistic and cultural aspects" (Kienbaum, Russell, & Welty, 1986, p. 12). Authentic material will support this kind of use whereas simplified material will not.

Simplified materials, as stated above, can be good for students. These materials are easier to understand and require less work on the part of the instructor. However, they do not reflect realistic linguistic and cultural uses of the language. Moreover, Ellis mentions that there has not been any supporting evidence to prove that simplified materials ease the acquisition of a second language (Ellis, 1993, as cited in Crossley, Louwerse, McCarthy, & McNamara, 2007). So, when the instructor presents an easier text, it does not necessarily imply that the students will acquire the language any more easily.

Comparing language development resulting from simplified versus authentic texts, Carney and Franciulli (1992) tested students in their graduate-level Spanish international management class. They assumed that students would be able to read through the material without additional assistance (such as assistance from native speakers) and to prepare an oral report to present to the class. They add, "In the case of the most difficult pieces, some of the words were discussed at the beginning of the class" (Carney & Franciulli, p. 7) in order to ensure that the students reached a primary level of comprehension. The students first read from an authentic article and then a simplified article.

The findings showed that "although the students committed a great number of mistakes, they fulfilled the basic objective of acquiring enough elements to express themselves" (Carney & Franciulli, 1992, p. 8). However, the authentic article, which contained more challenging language, generated a higher interest level than the simplified article. Moreover, the authentic article "had demanded the most preparation, [and] had created schema that the students were applying to other readings" (Carney & Franciulli, p. 8). Young (1999) supports this statement with her own data saying that "students obtained the highest recall scores on the authentic, as opposed to the simplified versions" (Young, p. 359). Therefore, although simplified texts may require less work, they may not lead to acquisition whereas authentic materials promote a functional use of the language.

In addition to creating schema, authentic material also evokes emotional involvement from the students in the classroom. In a study performed by Kienbaum, Russell, and Welty (1986), students were "enthusiastic to acquaint themselves through realia with a small city and discover its infrastructure" (p. 26). The students created a reality in which they became involved with the target country and language, linking themselves sociologically with individual citizens and their daily life (Kienbaum, Russell, & Welty, 1986). The students learned to care about the daily life of these individual citizens instead of the uninteresting characters in the textbook.

Moreover, "controversial topics stimulated the students to pursue further reading on a subject although the length of articles or the lexical complexities were

frequently beyond their level" (Kienbaum, Russell, & Welty, 1986, p. 26). Topics or materials that require emotional investment spark the curiosity of our students and can be useful in motivating learners. Authentic material forces students to ask who, what, when, why, and how. It increases their "motivation to engage in literacy" (Ranker, 2007, p. 296). This type of material also expands their cultural views, causing them to compare or question their own value system and open themselves up to other points of view. In using authentic material, instructors challenge students to think critically about their own society and culture. This type of culture questioning is in line with the ACTFL guidelines for foreign language learning by adding to students' schemata of communities and comparisons.

Fairy Tales and Comic Books

Students can be introduced to the culture of the target language through popular literature from the target community. Both fairy tales and comic books are good examples of such literature. Though they may not necessarily be thought of as prime examples of authentic literature, fairy tales and comic books reveal a genuine use of the language. In addition, they are windows into the community that can provide valuable insights to outsiders. They are originally written for the native speaker and provide students with a social commentary on the target culture. Moreover, they can be used as an implicit exhibition of the target culture, which is fitting in a L2 classroom. First, I will focus on fairy tales.

Fairy tales were part of an oral tradition only later collected and written down. As Davidheiser (2007) explains, "people often are surprised by the fact that fairy tales were an oral tradition long before they ever were put to paper. These oral tales are sometimes referred to as folktales to differentiate them from their literary versions, which soon became the norm for fairy tales" (p. 215). Because these tales were originally part of an oral tradition, fairy tales or folktales stem from the core values, beliefs, and imaginations of the native speakers indigenous to a particular region. Zipes (1987) mentions that those who collected the tales, such as the Grimm brothers, "hoped to find great truths about the German people and their laws and customs by collecting their tales, for they believed that language was what created national bonds and stamped the national character of people" (p. xxxiii). Since fairy tales originated as oral tradition and were collected and written down centuries later, fairy tales are part of the core representation of a culture and language at a particular point in time and are the ultimate authentic literature example for the L2 classroom.

It is possible to maintain the authenticity of a text even if it is simplified. For example, Davidheiser (2007) has published a text entitled *Deutsch durch Maerchen* which includes shortened stories of the Grimm Brothers' fairy tales. Davidheiser describes that, in his text, "we maintained the authenticity of the original tales, but shortened them and updated some of the vocabulary" (p. 222). Thanks to these shortened fairy tales, students are not only able to understand the fairy tale in the L2 classroom, but they are also able to understand the vocabulary and the grammatical concepts without reading the original form that may include antiquated language and

sometimes dated grammar (Davidheiser, 2007). In using the authentic version of the fairy tale in the classroom, the instructor is facilitating the comprehension of the fairy tale. Though some may argue that changing the vocabulary and the grammar removes the authenticity of the piece, I believe that the vocabulary and the grammar need not be fully removed from the text. Instead, glosses or synonyms could be provided by the instructor in order to maintain cohesion of the story. In this way, the authenticity of the story is kept while and the antiquated language is comprehensible to the students.

How is the use of fairy tales beneficial for students in the L2 classroom? The natural linguistic features of fairy tales provide convenient learning activities, including many grammatical concepts, such as adjectives and the command form. One linguistic feature of fairy tales is natural repetition, averaging a repetition of a linguistic feature about three times (Tatar, 2002). For example, in *Les Plus Belles Histoires du Soir*, the story *Framboisine* tells of a princess who loved desserts and requested that her suitors brought her a dessert before she would agree to marry them. The reader is taken through three occurrences where the suitors brought her their dessert. It was not until the third suitor, Prince Macaron, offered her a pink cookie that she fell in love with both the confection and the prince.

This element of three can also be seen in Goldilocks. The first incidence can be seen when Goldilocks came upon three bowls of porridge sitting on the table at the house of the three bears. The first bowl was too hot, the second too cold, and the third was amenable to her tastes (Schleffer, 2007, p. 5). Though this is not the only time in

the story that the number three is used, it is a prime example of the natural repetition that is beneficial for the students in a second language classroom. Had the students not known the word porridge previously, after having seen that key word several times in the text, they may begin to wonder what it is and will seek out a definition by various methods. Thus, the natural redundancy in fairy tales helps build the learner's second language lexicon.

Davidheiser (2007) states that "repetition is, after all, an absolute sine qua non for foreign language learning. By reusing targeted vocabulary in [...] narrating the tales, students are able to internalize vocabulary" (p. 222). Students are therefore able to review and internalize vocabulary by reading a fairy tale, which is a far more interesting than reviewing flashcards. The same repetition occurs with other linguistic features, such as grammatical concepts.

Many fairy tales contain a natural repetition of verb tenses. Where there is a consistent repetition of these tenses, form-focused instruction can aid students in comprehension. For example, this can be seen in Perrault's (2010) seventeenth-century version of Cinderella, *Cendrillon*: *il lui donn**a** la main à la descente du carrosse, et la men**a** dans la salle où était la compagnie* (p. 97, emphasis added). In another example, we see the same thing: *Elle dans**a** avec tant de grâce qu'on l'admir**a** encore davantage* (p. 98). With instructor guidance and indication of these differing forms of the verbs, the students can identify specific features of the tenses within the target language

(Spada & Lightbown, 2008). Through practice and repetition, the students will be able to tackle a formerly unfamiliar French tense.

In the French fairy tale *Framboisine*, the reader can find a natural redundancy of the *imparfait*, or imperfect tense. For example, a novice student can identify the imperfect form of the verb *avoir* (to have) which is *avait*. Students will also recognize the imperfect forms of the verbs in the following sentence, which have been bolded here: *Le deuxième, le prince Éclair,* ***s'était*** *dit qu'il* ***allait*** *la séduire avec un gâteau au chocolat* (Acappella, p. 18, emphasis added). Taking notice of a text's naturally recurring elements is a clever way to familiarize students with new grammatical concepts. Instructors can quite easily fit verb tenses into any lesson, pulling from any piece of literature. Beginning L2 students would also become accustomed to seeing regular and irregular verbs in different contexts. French students, who commonly deal with *avoir, être,* and *aller*, would quickly become familiar with these irregular verbs through repetition and could use this knowledge throughout their L2 acquisition.

