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# A Language Learning and Teaching Journey: Practicalities and Possibilities

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A LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING JOURNEY:  
PRACTICALITIES AND POSSIBILITIES

by

Elizabeth Irene Abell

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

of

MASTER OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Logan, Utah

2016

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## ABSTRACT

A Language Learning and Teaching Journey:  
Practicalities and Possibilities

by

Elizabeth Irene Abell: Master of Second Language Teaching  
Utah State University, 2016

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Department: Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies

Within this portfolio, the reader will find the work that the author has completed over the last two years in the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program at Utah State University and a demonstration of her professional growth as an instructor over this period of time. The first major part is the teaching philosophy, in which the author discusses: the experiences as a student that have shaped her as a teacher, the various teaching contexts in which she may work in the future, her personal philosophy of language teaching shaped by what she has learned in the MSLT program, and the lessons learned from observing her own and others' classrooms.

The second part is comprised of three artifacts written throughout the program which explore topics inspired by the everyday practicalities of language teaching. The first artifact explores student first language use in the immersion classroom and applying an understanding of this phenomenon to the foreign language classroom. The second artifact discusses vocabulary acquisition through writing tasks and concludes with a

research study proposal to better understand how different language scripts may affect vocabulary acquisition. The third artifact delves into the topic of teaching second-person pronouns (*tu* and *vous*) in the French as a foreign language classroom; the author here offers a lesson plan for teaching this nuanced aspect of francophone interaction. The portfolio concludes with three annotated bibliographies which further support the teaching philosophy in addressing three other practical aspects of language teaching: the communicative language teaching approach, motivation and anxiety in the foreign language classroom, and culture teaching with technology.

(161 pages)

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## INTRODUCTION

This portfolio is both a culmination and starting point; herein one will find the principal work that I have completed during my two years in the Master of Second Language Teaching program, but as I move forward in my teaching career, it will serve as a foundation upon which I will continue to build my teaching knowledge and skills.

As I illustrate in my personal teaching philosophy, I envision the teaching and learning of languages as a journey, but I have intentionally subtitled this journey “Practicalities and Possibilities”. Probably the most invaluable learning experience I have had in this program has been my time as a graduate instructor, during which not a day went by that I did not discover an unexpectedly challenging aspect of teaching that I felt I needed to research and master. I quickly realized that dreaming up lesson plans for an ideal class and reading theoretical explanations about how language learning *should* happen, though enjoyable, were not nearly as useful as facing the difficult, everyday practicalities of the classroom head-on. I have attempted in this portfolio to address some of these challenges, such as student first language use in the classroom, vocabulary acquisition, and motivation and anxiety in the classroom.

However, my time as a graduate instructor has also helped me to see the other side of classroom challenges and practicalities: the potential joy of discovery and true learning (for both students and teachers) that transcend any single lesson, exam, or course. I have been able to see my students struggle, hypothesize, experiment, and laugh with French. They have consistently surprised me in how they approach the tasks I design for them

and constantly remind me that the classroom is a place for both hard work and dreaming, practicalities and possibilities.

**TEACHING PHILOSOPHY**

## APPRENTICESHIP OF OBSERVATION

In the fall of 2009, when I had just begun my undergraduate studies at the University of Oklahoma, if someone had told me that I would later pursue a Master of Second Language Teaching degree, I would not have believed them. I began my time at OU studying film and business, and even though I graduated with a degree in economics and French, teaching had never been something that I had considered seriously as a career path. In retrospect, however, teaching a foreign language represents an elegant convergence of the seemingly disparate activities and interests I accumulated over my four years as an undergraduate. Luckily, my education and language learning journey up to this point have been peppered with many wonderful teachers and learning experiences, and it is increasingly clear to me how all of these have shaped my vision of the type of foreign language (FL) instructor I want to be. In this apprenticeship of observation section, I will be discussing two instructors and one experience in particular that have shaped this idea more than the others.

The first of these, and perhaps the most important, is my honors algebra and geometry teacher from high school, Ms. Ann Meyers. A former collegiate volleyball and basketball star, Ms. Meyers stood six feet, one inch tall and her voice seemed to boom over all of us nervous freshmen. I will admit that I was afraid of Ms. Meyers for perhaps only the first two weeks of freshman year, but I never stopped being afraid of disappointing her. She came to every class with remarkable energy and she expected the same from us. Passersby in the hallway at my high school were used to seeing Ms. Meyers' class doing jumping jacks or push-ups if we weren't energetic enough (or if

someone wasn't adhering to the school dress code)- no one had any doubts that her expectations for us were high and that she wasn't afraid to push us to meet them. After every quiz or test, we did test corrections, but Ms. Meyers made sure we knew that these weren't just busywork: she was the first teacher to show me how to examine my mistakes and make a conscious effort not to repeat them. It was also in her class that I first heard the word *accountability* used to speak about education. She was the first one to encourage me "to think like the test maker" while studying. In short, she was the first of my teachers to bring to my attention the process of my own learning, and I will be forever grateful to her for this. She also conducted every class and every office hour with an understanding smile, plenty of humor, and with genuine devotion to her students. Students walked out of her classroom knowing not only how to factor equations and use the quadratic formula, but also knowing how to be better students in all of their classes, and this is exactly the type of teacher I plan to be as well. Language learning in particular demands attention to the methods one uses to study, and I hope that I will be able to emulate Ms. Meyers' ability to seamlessly integrate opportunities for this type of self-examination and reflection into the rest of my course's content.

The second instructor who has influenced what kind of language teacher I plan to be is also from my years in high school, and Madame Brown, my French II teacher, was undoubtedly the spark that ignited my enthusiasm for learning French. Like Ms. Meyers, Madame Brown's energy and indefatigable kindness in the classroom could work miracles. With her sweet smile and encouraging words, she could coax even the most stubborn students to tell her about what they were going to do over the weekend using the *futur proche*. She always met class disruptions with a kind smile and a nudge back to the



topic at hand, a rather different approach than that employed by many other teachers at my Catholic high school. In situations where other teachers might get visibly frustrated with their students, Madame Brown's patience did not falter, and she met our frustration with gentle encouragement and hints to get us on the right track. It was also clear that Madame Brown lived and breathed French: she always called her students by their chosen French names, even outside of class; she was always quick to greet her students with a "Bonjour! Ça va?" during lunch; and of all of my high school French instructors, she used the target language (TL) the most. In Madame Brown's classroom, we weren't afraid of making mistakes or looking silly as we struggled with pronouncing French words, and I hope to create the same environment for my students. Though she was only my French instructor for one year, my time in Madame Brown's class has made a lasting impression on how I want to teach. Primarily, I hope to be able to echo her kindness and enthusiasm to my students, to make it clear to them that they are welcome to make mistakes in front of me, and that I appreciate any and all efforts they make in class.

Without the encouragement and kindness of Madame Brown, I probably never would have reached what I consider a turning point in my French education. It was a fleeting moment at a restaurant in the south of France during my class trip in March of 2008. As a small group of American teenagers, most of us visiting Europe for the first time, we were unsure if the carafe of water sitting on our table was free or if we had to pay for it. This was a day where we could choose where to eat lunch, so our trip chaperones were at another restaurant, and we debated briefly among ourselves. When we were unable to reach a consensus, I decided to ask a waiter. This was possibly the first all-French conversation I'd had with a French native speaker, and it only consisted of

three words: once I'd made eye contact with the waiter, I pointed to the bottle of water and said "C'est gratuit?" As he placed something on nearby table, he quickly said "Oui" and hurried away, probably wondering why I had even asked such a thing. I will never forget, however, the rush of satisfaction from that brief exchange. I knew that what I had learned in my classes had not been useless, and that I was *actually* capable of communicating with French native speakers. In my own classroom, I want to help my students build their confidence to have their own moments like this one. It was a quick decision to step out of my comfort zone and ask the server the question, and a very brief exchange, but it made a world of difference as I continued to learn French. I hope that my students will walk out of my classroom with that extra ounce of courage, that additional bit of audacity that will push them to take a chance when the moment presents itself.