Within *Framboisine*, and many other French literary texts, there is the added element of the *antérieur passé*, or the past perfect. The *antérieur passé* is a literary compound past tense, containing two main parts. It is a difficult tense for beginners because of its formal style and its singular use in literature. The tense itself is not necessarily complex, since beginning French students have encountered a similar compound tense (*passé compose*), but they are not usually exposed to the *antérieur*

passé in the lower-division classroom. Upper-division French students typically stumble upon the *antérieur passé* when they read literature outside of the classroom setting.

Since this tense is not typically introduced in lower-division courses, the literature itself becomes a challenge to read. However, through the natural repetition of authentic literature, such as fairy tales, the students become acquainted with this tense and can easily identify where it occurs within any text. If an explanation is provided, and form-focused instruction (Spada & Lightbown, 2008) occurs, the literature can be more easily navigated. Normally, where the students would have difficulty with the sentence, "*Framboisine goûta un morceau et fut vite écœurée"* (Acappella, p. 17) they can instead see the usage of *goûta* and *fut* as being *antérieur passé* and can interpret the story, especially when they see the verb repeated frequently.

Along with the repetition of grammatical concepts, fairy tales teach other cultural aspects of the language. Within the authentic fairy tale, the students can further their understanding of the target culture and language and the omnipresence of fairy tales in other areas. Learning a second language through fairy tales is likely to captivate students' interest. Moreover, fairy tales can be suitable for multiple audiences and ages in second language acquisition (Davidheiser, 2007). The use of fairy tales in the L2 classroom deepens the cultural awareness of the target culture and of one's own culture. Significant differences occur in similar stories that have been found in a range of cultures. To show these differences, a simple look at Cinderella will suffice.

When reading through the German, American, and French version of Cinderella, the difference is noticed in the trying on of the shoe. One of the more memorable examples in the French and German versions is that Cinderella's stepsisters cut off their large toes and part of their heels to fit into the slipper (Owens, 1996). This example of gruesome detail in both versions of Cinderella is an underlying commonality in contemporary society in French and German cultures. The French mentality is much more inclined to support the development of characters in the story, their reaction to the world around them, than the American version of the story. American society tends to see through rose colored glasses. For example, the standard American film will have an ending where the characters live 'happily ever after,' as opposed to the French and German standard films that prefer social commentaries and leaving their audience thinking. This creates a cultural opposition in the common literature that the students in an L2 classroom have become accustomed to reading.

Cultural awareness can also be developed through the morals found in fairy tales. Second language learners may either find this moral at the end of the story or hidden within in the form of repetition of a theme. One such example can be found in the modern French fairy tale, *Bouche Cousue*. The story tells of a gluttonous monster that has his mouth stitched together by a fairy. The moral, found at the end of the story, states simply, "*Ce n'est pas la quantité qui compte, mais la qualité*" (Acappella, p. 54). After having gone through a trying experience, the gluttonous monster learns a motto that is current in French society today. Any visitor to France will surely find pastries in multiple *pâtisseries*, yet the French are quite good at understanding that

quality is more important than quantity when it comes to eating. In reading a fairy tale, albeit modern, the students in the L2 classroom would be able to glean this cultural information.

Through fairy tales, the students are able to learn a variety of things. Not only are they able to find natural repetition, which fosters negotiation of meaning, but they are also able to see cultural differences and benefit from the morals found in the tales. They are able to take the authentic story and garner not only grammatical information, but cultural information that can be applied throughout their language learning career. This is not a distinct characteristic of fairy tales but can also be found in other authentic examples of literature such as comic books.

Comic books, as opposed to fairy tales, are more frequently written in the current language of the day. They preserve the contemporary use of the language and the cultural context of the society. Comic books preserve this language and culture, but add visual garnishes that are appealing to the reader. Though the use of these illustrations may be unobserved by the native speaker, for second language students, the material provided by the illustrator supports their comprehension of the material and the content and message of the book.

In order to be effective and understandable, the grammar point or target vocabulary must be salient. One way that the students can comprehend the text is to see the natural repetition of characters and language in a comic book. While the characters may use a more contemporary form of the language to establish

individuality, the students can be drawn in by the characters and notice their use of speech. This authentic text, in which nothing has been changed to make it less contemporary, may be a little challenging if it was simply laid out in a boring format without visual materials. However, comic books are highly visual and may be considered far from boring by many students.

Since comic books are visually appealing, they naturally draw students in. Maun (2006), in a report on a study that he performed, states that "text which looked generally solid, with only black and white contrasts (printing against paper) produced negative reactions" (p. 116). In addition, he claims that "text which bores may be demotivating," causing the students to not want to continue reading the literature (p. 117). However, because comic books do not contain blocks of text, nor just black on white print, they hook students' attention and carry them throughout the story. Moreover, the images aid students in building schemata for their second language.

Students who encounter a previously unfamiliar word are often helped by a text that has illustrations. In a comic book, when students see a new vocabulary word, they are able to turn to the image in the frame to explain what is occurring. This allows the student to negotiate the meaning of the word without using a dictionary. This small success helps students to continue in the story, without interruption, and allows them to grasp the authentic language by themselves, sparking a continuing interest in what they are reading. Carney and Franciulli (1992) state that, "the degree of interest [the] material generates motivates the students in spite of the difficulties of the language,"

claiming that if students are captivated, they will be motivated (p. 9). If the instructor is able to motivate the students, the text may not appear so difficult.

From the point of view of the student, any text that is less intimidating may be more motivating. For novice and intermediate language learners, comic books and fairy tales in their original state are palatable with assistance from various sources. If students can use the visual support given by comic books, the final moral dictated by fairy tales, the natural repetition in both sources as a means to learn new vocabulary, and cultural references in both sources to assemble a picture of the target culture, they may be more eager to find other literature in the target language in the future. Ideally, they will create an emotional tie to texts that they enjoy and will continue to seek out the connection with the language. If students learn that authentic literature can be read and understood from their first interaction, they will no longer be intimidated by authentic material.

Authentic material will instead become a tool used to "create meaning in the mind of the reader" (Maun, 2006, p. 122). If instructors simplify everything that the students process, learners will not be able to function effectively in the target language society. Authentic texts, which include any text that was originally written for the native speaker, provide rich examples of the target language for the second language learner. Fairy tales and comic books, as a part of that definition, can be incorporated into the L2 classroom. Using material that is both linguistically and culturally laden allows students

to become familiar with the language and culture in the best possible way and should be preferred over simplified or unauthentic texts for the benefit of the students.

CULTURE ARTIFACT
The Worldwide Effect of French Language and Culture

INTRODUCTION

I believe that each culture has been affected by other cultures. We have all been shaped by our ancestry, history, and experience. While I am not of French citizenship, I notice a strong European influence in my language, in my thought process, and in my interaction with other people. This artifact is my attempt to show other Americans, including my students, how their lives are still being shaped by French culture.

French is spoken by over 67 million people worldwide (Ethnologue, 2009). Like other languages, French started from a small group of people and has developed over time, leaving quite a mark. It became an international language, as can be seen by the number of speakers outside France. The culture has spread with it. DeCapua and Wintergerst (2004, p. 23) state, "Language and culture are intimately linked." Culture influences the way speakers perceive the world and how they use language to communicate. Likewise, language influences how speakers view the world and the way in which they communicate. It is my goal in this paper to describe in a very broad overview how the French have used their language and culture to influence world history and other cultures, and how the French language continues to exert an influence today. Although the effect occurred in multiple ways, this paper will focus on how it has been used to unite the people, to establish a correct way of speaking and a cultural elite, to socialize and spread the arts, to colonize, to dominate and exploit other cultures, and establishing a current gastronomical place in society.