To sum up with the words of Ms. Frizzle from the book and television series *The Magic School Bus*, I want my students to "take chances, make mistakes, [and] get messy" in my classroom. I want to instill them with the confidence to step out of their comfort zone with their language in and outside of my classroom when they get the opportunity. I want them to be unafraid of the messy aspects of language learning, like the untranslatable expressions, unfamiliar spelling patterns, and difficult new sounds. I want to then give them the tools to examine their mistakes and evaluate their study methods, so that they can continue to improve, and see learning a language as an enriching process and not just something to do for a grade. Finally, I want my students to leave my classroom feeling supported and encouraged by how I teach, how I react to their difficulties and frustrations with patience and understanding, and how I do my best to help them on their life-long language learning journeys.

## PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

I see myself working in a variety of contexts as a foreign language teacher, either teaching French in the United States or teaching English abroad. Having taught students at the middle school, high school, and postsecondary level, I think that I could be a successful language instructor in any of these environments. Currently, I am aiming to teach English abroad at either the high school or postsecondary level. As I have experience at the collège (middle school) and lycée (high school) levels in the French educational system, I think I could be very successful in implementing what I have learned at an International Baccalaureate high school, or in a post-high school vocational program (Brevet de Technicien Supérieur) in France, but I know that my skills would also be applicable in other international settings. I also see myself working to develop materials for foreign language courses in the United States or in a Francophone country.

## TEACHING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

### **Introduction**

Throughout my own process of learning French over the last ten years, applying the metaphor of language learning as a journey has helped me to keep my learning in perspective and learn from all of the roadblocks and detours that I have encountered so far. My foreign language teaching practices and beliefs can also best be explained with the journey metaphor by providing answers to these three essential questions about any trip: Where are we going? How are we getting there? and Who is coming on the trip? I have made many road trips of varying distances, both alone and with friends. From these experiences, I know that clarity of destination, decisiveness in choosing a route, and consideration for all those making the journey also apply to the endeavor of language learning. In this teaching philosophy, I will address all three of these questions to illustrate how I envision language teaching, based on what I have learned in the Master of Second Language Teaching program.

The first question (Where are we going?) addresses what I teach in my language classroom, i.e., my course and lesson objectives, which are guided by the Standards for Foreign Language Learning (2006, 2014) and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Can-Do Statements (2013). The second question (How are we getting there?) explores the specific methods I use in my classroom to achieve these objectives, which fall under the umbrella of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. The third question (Who is coming on the trip?) addresses the importance of context when implementing CLT and examining the specific characteristics (e.g., proficiency levels, age group(s), cultural biases, identities, etc.) of

the group of students before deciding which aspects of CLT would be most effective for their learning.

### **Where are we going? (5 C's/ Can-Do Statements)**

The Standards for Foreign Language Learning (SFL), now known as the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages, and the ACTFL Can-Do Statements provide language teachers with clear guidelines for communication-oriented classroom goals, and also guidelines for what the students should be gaining from the language class beyond language proficiency itself. The Can-Do Statements articulate what exactly students should be able to do with the language at the different ACTFL proficiency levels. The Five C's of Foreign Language Education, or the five goal areas of the SFL, address not only communication, but how students are to explore culture, connect their foreign language (FL) skills to what they are learning in other disciplines, compare the target culture and language to their native culture and language, and apply their language skills outside of the classroom (NSFLEP, 2014). Though it can be easy to get caught up in the linguistic features and nuances of a language, I consider the things my students learn beyond the language itself to also be vitally important and elements that I actively strive to incorporate into my classroom.

The first goal of the Five C's, Communication, draws our attention to the three modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational) and makes it clear that students must become proficient in working in all three modes, not just one or two (NSFLEP). The other four C's (Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) provide a clear framework for helping students become global citizens in their language classrooms (NSFLEP, 2014). Though all of the latter four standards are

crucial to effective and meaningful language learning, I put extra emphasis on the final two, Comparisons and Communities, in my classroom.

The Comparisons standard calls for students to use the target language to make both “cultural” and “language” comparisons between the target language and culture and their native language and culture, and to “investigate, explain, and reflect upon the nature of language [and] the concept of culture” (NFSLEP, p .1). As I currently teach university students, and will probably be teaching secondary or postsecondary learners at different levels of language proficiency in the future, I believe this deeper reflection on culture and the nature of language is a vital part of their language learning experience. Personally, I have seen the greatest change in my thinking since I began learning French in terms of how I look at my own native language and culture and how I view other cultures, including French and francophone culture. I have learned to view cultures and languages more objectively and in the larger contexts of their histories and the history of the world. This has helped me develop more thoughtful viewpoints on various issues, especially when it comes to regarding my own country critically, and this is a skill every global citizen must possess. As Downes’ research on Japanese students in an English immersion setting shows, language learning can bring about a critical awareness of the students’ native culture that is essential to being an informed and truly global citizen (Downes, 2001).