French was used as a tool for uniting people. In its infancy, it was used as a political tool to unite the numerous peoples living in the area that is now France. Even though there is a Parisian standard, different regions of France persist today in imposing their own accent on the French language (Steele, 2002). François I, who became king of France in 1515, established his power by linking the language of his current region, now known as Île de France, with the other surrounding territories, governed by various rulers. This relationship that François I created by chaining the language to the State

remains, to this day, a key feature of the language. Before this powerful king, the area was composed chiefly of multiple regional dialects (some of which currently exist on the periphery of France). A document issued by the king and entitled the Ordinance of Villers-Cotterêts, which limited clergy power to religious spheres, contained two articles, 110 and 111, that required all judicial acts be performed "*en langue maternel françoys et non autrement*" (in the French mother tongue of French and none other). In this case, the 'none other' referred to Latin which was primarily the language of the church (Nadeau & Barlow, 2006). Through this ordinance, François I promoted the notion that the rulers of the country spoke French and if the governed citizens wanted to be a part of the country, they would speak the language of power and influence.

For the citizens, this document changed how they thought about French. The ordinance itself really had less to do with language than it did to do with power. It was a government document, used to give François I more clout. In fact,

> by forbidding official procedures to be performed or official documents to be written in any other idiom than French, François boosted the power of his own functionaries and reduced the power of the counts, dukes and other nobles who were still running France (Nadeau & Barlow, 2006, p. 47).

Thus began the definite advancement of the French language and the decline of Latin. The state now ran in French and the citizens, under the King's rule, would obey and communicate official documents in this official language. However, it was not a quick or an easy transition.

French had been struggling to dominate the area since the first extant official document, *Les Serments de Strasbourg*, had been created in the language. The oath, sworn by the grandsons of the Emperor Charlemagne (742-814), was the first complete text that appeared in the embryonic language. This version of French was not the current version that we know now. Old French was being transformed, but it was clearly no longer Latin. According to Janson (2002), “from a linguistic point of view, the text [of the oath] looks more like French than Latin, which shows that many features of modern French existed in the spoken language as early as in the ninth century” (p. 114). In creating the Ordinance of Villers-Cotterêts, François I was not only uniting the people under a common language, but he was also uniting them under his own authority in the language they were speaking at home.

This was not the only time that French would be used to unite a diverse people. Later, during the period of colonization, France sent many of its citizens to inhabit the new protectorates. France, in its imperialist zeal, installed many schools into what was, from the colonial point of view, the uncivilized area of the world. This caused many problems for the local populations who didn’t feel “uncivilized” and therefore didn’t need the French to be imposing their culture where it didn’t belong (Nadeau & Barlow, 2006). However, the French, in their typical tenacious style, continued to establish school systems. The French established colonies in an effort to create more French citizens. They established French institutions, including schools that taught French, in all their colonies. This process imposed a mandatory incorporation of not only the language of the French, but also their culture (Nadeau & Barlow, 2006). The French

expected that everyone they encountered in their colonies would eventually speak French and become French.

Knowing that the history of colonialism raises numerous controversial issues, I will not treat it in depth in this paper. It suffices to simply say that Africa is even today a diverse continent, and did not, of course, become French. With more than 750 regional languages spoken in "thirty French-speaking countries in Africa [,] French was a neutral language that didn't privilege one ethnic group over another" (Nadeau & Barlow, 2006, p. 298). The French colonial governments did not openly favor any ethnic groups necessarily because, to them, it was France or nothing. The language, and the culture, became a way of unifying what would otherwise be a continent with no common way to communicate.

France today still functions under the same principle and is currently home to more than two-and-a-half million immigrants from various countries. It has become a melting pot for refugees from North Africa, Vietnam, and southern Europe to name a few (Tomalin, 2003). In today's France, many immigrants have learned to speak the Parisian norm. Interestingly, "of all the international languages, French is the only one of which the majority of native speakers are still in their country of origin" (Nadeau & Barlow, 2006, p.7). This means that immigrants must immerse themselves in French language and culture in order to become acculturated and communicate with people around them.

France may have been so successful in uniting diverse groups of people because of its regulation of its language. French is well-known to be strict and littered with rules. For anyone who has studied the language, to make a mistake is to make a *"faute,"* a word that has the connotation of a misdeed or an offense. The French are particular about their language and consider it a national treasure. "They love and cherish their language in ways that are almost incomprehensible to English speakers. It's their national monument" (Nadeau & Barlow, 2003, p. 162). Because of this standard, this accepted state of French, it has been used to establish a correct way of speaking and to form a cultural elite for generations.

In fact, the French were so concerned about their language that the fovernment established the *Académie Française* in the seventeenth century. Because of the existence of this still powerful institution, "In the back of any francophone's mind is the idea that an ideal, pure French exists somewhere. And that somewhere is, at least symbolically, the French Academy" (Nadeau & Barlow, 2006, p. 64). Originally, this academy was just a small club of poets and scholars who would gather to read poetry and discuss language. The majority of its members were devotees of Malherbe (François de Malherbe, 2004), the most condescending language critic of all time. Malherbe, who was known for correcting other poets' work, endeavored to eradicate all synonyms and ambiguity from the genre of poetry. He ruled the poetry world with exigency, disallowing the creation of new words, words that could have multiple definitions, hyperbole, borrowing from other languages, and embellishments of any kind. From this type of thinking, the French have derived an idiom – *"un français châtié"*

(a punished French), referring to the strict use of the language (Nadeau & Barlow, 2006). . This is a phrase which can still be heard today. The regulation of their language became important to the French and so they created a governing body to do just that.

The *Académie Française*, in keeping with the rules of Malherbe, set out to purify the French language. In establishing themselves as the guardians of French, they gave themselves the title of *"immortels"* and declared that they were chosen for the job. In fact, that is the sentiment that exists today. Directly from the *Académie* website, the phrase can be found stating that "*l'élection à l'Académie française est souvent considérée par l'opinion comme une consécration suprême"* (election in the French Academy is often considered by opinion as a supreme consecration) (L'Académie Française*, Les immortels*). Newly appointed, the *Immortels* set about creating a new dictionary.

Dictionaries are still the current concern of the Academy. This was stated as their original purpose and has been upheld ever since. The website clearly states the Academy's role:

> *"La mission qui lui fut assignée dès l'origine était de fixer la langue française, de lui donner des règles, de la rendre pure et compréhensible par tous. Elle devait dans cet esprit commencer par composer un dictionnaire"* (The mission that was assigned to [The Academy] since the beginning was to establish the French language, to give it rules, to make it clear and understandable for everyone. In this spirit, it should begin by creating a dictionary) (L'Académie Française*, Le rôle*).

This undertaking, this dictionary, was far more arduous than any the French or the *Immortels* had imagined. The first version of their dictionary was published in 1680

and the Academy produced its latest version (the 8th edition) in 1935 (Steele, 2002). To average that, it would appear that the Academy is producing a new dictionary every 32 years. However, this is not quite correct. Nadeau and Barlow are quick to point out that "from the beginning, the academicians were in essence a bunch of amateurs, and they have always remained so" (2006, p. 73). The content of their dictionaries is far from exhaustive. The Academy has left out words such as *anglais* (English) out of every edition to this date. This is typically a vital word and thus difficult to avoid.

It is even more humorous, or perhaps telling, to note that other forms of this word (*anglican, anglophile, anglophobie,* etc.) are present, but the root just simply doesn't exist in the Academy's dictionary. In fact, this is a common problem in the dictionaries that the Academy produces. The French, maintaining Malherbe's standard, take great care in debating which words should be included in their language. This is usually a long discussion. In fact, some have criticized that the Academy takes so long to discuss whether or not a word belongs in the French language that by the time they publish a new dictionary edition, it is outdated (Nadeau & Barlow, 2006). Yet the Academy continues its work. And, as Steele (2002) points out in his French culture guide, this is not surprising. He mentions that "this symbolizes the long-standing role of the Académie: to represent tradition and oppose innovation" (p. 118). From this, we see that the French are more concerned with correct usage of the language than with documenting current usage.

In fact, this strict maintenance of the language enabled it to disperse. It also ensured that French was able to hold its own against English and German, which were its contenders in the nineteenth century. Since French had been the language of "Europe's largest country and strongest continental power until the eighteenth century" (Nadeau & Barlow, 2006, p. 276), the language carried with it a certain sense of political supremacy and diplomatic clout. It was the language of the English court under the rule of several kings throughout the middle ages. William the Conqueror, who originally came from Normandy, brought his language with him. French became a political language and its correlation to power drew a great deal of attention. It "became a desired commodity that was indispensable for practicing the art of communication—whether spoken or written—and the undisputed medium of culture and refinement…In the eighteenth century the French language, with its trappings of prosperity and leisure, represented all the happiness that could be had" (Nadeau & Barlow, 2006, pp. 119-120). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this method of thinking gave rise to *salons*, a type of forum, in which men and women freely discussed ideas, poetry, politics, and quotidian life. During the Enlightenment period, those who valued reason became highly valued in Europe. People prized the opportunity to assert their opinion, so they would attend these *salons*, were they would speak French and have philosophical, linguistic, political, and literary debates. To generalize, in a way, the French language created a type of culturally elite and powerful thinkers who would gather in small groups to discuss current affairs and prognosticate about the future of civilization.