The Communities goal states that students must use the language beyond the classroom in the global community and also “set goals and reflect on their progress in using languages for enjoyment, enrichment, and advancement” (NFSLEP, 1). This standard speaks to fostering student motivation, which is an integral part of a successful

language class for both secondary and postsecondary learners. In my classroom, I strive to make the communicative activities relevant and interesting for the students and to also show them how they can engage in French with topics that interest, for example through nail art tutorial videos on YouTube or a podcast in slow French about current events. I design my class activities to mirror real-world situations, so that my students will be able to use their language skills outside of the classroom and have a more concrete idea of what they are able to do with the language skills they've acquired.

ACTFL's Can-Do Statements also transform my students' language skills into something more real and applicable by framing them in terms of meaningful actions that they can perform in the real world. These "Can-Do" statements are arranged by ACTFL proficiency levels (Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced, with distinctions of Low, Mid, and High at each level) and they are an invaluable tool for me in planning my syllabus and lesson plans. They provide me with clear communicative goals that help inspire my activity designs. For example, at the Novice- Mid level, my students should be able to say "I can ask who, what, when, where questions. [...] I can ask questions about something that I am learning. [...] I can say or write something about the members of my family and ask about someone's family." (ACTFL, 2014, p. 8). These Can-Do Statements, along with the Five C's from the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages provide well-delineated goals and objectives for my foreign language classroom and make it clear to my students and me where we are going on our language learning journey. While these guidelines do not serve as syllabi or curricula, they can act as starting points for an instructor looking to link concrete goals with the content of a less-than-communicative textbook. They provide a 'bigger picture' for instructors to look to for guidance, which is

helpful when it is easy to get bogged down in every last grammar point addressed in a given textbook.

### **How are we getting there? (CLT)**

To answer this second question, I will first explain the basis for my methodologies in the FL classroom, that is, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. This approach was born from a reaction against the Audio-Lingual Method of foreign language instruction, which focused on correct grammatical forms acquired through repetition and memorization, and not on meaningful utterances (Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). An often-discussed and perhaps defining characteristic of CLT is that it is broad in nature and encompasses many different classroom methods and techniques. For my own teaching practice, this is what makes CLT the ideal approach: it's adaptable, multifaceted, and also grounded in second language acquisition (SLA) research. Berns (1990) distills some of the "core tenets" of CLT to the following, which are the most relevant to my current teaching practice:

1. Language teaching is based on a view of language as communication. That is, language is seen as a social tool which speakers and writers use to make meaning; we communicate about something to someone for some purpose [...]
3. A learner's competence is considered in relative, not absolute, terms of correctness. [...]
6. No single methodology or fixed set of techniques is prescribed. [...]
8. It is essential that learners be engaged in doing things with language, that is, that they use language for a variety of purposes, in all phases of learning. (p. 104)

In the subsections below, I will further discuss three crucial components of my implementation of CLT: the use of the target language in the classroom by both the teacher and the students, the use of task-based activities (TBA), and the roles of the



teacher and the students in the CLT classroom. I will also revisit the above tenets from Berns and how they are present in my classroom.

### **The Use of the Target Language**

Lee and VanPatten (2003) succinctly sum up Savignon's 1972 study on what kind of classroom activities best facilitate language acquisition for university-level, first-semester students of French: "one learns to communicate by practicing communication" (p. 50). By extension, if one wants to learn to communicate in a specific language, the maximum amount possible of classroom communication must be carried out in the target language. This practice both provides the students with ample comprehensible input as well as pushes them to produce output, or speak and write the language themselves. Comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985) is defined as the target language that the students read or hear that is understandable to them and which carries a meaning or significance to which they must attend (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003), as opposed to messages in the target language which carry no significance for the students, or which are beyond the proficiency level of the learner. For example, during an 'input' part of a class period, I might tell my students a story about an imaginary student who is having a terrible day. I would use visual support from a PowerPoint presentation, gestures and varying intonation, as well as repetition to help my students understand the story and they would have a worksheet in front of them on which to note the various bad things that happened to the imaginary student. I would tell the story twice, giving my students the chance to both attend to the meaning of the story and notice the language I was using to relate it, so they could accurately record some of the events on their handouts to use in the subsequent small group activity.