Although the French preferred to keep their *salons* exclusive, their discussions became a way of socializing and spreading the arts. “People wanted to speak French because it gave them access to what was modern, sophisticated and state-of-the-art” (Nadeau & Barlow, 2006, p. 241). Many great literary accomplishments came about because of French. The French language fostered a literary tradition that gave rise to such popular writers as Alexandre Dumas, famous for his novels such as *Les Trois Mousquetaires (The Three Musketeers), Le Comte de Monte-Cristo (The Count of Monte Cristo),* and *The Man in the Iron Mask*. Dumas preached “one for all, and all for one,” a maxim that is reflected today in the French motto of “*Liberté, égalité, fraternité*.” This type of politically engaged literature was only the beginning.

Alexandre Dumas may have invented the popular historic novel (Nadeau & Barlow, 2006), but he was not the only French author to have contributed to progressive French literature. Other major canonical authors originated in France such as Gustave Flaubert, who introduced literary realism, and Émile Zola, who has been crowned the father of naturalism. Jules Verne, who was a great inspiration to Walt Disney, is credited with creation of science fiction. With authors pursuing their own styles, we can see how the different genres of literature were created in France.

Another ubiquitous French author in the Francophone world is Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. Although he is well known for his classic novel *Le Petit Prince*, Saint-Exupéry was actually an aviator. His novel has become an icon in French literature, even today

(Encyclopedia Britannica, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry**).** In favor of the values of remaining forever innocent, Saint Exupéry (2001) incorporates the French wit and wisdom.

> *Les grandes personnes ne comprennent jamais rien toutes seules, et c'est fatigant, pour les enfants, de toujours et toujours leur donner des explications* (Adults never understand anything by themselves, and it's tiring, for children, to always give an explanation) (p. 2).
>
> *Il faut exiger de chacun ce que chacun peut donner, reprit le roi. L'autorité repose d'abord sur la raison. Si tu ordonnes à ton peuple d'aller se jeter à la mer, il fera la révolution. J'ai le droit d'exiger l'obéissance parce que mes ordres sont raisonnables* (I can only require from each person that which each person can give, explained the king. Authority rests on reason. If you order the people to throw themselves in the sea, they will revolt. I have the right to demand obedience because my orders are reasonable) (p. 31-32).

Because of its format and universal appeal, *Le Petit Prince* has spread not only throughout France, but worldwide. It has been translated into over 160 languages (Nadeau & Barlow, 2006).

Continuing this very broad overview of select examples of major French canonical authors who have contributed to growth and global expansion of the French language, Victor Hugo also contributed to the worldwide spread of French culture. His novel *Les Misérables* has been translated into multiple languages, giving numerous cultures the opportunity to dive into the history of the political situation that existed in France in the nineteenth century. For anyone who has read the unabridged version of this novel, it is easy to see that Hugo takes a good deal of time and paper to express his political views. Having exiled himself due to the current state of the government, Hugo supplies a great deal of cultural background through the now popular novel.

However, such well-known canonical pieces of literature are not the only examples of how French culture and language have become globally important in the arts over time. For example, cinematography was created in France by Auguste and Louis Lumière (Encyclopedia Brittanica, Lumière Brothers). Currently, thousands of people gather every year to attend the Cannes Film Festival, held in the south of France. The film industry in France remains strong and relatively well funded today. To generalize, cinema, and particularly independent cinema, has become a permanent fixture and influence in modern French society and French film is known and respected globally.

We can add to the overview of the influence and the spread of French journalism, television, and technology. Currently, for example, *Elle* (and other popular magazines) is produced in France with an English version here in the United States. Although it is known best in its American version, *Elle* is published in an additional 37 languages besides French. *Le Monde*, one of the popular papers in Paris can be found at newsstands or on the web. TV5, an international television network broadcast in French, has established itself as the third most popular network in the world, following behind CNN and MTV. The French have made additional contributions to the modern world by bringing the metric system, the Suez Canal, and the Civil Code. In addition, they added smart cards, fiber optics, HDTV, the Concorde and high-speed trains (Nadeau & Barlow, 2003, 2006). The world has greatly been affected by France's strong influence over these technological advances.

French contribution to current affairs doesn't stop at these inventions. The French have manifested their presence in other areas as well. Culture author Barry Tomlin (2003) states that:

> It is worth remembering that for three centuries French was the international language of diplomacy and intellectual exchange; that France had a huge empire, with outposts in America, India, the Far East, Africa, and the Caribbean as late as 1960; that English is imbued with words of French origin; and that the American War of independence was supported by French troops and sparked France's own epochal revolution in 1789 (p. 18).

As Tomalin points out, French was used for diplomatic purposes. That is still the case today. The African Union has chosen French to stand as one of its official languages. We can add to that list the organizations for which French is a working language such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Human Rights Commission, the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), the International Labor bureau, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the International Committee of the Red Cross, Intelsat, Doctors without Borders, and the Union of International Organization. While there is a decline in the use of French at the United Nations, it still dominates other official languages, coming in second to English (Nadeau & Barlow, 2006). It is still listed as an official language of the European Union. Since French has dominated so many countries to this point (namely those in Africa), it will continue to maintain a high status in the U.N. as long as those countries want to be represented. Nadeau and Barlow (2006) further point out that "working in French and English, diplomats had to clarify their ideas, because the spirit of French favours precise definitions" (p. 283). Using this

definition, we can see how the exactitude of the language and knowledge of its nuances would be highly preferred in negotiations.

Yet even though French plays a vital world role today, this isn't the first time in history that has been the case. During France's colonial period, France sought out terrain in modern day Canada, various islands in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, North America, and Africa. These colonies were under France's protection and encouraged to adopt elements of French culture and the French language. After some time, the colonies sought independence or were offered such by French president Charles de Gaulle in 1958. French-Guiana, Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Réunion remain a part of France (Nadeau & Barlow, 2006). Though the French language has positive associations in these regions, that is not necessarily the case with Africa.

The French not only used their language and culture to colonize other areas, but they also used it to dominate and exploit other cultures. Algeria is a prime example of this. A brief general synopsis of its long and complicated history will be given to support the point.

After colonization, Algeria became a territory of France. The French saw Algeria as an opportunity to increase their status in the world. From 1848 through 1890, the French migrated to the country, positioning themselves far and wide. As colonizers do, they reserved all of the best land for themselves and banished the local Muslim population to the objectionable parts in a period of restructuring. They settled themselves into over 700 towns that were created especially for the French. They

established themselves as the government and allowed the Muslims to be in charge of nothing but their own local interests, in effect, denying them basic civil rights (Nadeau & Barlow, 2003). With little choice in the matter, the Algerians felt dominated, oppressed, and humiliated. With strong feelings of resentment, they revolted. After a long war (1954-1962), there are still hard feelings today among many in both countries because of the intensity of the war.

Following the Algerian War, bad feelings persisted on both sides, though it is not common knowledge outside of France. In fact, it was not until 1995 that former French president Jacques Chirac even admitted (on behalf of the French people) that the war had happened, though he still didn't go into detail about anything specific. Algeria remembers to this day how the French imposed themselves on their country. The Algerian government has not promoted French to official national status, even though a good majority of the population continues to speak it (Nadeau & Barlow, 2006).

It is understandable why Algeria attempts to eradicate French from its national life. However, Algerians are not alone in their resentment for being dominated. For most societies, the colonizers tend to eradicate the local culture with their aggression. The French, as colonizers, demonstrated a tenacious determination in their colonization. They wanted to create a larger French empire, adopting those who would put the State first and making them French. In fact, Nadeau and Barlow (2006) go so far as to say that "for the French, the ultimate objective of colonization was cultural assimilation" (p. 195). With their colonization, they imposed their government. They brought their own

education system and demanded that it become the standard. Though this assimilation has had both positive and negative effects in countries throughout Africa, it can definitely be said that those effects are lasting.