Beyond using the target language for providing the students with comprehensible input, I also use it to give activity instructions, discuss administrative aspects of the class, and have casual conversations with my students. Ballman et al. (2001) explain several reasons why the consistent use of the target language is imperative to creating a communicative classroom. First, it sets a model for the students to follow in their own target language use. Additionally, the teacher's avoidance of translation into the students' native language or L1 demonstrates to students that they cannot tune out the target language and still expect to acquire the TL. In my classroom, I push my students and provide them with the necessary support and resources to use the TL in class as much as possible, while making it clear that perfection is neither possible nor expected from them. This can prove challenging in classrooms where the students share a common L1, however. Several studies such as Behan, Turnbull, and Spek (1997) and Swain and Lapkin (1998, 2000) show that *some* student L1 use during task preparation can enhance their performance in the TL, so I am not overzealous when it comes to TL use when my students are just starting out and getting used to it. Ellis (2012) even discusses some reasons why teachers might use the students' L1 in the classroom, even teachers who promote maximal L2 use. One of these reasons might be "rapport-building purposes" i.e., "digress[ions] from instructional sequences in order to background their role as teacher" (p. 130); in my experience teaching French, however, I have found that intonation, facial expressions, gestures, and even pictures can go a long way to build rapport with students through humorous stories, even when told in the L2.

Overall, my own experience teaching French in the United States and English in France has been that, while students may resist this unwavering TL use at first, in the

long run they come to see how this practice exponentially improves the classroom conditions for learning the TL (Spolsky, 1989). One of the principal opportunities for my students to practice using the TL in my classroom is during task-based activities, which I explain in the next section.

### **Task-Based Activities (TBAs)**

Ellis (2012) cites Howatt (1984) by contrasting “ ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ forms of communicative language teaching” and he characterizes task-based learning as belonging to the former category because it is “create[ing] opportunities for communication in the classroom on the grounds that language is best learned through communicating”, not simply “teach[ing] and practis[ing] communication” (Ellis, 2012, 196). Task-based activities are the opportunities that I create for my students, so let us first define a task-based activity. Ballman et al. (2001) define a task-based activity as having three necessary characteristics. First, the activity must be learner-centered, meaning that the completion of the activity is only possible through interaction between students. The second characteristic of a TBA emphasizes that the interaction between students must be meaningful, or provide opportunities for the students to negotiate meaning, or exchange utterances so as to ask questions (or otherwise signal a lack of understanding), gain clarification, and modify the language they receive from their activity partner to eventually reach mutual comprehension (Ballman et al., 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Finally, the TBA must be made up of guided communicative steps that culminate in a concrete representation of the information exchanged (Ballman et al., 2001). Ellis (2012) echoes these criteria. This type of instruction is an irreplaceable part of a communicative classroom because it is through the completion of these

activities that students interact in an authentic way and develop their understanding of the language and how to use it *through* using it. Here, the first and last of Berns' (1990) CLT tenets are present: my students aren't simply analyzing the language, they're using it to communicate as they might in the real world.

TBAs serve more than just the purpose of giving students the opportunity to build their language proficiency through practicing communication. The scaffolded or guided nature of TBAs helps students build confidence and momentum in their language-learning journey, just as signposts along the interstate highway let travelers know that they're on the right path. Completing task-based activities also moves the class toward the Communities goal area of the SFLL because they simulate real-world situations and help students envision themselves as target language users outside of the classroom. The learner-centered nature of TBAs empowers students to take on a more active role in their language-learning journey, which I will discuss in the following section.

### **Role of the Teacher/Role of the Student**

The implementation of other language teaching approaches before the advent of CLT defined rigid roles for teacher and students as knowledge conveyor and knowledge receiver, respectively, with the burden of learning the target language placed largely on the shoulders of the teacher (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). However, a different conception of the roles of teachers and students came with the development and adoption of CLT, one in which students and teachers play equally important roles and share the responsibility of learning the target language more equitably (Ballman et al., 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003). I share this vision of teacher and student classroom roles, and I make them a reality through my implementation of task-based activities. By using task-based

activities, during which the students are the ones working towards a specific communicative goal, my role as the teacher becomes one of a facilitator, an architect, or a stage manager. I orchestrate what happens in my classroom, but (to continue the stage manager metaphor) my students are the ones who are putting on the show, working with the material I have given them, and building their own understanding of the language for themselves. As Ballman et al. succinctly put it: “Communication is not a spectator sport” (Ballman et al., 2001, p. 80), and the implementation of task-based activities puts the onus on the learners to make the language-learning journey their own.

A second facet of my role as teacher deals with the management of students’ anxiety and motivation in the classroom. As the one who has chosen the goals of our language-learning trip, it is also up to me to do everything I can to make the trip as enjoyable and positive as possible for my students.

Here I will briefly explain two examples of how I foster motivation in my students. In his article on student motivation in the FL classroom, Dörnyei (1994) briefly discusses student self-efficacy, or “an individual’s judgment of his or her ability to perform a specific action” (p. 277), and how this component of motivation can be severely diminished in a FL classroom where only the target language is spoken (Dörnyei, 1994). He cites Oxford and Shearin (1994) when positing that language teachers can combat this loss of self-efficacy by giving their students “meaningful, achievable, and success-engendering language tasks” (p. 277). I do this also through the use of task-based activities, which, by their nature, are scaffolded and sequential—two characteristics that promote student success. My utilization of the Can-Do Statements is another way that I motivate my students. Dörnyei suggests at the end of his article that

teachers motivate students by focusing on what students are able to do with the language they know, instead of what they have yet to learn or what they struggle with, and these statements help me do exactly that. However, in Boo, Dörnyei, and Ryan's (2015) meta-analysis of L2 motivation research, the authors discuss how advances in motivation research move toward a more nuanced and dynamic approach to studying L2 motivation, i.e., one that does not rely solely on "linear relationships" (Boo et al., 2015, p. 156) between various factors and student motivation. This, in turn, might point to teachers then needing a more nuanced understanding of student motivation, and this is an area of L2 learning that I intend to continue exploring after completing my graduate coursework.

To conclude this section, I will briefly discuss how I minimize my students' anxiety in the FL classroom. As Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) recommend in their article on FL classroom anxiety, I actively work to create a learning environment that is less likely to engender anxiety in my students. One of the foundational hypotheses of SLA is Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (1982), which posits that students will be more successful in learning a new language if their anxiety is low, i.e., if they are comfortable in their learning environment and if they are not worried about making mistakes. To promote this, I encourage student camaraderie through frequent pair and group work, which helps students feel they are in a less judgmental environment, where they are free to make mistakes and learn from them. I am also selective about the errors I correct while my students are speaking, often making general statements to the entire class instead of correcting a single student in front of everyone. I give my students guidance and resources, in the form of many examples, ample visual support for what I'm saying and what's expected of them, as well as a handout for quick reference, to help

them use the target language throughout the class period. Finally, I also give my students regular, short surveys on their assessments, not only so that I can get a better idea about what may be working or not working for a particular group of students, but also to let my students know that they are valued and listened-to members of our classroom community. After all, a road trip is less likely to be pleasant or successful if the driver is constantly giving the passengers the impression that they won't complete the journey, if the passengers feel helpless to stop the driver from taking them somewhere they don't want to go, or if they even feel too motion-sick or disoriented to get anything meaningful from the trip.

The use of the target language, TBAs, and the roles of the teacher and the students are three key parts of the road map that guide my class's language learning journey. They designate that we will take a certain route, filled with opportunities to practice communication and negotiate meaning, which will allow us to pause at important junctions to fully appreciate how they can use their new language skills. The final component of our language learning road trip is the group of people making the journey. In the next section, I will discuss how careful consideration of the characteristics of this group and appropriate adaptation of CLT lead to a successful trip.