The education system in African countries today is based on the French system. Due to various factors, especially the cost involved to change the entire system, French persists today as the language of instruction in some African countries that are former colonies. In addition, as Reagan (2000) has pointed out, most African societies have traditionally functioned in an oral system, even if they have a written literature. Thus French remains, with its comprehensive grammar system and precise definitions, the most taught language even in the postcolonial classroom setting. This may be attributed to the fact that French presents a neutral standard that avoids choosing one African ethnic group over another (Nadeau & Barlow, 2006). This is not to say that African French doesn't add to the language. Congolese poet Gérard-Félix Tchicaya U Tam'si stated, *"La langue française me colonise et je la colonise à mon tour"* ("The French language colonized me and I am colonizing it in turn") (*Les enjeux de la francophonie)*. In African French, many variations on the Parisian standard can be found. For one brief example, the word *droiter* in African French can be translated as to make a right turn, whereas in Parisian French, one must say *tourner à droit* (to turn to the right). Francophones in other countries have put their own cultural stamp on French.

However, education wasn't necessarily a negative thing in all African countries. Senegal, which today still supports the use of French in its country, is an example of a former colony maintaining French. Nadeau and Barlow (2006) point out that "French remains Senegal's language of social promotion, and just learning it opens a world of possibilities" (p. 296). Senegal is well known in the literary community. In fact, one of its former presidents, Léopold Sédar Senghor, still promotes the use of French. The Senegalese have added to the French literary community the concept of *negritude*, which is a manifestation of the feelings the local population had against French colonial racism. As Senegalese speakers of the French language, the people have the opportunity to connect with other cultures through this lingua franca. They are tied to other cultures because of French. Nadeau and Barlow (2006) assert that "Francophones are also united in their strong adherence to norms, contrary to English speakers, because French relies on strict written rules to define its grammar, lexicon and syntax" (p. 12). The Senegalese can assert their culture and their ideas through the strict regulation of the French that they learned in school.

The education system is not the only trace of French colonialism in Africa. For example, in government policies and administration in Madagascar, French is peppered throughout. Backed by the French Army in 1895 and 1896, the colony went about its standard business in the language of the domineering party. Bloch (195) shows us that "the matters which most concerned the peasants were the payment of taxation and, perhaps even more important, the carrying out of various forms of forced labor" (p. 195). This demonstrates how French became the domineering and exploiting presence

in the colony. The language itself became associated with authority and condescension and the citizens developed a negative colonial association with it.

What is most evident in the French's former dictatorial role in Madagascar today is when it is used. Malagasy citizens rarely boast, nor are they aggressive. They are typically overly polite and express that in their mother tongue. However, aggressive and arrogant characteristics are perceived as rooted in French culture and would have manifested themselves during the French term of administration. The French language can currently be found in Malagasy society when its citizens are inebriated and completely unaware of the need to be polite. But most interestingly, French is used to speak to their cattle (Bloch, 1998). This brings up an interesting point. Why would farmers speak to their cattle in a language that they rebel against? Bloch poignantly states:

> Just as French is used for communication by the totally powerful colonials or administrators to the totally powerless peasants, the totally powerful cattle owner addresses his totally powerless cattle in French using the analogous model of the colonial relationships which contrasts so sharply with the entirely different social relationship between peasants which are transacted in Malagasy (p. 195).

It is culturally significant that the Malagasy population has continued the tradition of the overlords, only shifting it to their relationship with cows. This illustrates DeCapua and Wintergerst's (2004) statement that "a culture's beliefs, values, and norms are reflected and reinforced by the discourse patterns of a language" (p. 242). We can see how French has used its language and its culture to dominate and hegemonically exploit

other cultures, which have in turn taken the French language and incorporated and adapted it for their own purposes.

It is also important to add that other societies, whether Francophone or not, have in turn, exploited the French culture and language. The French have spread their language and culture over different spheres, both geographical and generational. The best example of this is in the realm of gastronomy. Haute cuisine established its birthplace as France, but it has since taken up a summer home in the United States. Tomalin (2003) aptly says, "It will not have escaped your notice that France regards itself as the world's center of fine cuisine" (p. 106). The reason the French continue to think this, apart from French pride and patriotism, is that the rest of the world supports their claim.

Already during the Norman-French occupation of England, "French became essential for any chef with ambition, and remains so today, which is why people still speak of *entrées, hors d'oeuvres, casseroles, vinaigrettes,* and *meringue*, to name but a few French gastronomic terms used in English" (Nadeau & Barlow, p. 245). Le Cordon Bleu, a reputable and highly regarded French cooking school, has established itself as an institution in various countries teaching the much sought after French techniques.

For those individuals who are not familiar with the haute cuisine lexicon, it is possible to speak of common foods and immediately see their French roots. For example, soup, restaurant, sauce, croissant, and crepes are fundamental dining terms in English. A good French wine is a highly regarded (and quite pricey) addition to any

meal. The French may have originally claimed these items as their own, but English has incorporated them (along with 45% of modern day English which was borrowed from French (Schmidt, Williams, & Wenzel, 2000)). In incorporating other languages, English is a melting pot of other cultures.

Since all language is infused with culture, it is impossible to extricate one from the other. DeCapua and Wintergerst (2004) add that "because culture is part of most contexts, communication is rarely culture free" (p. 261). In spreading their language over such large terrain, the French not only established their language, but their culture. They have used their language and culture throughout history to unite people, to create both a standard French and a cultural elite that speaks it, to socialize and spread the arts and technology to a variety of people, to enlarge their borders through colonization, to dominate and exploit the cultures with which they came into contact, and to identify their position in the realm of gastronomy. As these influences are still felt strongly around the world, learners of the French language also have numerous and rich sources for studying Francophone culture.

ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION OF TEACHING VIDEO

During my first semester in the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program, I made a video of myself teaching. The video was made in front of other MSLT students who did not speak French.

While in my first semester, I was still unsure what elements of my teaching style were effective. I created a lesson plan in French and attempted to engage the students. After watching the video, and after establishing what is effective French teaching, I have found that my lesson did not evoke the kind of response for which I was looking.

For example, I believe in a student-centered classroom where group work is required. The lesson that I presented to the MSLT students required more participation from the instructor than the students. I have since changed that particular lesson plan to include more group exercises and less instruction by me. This allows the students to negotiate meaning and to learn the language, not learn about the language.

The video did demonstrate my knowledge of French, which is an important part of my teaching philosophy. However, I would prefer that my knowledge of French is used to help the students understand the grammar better and to form their own sentences. I feel that the video was more of a display of my French knowledge than evoking the language from the students.

I was able to give a little feedback to the students from time to time. However, the majority of the students in this particular classroom did not speak French and therefore needed more encouragement than correction in this situation. That is not typically the case. Since I had been in class with these students for a semester at the

point that the video was taken, there was a enough familiarity to create a positive environment which helped with the encouragement that I provided.

Finally, watching this video demonstrated to me that there is room for much improvement. I believe that one of the characteristics of an effective French instructor is the ability to recognize when changes need to be made. I know that I was not an effective instructor in the lesson that I prepared for the video and it was clear that my methods needed to be improved.

I have learned many things since my first semester in the program. Watching the video of my teaching from two years ago has demonstrated to me the value of knowing the students, requiring them to work together in groups so that they each get the opportunity to develop their skills, and creating a dynamic classroom environment. Moreover, it showed me that I cannot be the only person in the room speaking French. Though I have knowledge of the subject, the goal is to encourage the students to use the language that they already know to perform the given task.

I was not impressed with the instructor that I was during my first semester in the program and I hope to say that I will never repeat the mistakes that I made during that video.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

I have written this annotated bibliography to demonstrate the literature that was of interest to me during my time in the program. I have organized the bibliography in alphabetical sections. I have started by grouping the bibliography by articles and books treating literature, general teaching, language teaching and learning, and French culture.

Adair-Hauck, B., & Donato, R. (2002). The PACE model -- actualizing the standards through storytelling: "le bras, la jambe, et le ventre". *The French Review*, *2*(76), 278-296.

Summary

To introduce culture into the classroom, the authors used a Francophone story to create a lesson plan for their students. This lesson followed the PACE format (Presentation, Attention, Co-Construction, and Extension) which is typically targeted at intermediate or advanced students.

In order to set up the activity, the teachers present a pre-listening activity that includes a description of the background of the story and useful vocabulary. The storytelling phase may include props, gestures, illustrations, and dramatization. During the attention phase, the students focus on form so that the information becomes more salient. In the co-construction process, the students form hypotheses, assumptions, and questions. Finally, during extension, the students are able to negotiate meaning.

Reaction

This article incorporates numerous effective techniques. Students are encouraged to use TPR, Venn diagrams, charts, maps, the whiteboard, and several other tools in order to perform the entire PACE model. It incorporates reading, speaking, listening, writing, and cultural information. Every learning style is addressed. Additionally, the students have the opportunity to learn the grammar rules implicitly instead of reciting rote rules.

Not only does this seem like a good approach from an instructor's standpoint, but the students would enjoy doing it. They would have the opportunity to get involved in what they're doing. Moreover, it would create a memorable experience, so the information would be more salient. The PACE model seems to be an effective approach to teaching the Five C's in the classroom.

Bamford, J., & Day, R. (2004). *Extensive reading activities for teaching language*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Summary

This book is a collection of activities that an instructor can use to integrate literature in the target language into a classroom. The authors suggest that there are multiple ways to get the students interested in reading on their own. Additionally, the authors give various activities that would appeal to students who may not be interested in literature. Frequently, students do not spend enough time reading in the classroom because they are involved in learning the grammar. These authors give instructors ideas for getting students involved with literature at home.

They also suggest using these activities in the classroom as a way to effectively assess the students without giving them the standard test assessment. Students can go through the activities described in the book to show that they are learning the material instead of taking a quiz. Several chapters focus on how to improve oral fluency and writing through literature in the target language.

Reaction

I think this book should be on every instructor's shelf. Assessment is continually before us and these authors have given us ample opportunity to assess our students without raising the affective filter. Moreover, they create activities that stimulate the students and produce a more exciting learning environment.

I also like how the authors give various examples for how to use the activities for either a beginning classroom or a more advanced classroom. The adaptability of the activities makes for easier lesson planning for the instructor. Overall, this book can be used for any foreign language classroom and for any level of student.

Strunk, Jr., W., & White, E. (2000). *The Elements of style* (4th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Longman.

Summary

The Elements of Style was written to showcase the basics of good writing to all writers. The authors discuss what is appropriate language, how to coherently put it together, and what should not be done with English. They remind readers that written text should be simple, without added flair and urge all writers to simplify their writing.

Reaction

This book is good for any writer. It has advice that can be applied to any language. I believe its wisdom can apply to a beginning French writer. The authors

describe how to develop a style and how to be concise. While writing in a second language, it would be beneficial for students to heed this advice. I have found that many beginning students spend an inordinate amount of time trying to use words and vocabulary that are still foreign to them. If they would do as Strunk and White suggest, they would find the simple way to tell the story. Not only would it save them a great deal of time, but they would be able to write more freely.

As for me, I especially liked the section on commonly misused words. I have tried to make an effort to be correct in my grammar for years. However, there were a few exceptions listed in the book that have escaped my attention. Knowing what word to use in which situation will not only improve my English grammar, but will also help me understand the difference between some related French words.

Bain, K. (2004). *What the best college teachers do.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Summary

Ken Bain is interested in knowing what made the best college teachers great. He wondered if it was a collection of practices, personality traits, or knowledge. This book, written for all college teachers, is a description of the study he performed to answer these questions.

Bain first defines what it means to be an excellent teacher. He says that it wasn't just classroom performance that was of interest. Many times, it was obvious why students gravitated toward these excellent teachers. Other times, he had to investigate further to find what made them so remarkable.

He discusses in depth the preparation of their courses, how they conduct their courses, what they expect from their students, how they treat their students, and what type of assessments the teachers use. While presenting what it means to achieve excellence, he inspires all college teachers to become better.

Reaction

After I finished reading this book, I understood a little bit more about teaching in a college environment, an environment that is extremely dynamic, diverse, and has no one definition of excellence. I would like to be an excellent instructor and I know that there is no single way to do that. However, I liked that this study was performed over multiple campuses and with multiple subjects. Bain was able to show that it doesn't matter what the subject matter is, it matters more that the instructor knows how to teach it.

Brookfield, S. (1990). *The skillful teacher*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Summary

This book was written for college instructors, both new and old, who care about their profession. Though it was not specifically written for those who teach a second language, I found it useful for instructors in my field.

Brookfield broaches many subjects such as group work, lecturing, discussions, the classroom, and basic realities of being an instructor at a college level. He encourages instructors to create a community of learners and to not be discouraged when events do not go exactly as planned.

He also offers many suggestions on how to get students involved in their education. While most college courses are set up in a lecture style, Brookfield realizes that there are other effective ways of teaching. He talks about role playing and discussions which can both be used in the French language classroom.

Reaction

Though this book does not provide a simple solution to all problems, it gives instructors inspiration and advice to reinvent their teaching methods. It caters to diversity and variety in the classroom.

The chapter on discussions was especially helpful to me. It challenges the instructor while showing that a discussion should be used to help students reinvent their thought process. Moreover, it shows that there are intellectual and emotional

connections that need to be made with the material that is being discussed. In a language classroom, if intellectual and emotional connections can be made, the material is more readily learned and more effectively utilized.

Freire, P. (2005). ***Teachers as cultural workers: Letters to those who dare teach*****.** **Boulder, CO: Westview Press.**

Summary

Freire has become one of the most well-known educators of the twentieth century. He speaks directly to all educators in his book, not just those who teach a second language.

Freire shows instructors how to seek for answers within and to look critically at their teaching. He challenges instructors to understand that there is not just one possible way that learners learn. He also states that instructors should not be content with a stagnant methodology. They should constantly be seeking to improve their teaching and the quality of their instruction as the students in the classrooms grow and develop.

Reaction

Though I found many inspiring quotes in this book, one of them stood out to me. Freire states that “if an obstacle cannot be overcome right away, one must determine what steps to take toward becoming better capable of overcoming it tomorrow” (p. 50). This truly sums up my opinion of language learning. It is a continual challenge to learn

how to communicate with another human being. One must make constant effort to be grammatically, pragmatically, and culturally appropriate. There are successes and there are failures and we must simply try again the next day.

This book should be read by anyone who feels the draw of becoming an instructor. It is a good example of ideal practices, but also quite inspiring. It can be used by any instructor in any field. It shows the value of reevaluating our techniques and ensuring that all learners are included in the learning community.

McKeachie, W.J., & Svinicki, M. (2006). *McKeachie's teaching tips: Strategies, research, and theory for college and university teachers*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Summary

McKeachie and Svinicki give new college and university teachers valuable advice, information on what to expect, and approaches to teaching a class. They describe the classroom setting, how to deal with problem students, what types of things should be covered in a syllabus, how to create a fair test, and different cultural approaches to learning. They help instructors realize what steps they need to take in order to prepare for their class. In addition, they give great information on how to make lesson plans beneficial for the students.

Each chapter in the book covers a different topic. It is well organized and easy to read. This particular version of the book has been updated to include information about technology that can be used in the classroom.

Reaction

Though McKeachie and Svinicki are writing for all college and university teachers, and do not specifically focus on anything language related, they were able to give me helpful information on what to do if a student is cheating, how to handle misbehavior, and how to create a successful test. I have highlighted many sections of the book, realizing that I should read this book over and over during my career. It is invaluable and should be read by all beginning instructors, no matter what their area of study.

Engwall, O., & Bälter, O. (2007). Pronunciation feedback from real and virtual language teachers. *Computer Assisted Language Learning, 20*(3), 235-262.

Summary

The authors argue that computer-assisted pronunciation training (CAPT) should give pronunciation feedback at the phoneme level in order to be effective. This study introduced a virtual tutor in an effort to improve the CAPT system. They also discuss what types of errors should be corrected, when those errors should be corrected, and the method that instructors should use to correct the errors. The authors describe the role that the students play in their own correction. The role of the teacher and virtual tutor should be an active role in order to provide the most effective corrections because students don’t always know the most effective method to correct their own mistakes.

Reaction

Since the debate of how to correct student errors is a very commonly recurring one, I found this article very helpful. The authors give a very detailed description of which errors require feedback and which can be left alone. In a classroom setting, where anxiety and social face are important factors in learning a language, it is important for the instructor to provide the right type of feedback. Though the feedback required depends on the student, this article gives instructors a solid base from which to start.

Hauptman, P. (2000). Some hypotheses on the nature of difficulty and ease in second language reading: An application of schema theory. *Foreign Language Annals*, 33(6), 622-31.

Summary

This article presents the application of Schema Theory for students reading a text in a foreign language. While reading a foreign language article, students may have difficulty with content and structure. Each culture has a specific way of writing and students may have trouble adapting to the new format. If the text is augmented with facilitators such as "signallers" and other clues, it produces a more palatable text for an intermediate learner.

Hauptman describes how pictures or charts may aid each student to follow along with the text. Moreover, if the text is in the genre of interest of the students, it will be

easier to read. If the language teacher draws upon the background experience of the student, the text will become more meaningful to the students.

Reaction

After having read this article, I noticed how many French textbooks have photos, realistic ads, or maps included in reading sections. Though I had seen them before, it never really occurred to me that they were strategically placed for student benefit. Reading this article caused me to realize that I should be using those icons to my advantage. Moreover, it caused me to realize that in comparing and contrasting the differences between French and American culture, I can create a more meaningful experience for the students in my classroom, using authentic literature.

Herron, C., & Tomasello, M. (1988). Learning grammatical structures in a foreign language: Modelling versus feedback. *The French Review, 61*(6), 910-922.

Summary

This article is a study on the effectiveness of instructor modeling versus feedback in the French language classroom. Modeling required the students to listen to the instructor whereas feedback required active participation by the students. The feedback technique required the students to correct themselves with additional help from the instructor. Since the students were engaged in their education and had the opportunity to think critically about the functionality of the language, they performed better overall on the test. The motivation and interest of the students in the activity

was much higher compared to those in the modeling group, who were required just to listen to the instructor.

Reaction

This study proves that students who take an active role in their education will be better users of the language, and therefore will be quicker to learn the language. It also proves that feedback is imperative in learning a second language. As long as the feedback is quality feedback and the students make the effort to produce the correct form of the language, they will acquire a better understanding of the language. Though this study was done for the French language classroom, the findings could transfer to any other language classroom. As an instructor, it is my responsibility to create an environment where the students do the talking and I provide quality feedback when errors are inevitably produced.

Lightbown, P., & Spada, M. (1999). *How languages are learned*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Summary

The authors of this book present a summary of the different beliefs about language learning. They present a variety of views on first language learning and then address second language learning. The authors include various examples from studies, both personal and from others in the field, that can be modified for use in the language classroom.

The authors look at how language learning occurs from the point of view of the student. They discuss many factors such as motivation, error correction, prior knowledge, and their effect on language learning. Then, the authors examine how second/foreign languages are being taught. They give the reader the opportunity to reflect on the different methodologies in an effort to determine which methodology is the most fitting for a language classroom.

Finally, the authors include a glossary of common language learning terms. While it is by no means a comprehensive glossary, I found it useful as a quick reference guide. It is concise and can be frequently utilized by anyone interested in second language acquisition.

Reaction

This overview of language methodologies helped me see that there is no one correct way to teach a language. I also appreciated the examples from research studies. While I do not find all the methodologies listed in the book appealing, I did find my own teaching style included here.

More than just my own teaching style, I found helpful activities and questionnaires that can be modified and used in my classroom. This book can be used as a reference for my current career as a student and my future career as a language instructor.

MacIntyre, P. D. (1995). How does anxiety affect second language learning? A reply to Sparks and Ganschow. *The Modern Language Journal, 79*(1), 90-99.

Summary

This article is a response to Sparks and Ganschow's linguistic coding deficit hypothesis which states that individual differences in the achievement of language are caused by language aptitude. However, MacIntyre believes that anxiety, cognition, and behavior are interconnected and cyclical in nature. Instead of anxiety being a byproduct of the slow language learner, it is instead one of the causes. Since anxiety is only one side of this multi-faceted pyramid, it is necessary for the instructor to realize that there may be other factors at work such as motivation, attitude toward the language, and previous failures. Moreover, MacIntyre suggests that anxiety plays a key role in how students demonstrate the knowledge that they have acquired of the second language and how it may interfere with their ability to do so.

Reaction

This article is important for any second language instructor because it emphasized the need to be aware of students' needs. Some students, due to anxiety, need an opportunity to collect their thoughts before they can answer a question. When called upon, some students, due to previous achievement, may volunteer readily. However, as instructors, it is our job to evaluate student performance taking in all factors, especially classroom anxiety. We need to be aware of the implications that our teaching methods may have on our students and their performance.

Mills, N., Pajares, F., & Herron, C. (2007). Self-efficacy of college intermediate French students: Relation to achievement and motivation. *Language Learning, 57*(3), 417-442.

Summary

The authors investigated how self-efficacy and self-beliefs affect the acquisition of the French language. In testing these two factors, the authors used Albert Banduara's social cognitive theory which asserts that human beings have control over their own behavior. The authors found that self-efficacious students would approach the language with mastery as the goal. This goal would strengthen their effort and intensify their resolution. They also found that female students had a higher achievement level than male students which could be attributed to their interest, enjoyment, and perception of the value of the French language.

Reaction

This article supports the theory that motivation and enjoyment of a language are major contributing factors to second language acquisition. I also found it to support the belief that women are better French learners. However, I was interested to know that the reason behind why they are better French learners is different than I originally thought. The authors assert that it is because of their interest in the language and culture and their enjoyment in learning the language. This makes perfect sense and explains the phenomenon.

After reading this article, I realized that it is my role to introduce certain masculine aspects of the language, such as logic and bluntness, so that I interest the

male students in my class. Moreover, I should make a concentrated effort to make sure that my students believe that they can accomplish the tasks that I ask them to do.

Omaggio Hadley, A. (2001). *Teaching language in context* (3rd ed.). Boston: Thomson Higher Education.

Summary

Teaching Language in Context is a compilation of theory and practical application. While Omaggio Hadley inserts her own opinion from time to time, the main objective of the book is to discuss the history and current methods in teaching a second language. It is not her goal to present specific lesson plans for the reader, but to expand the reader's knowledge used to formulate a working teaching philosophy for the individual teacher.

She divides her book into sections discussing the ACTFL guidelines of proficiency, methodology of teaching, different proficiency skills and their development, and testing. There is typically an underlying theme of integrating culture and student background into each of these sections. Omaggio Hadley introduces different points of view on each subject and adds her own as well. She makes use of examples from multiple languages in an effort to show the reader how this methodology can be applied to various foreign language classrooms.

Reaction

For me, Omaggio Hadley's book has become a reference tool, serving as an introduction to several complex ideas. It's main strengths are the numerous examples and its organization. I have also found Omaggio Hadley's book to be a supplement to several of my French texts, since she has been the author of several of them. I respect her opinion based on how she has structured other French texts and find that I am able to use it *Teaching Language in Context* in conjunction with other texts that she has written.

Pinker, S. (1994). ***The language instinct*****. New York: Harper Collins.**

Summary

Pinker has created a straightforward explanation of the structure of language. He describes how language is processed by the human brain, how children develop it and why it is difficult to learn as an adult. He also discusses why language is unique, how it has evolved and continues to change, and what we do with new exceptions that come up.

He uses countless examples of various aspects of the English language. Being very thorough in his research materials, Pinker compares various languages and their development in different parts of the world. He also states that language will continually develop and discusses how we react to the change in our language.

Reaction

I really liked the accessibility of this book. Though he presents a great amount of information, Pinker does so in a concise way. To help readers understand the metalanguage, there is a glossary at the back in case a term is unfamiliar to his audience. I like his wit and his ability to capture the reader's attention. I have already recommended that several members of my family read this book since it is so interesting. I find this book highly quotable and am glad to have read it.

Vandergrift, L. (2003). Orchestrating strategy use: Toward a model of the skilled second language listener. *Language Learning, 53*(3), 463-496.

Summary

This study was conducted in an effort to see if more-skilled and less-skilled listeners used different metacognitive strategies while listening to authentic French texts. The author found that there are, indeed, different strategies being used. The article also presents a discussion of how to develop more effective listening strategies in French language classes.

The author utilized authentic oral texts to see if they could be made more comprehensible. The selected texts were directly related to the students' lives and were examples of how the target language is used naturally. Vandergrift chose texts that were challenging but could be understood at the same time. The students were then asked to discuss their thoughts and their beliefs behind their thoughts.

Reaction

This study involved literature analysis of spoken texts. It was an opportunity for the students to listen to literature from a speaker other than their instructor. I think it is wonderful that the author found texts that would be important to the students so that they could properly engage with the text.

My favorite part of this study is the discussion at the end. Vandergrift gives an explanation as to why less-skilled learners have difficulty with authentic texts. The students are translating everything that they hear and it creates several problems. This study demonstrates why translating from one language to another doesn't work.

Carroll, R. (1988). *Cultural misunderstandings: The French-American experience.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Summary

This book contains various comparisons between American and French culture. The thing that sets this book apart is that it is written from the point of view of a French anthropologist who married an American anthropologist. She is also an educator at Oberlin College in Ohio. She has had ample experiences and is qualified to present the societal differences of the two cultures.

Carroll gives the reader a non-biased view of the differences between French and American views on multiple subjects including the home, the relationship between parents and children, the relationship between friends and neighbors, the concept of

fault, the art of conversation, and even the use of the telephone. She is able to clearly depict how major cultural differences in these areas have created misunderstandings between French and American people.

Reaction

Any American who has ever come into contact with a French person, or who intends on spending any time in France, needs to read this book. It is a window into the thought process of the French. Since the French are known to be private and do not like to discuss personal matters with strangers, it is difficult to truly learn anything about their culture until one has spent much time studying it in person.

This book allows readers to see the French culture from within. It is an in-depth and personal look at a culture from an anthropologist's point of view. It is truly a treasure for anyone who would like to study French culture.

Nadeau, J-B., & Barlow, J. (2003). *Sixty million Frenchmen can't be wrong: Why we love France but not the French*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks Inc.

Summary

This book is centered around French culture. The two authors are Québécois, but worked as journalists in France for a few years. During their time there, they noticed some significant differences between their own culture and that of the French. Each chapter of the book focuses on a different aspect of French life. The authors cover French education, French pride, foreign wars fought, privacy, government, and general attitude. It is an in-depth cross-section of a culture that is frequently stereotyped.

Reaction

As with any culture, many stereotypes have been placed upon the French. The authors of this book take the opportunity to look at the background of these stereotypes and explain not only their origins, but also their veracity or fallacies.

Beginning French students start out with an opinion of what the French look like, how the French behave, and how the French use their language. Though most of their stereotypes are incorrect, the students haven't been exposed to the French culture in such a way that these stereotypes may be proven wrong. In French language instruction, it is commonplace to teach the grammar of the language but skip over the cultural aspects of the language and society. If the students were required to read this book, it might open their eyes to the misconceptions they have previously held.

Nadeau, J., & Barlow, J. (2006). *The story of French*. New York: St Martin's Press.

Summary

This rather lengthy text takes the reader from the beginning of French to the end, creating a history of the language's origins, development, and spread. The authors show why French became a powerful European language. They also add cultural information during their explanations. In addition to the history of the French language, the authors compare the French language and its growth to the English language.

Throughout the book, the authors also explain to the reader how the language and the people developed together. They describe how the French language became an institution in France and how the people consider it to be a national treasure.

The authors also tell of how the *Académie Française* developed and its role in society today. They relate the current institution to others that were based on it. They convey how this *Académie* continues to regulate the language.

This book has several chapters dedicated to French colonization of Africa. The authors describe the history of colonization, the wars that ensued because of it, and the role that French plays on the continent today.

Reaction

In studying the French culture, it is impossible to separate the culture from the language. The French people regard their language as something to guard and a personal characteristic of what sets them apart. This book presents a case for how the two things, culture and language, became entangled and are now inseparable.

I also found it interesting that the authors incorporated so much additional regional information. Instead of focusing on how the language changed in Paris, they discuss how the French language developed throughout France.

Saint-Exupéry, A. (2001). *Le petit prince*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Children.

Summary

Le petit prince is a young philosopher who embodies the French culture. The story describes how this young man journeyed far from his planet and came to Earth. When he meets the narrator of the story, the reader begins to see the philosopher come out. The young man describes other planets that he has visited and what he learned from each of the people that he encountered.

Eventually, it is time for the young man to return to his planet. When he departs, the narrator continues to tell of this young man and how he has changed his life. He mentions how he would like to meet the young man again.

Reaction

This book is quintessentially French and can be used as an example of authentic literature. It describes how life ought to be lived, what can be learned from others, and how to see life through another point of view. It is an excellent example of French culture and is frequently used in French language classrooms.

I particularly like it for its wisdom. It is presented as a story for children, but is written with adults in mind. Wit and wisdom are interwoven throughout. One cannot read this book without gleaning philosophy and a French way of thinking.

Steele, R. (2002). *When in France, do as the French do*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Summary

For students of culture, this book is a quick reference to all things French. The author takes categories of common cultural aspects and writes a brief description of the French approach to life. He explains the correct behavior in a business situation, how to have a conversation with a French native, common abbreviations and acronyms, and general daily life in France. It is written for travelers in France who may be interested in understanding the cultural context of the country in which they will be traveling.

The book it organized by different topics. It is easy to find information on multiple cultural idiosyncrasies all in one sitting. It is written from an American perspective, so it has many subjects that would puzzle an American tourist. There is section on family, a section on friends, a section on business, and a section on food. This wide array of topics prepares a tourist for encounters with any member of the French culture.

Reaction

I think this book is good for beginning French learners. It is written in English and includes hundreds of informational websites. In addition, the author offers a variety of information on basic French culture that could easily be introduced as a supplement to any lesson.

I also like the format, with the author presenting information in small articles that can be read and digested quickly. There are entertaining quizzes throughout the

book that test for retention of information. Though the author can in no way explain what it means to be "French" in such a compact format, he makes a good effort to give the basics.

This book is good reference for students in a French classroom. The students could take a topic and, not only learn more than they knew before, but use the information in comparison with their native culture. Each topic is small and can therefore be discussed within a brief class period. It would open the eyes of the students to what French culture really means.

Tomalin, B. (2003). *Culture smart! France*. London, England: Kuperard.

Summary

This is a small, quick-reference guide to the French culture. It was published as a reference for English-speaking foreigners who would like to know more about how the French culture differs from their own. It is meant to be used in an effort to avoid culturally insensitive blunders on the part of the traveler.

The book was written for tourists, but is useful for anyone who wants to learn about the French culture. The author gives brief summaries of different topics such as history, family, or food. The topics are discussed in depth, but each gives a brief view into the culture. The author introduces basic knowledge in small doses so that the culture may be better understood by an outsider.

Reaction

This book quickly provides a look at French culture for an assumed naïve audience of North Americans. Though there isn't a lot of history in this book, it does depict some common traditions and customs that the French value. The author gives some advice on how to avoid common mistakes and slip-ups when visiting the country. I also like that the author discusses communication with the French.

The book itself is organized quite well. Since it is only meant to be a small reference, there is usually only about a paragraph's worth of information on each topic. However, the topics are organized into a well-thought out plan, and can be found easily by the reader. For anybody who would like a very brief idea of how the culture works, this book is a great reference tool.

For a beginning French student, it is difficult to glean cultural information from a grammar textbook. Therefore, Tomalin's easy guide would be good to use in introducing key cultural items to French students. If the students are taking French because they are planning a trip there, the information in this book could be used as a quick and precise description of how the French function.

LOOKING FORWARD

My career as a language instructor is far from over. In fact, it is only beginning. I intend to spread my love of the language to other students. Though I have finished a master's program in how to teach a language, that was simply another step on my journey.

I will always find opportunities to speak French. In order to improve my language skills, I will seek out French literature. Additionally, I will seek out opportunities to visit Francophone countries and to speak with native speakers. I also believe that I can seek for continual improvement by honing my lesson plans each year. Yet, even though I continue to modify my lessons, I will always have group work to ensure that the students are using the language in class. Finally, my lessons should always contain some cultural information to show how the language was shaped and how the French society, and my society, is being affected by history. These improvements will help me to become a better French instructor.

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