### **Who is coming on the trip? (CLT in context and Student Identity)**

As previously discussed, CLT is a broad approach to foreign language teaching, and this lends it to being adapted and used effectively in many different classroom contexts. I agree with Bax (2003) when he argues that CLT should not be held as a monolithic, one-size-fits-all approach, but seen as a choice among other teaching approaches after first considering the classroom context. Other professionals underscore

this argument through their discussion of the implementation of CLT in cultural contexts that do not always mesh well with what are often considered non-negotiable aspects of CLT, such as group work in Asian EFL classrooms (Harmer, 2003; Hiep, 2007; Hu, 2005; Liao, 2004). I incorporate this consideration into my own teaching by carefully reflecting on the activities I choose and trying to predict how my university students will react to them. This became an important part of my teaching after a certain vocabulary activity (the fly-swatter game) went over very poorly and was clearly not effective for my students at that point in the semester. It was too simple, did not engage them enough, and they were honestly confused by the simplicity of the game, which is something that I would have realized if I had reflected more before trying to implement it. In my current classroom and in my future teaching situations, I know that my implementation of CLT will be significantly more effective if I employ this consideration of the age, proficiency level, cultural predispositions, and background knowledge of my students when deciding what aspects of CLT to use with them.

Another important aspect in this consideration is my adoption of a poststructuralist conception of the individual or identity, as articulated by Norton (2013), in how I regard my students. This view of identity envisions the individual as “diverse, contradictory, dynamic, and changing over historical time and social space” (p. 162), and not as a fixed set of traits, as is often how individuals are envisioned in the field of SLA. As Norton elaborates, individuals can encapsulate multiple identities, all of which depend on the social circumstances and can affect an individual’s language learning journey differently. I’ll illustrate this with an example from my study abroad experience in France in 2012. When my train to Paris was delayed one January morning, I struck up a



conversation in French with a French native speaker to ask him what one of the train officials had said to the crowd in the station, as I hadn't been able to hear her. My confidence in my identity as 'competent French speaker' helped me start this conversation, and I'm sure my identity as 'young American woman' also helped me move the conversation beyond the situation in the train station. We continued speaking in French, but once our conversation moved past introductions, my French was not good enough to sustain more complicated topics, and we switched to English for most of the rest of the conversation. At this difficulty in communication, I had shifted from my position as 'competent French speaker' and resigned myself to my identity of 'non-native speaker' and lost my opportunity to practice my French. The young man had, in turn, leveraged his identity as a 'competent English speaker' and gained an opportunity to practice his English.

The language learning opportunities of my students in and out of the classroom, both the ones they create for themselves and the ones they are afforded by others, are affected by similar ever-shifting social circumstances. In my classroom, however, everyone has a voice, as it's the one place they are guaranteed speaker status. My understanding of this reality of language learning and my adoption of a poststructuralist conception of identity are crucial to my effectiveness as an instructor: they help me to better empathize with my students and avoid categorizing them as simply 'motivated' or 'shy'. They help me to see them as whole, dynamic, and multifaceted people, and this in turn allows me to better adjust my implementation of CLT methods to fit their needs. For example, if the class as a whole is seeming a bit sluggish or tired, I might work in a quick energy-boosting activity that gets them out of their seats, or just have them take a quick

stretch break, instead of getting frustrated with them for not matching my level of energy on that particular day.

### **Conclusion**

By applying these simple questions of Where are we going? How are we getting there? and Who is coming on the trip? to my language teaching, I am confident that I am creating the ideal conditions for a language learning journey that is beneficial and meaningful for everyone involved. Throughout the rest of this portfolio I explore specific topics discussed within this three-question framework, which address some of the more difficult realities of second language teaching: student use of their L1 in class, the role of writing to enhance vocabulary acquisition in the oral-communication-oriented communicative classroom, and the teaching of appropriate second-person pronoun (tu/vous) use in French. In the annotated bibliographies, I explore the following topics: motivation and anxiety in the FL classroom; criticisms of CLT; and using technology to facilitate the development of intercultural competence. Deep reflection on both my personal teaching methods as well as more widely-used methods will allow me to continue to evolve and grow as a teacher throughout my career and help my students embark on their own successful, fulfilling language learning journeys.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TEACHING OBSERVATION

In this section of my teaching philosophy, I will reflect on techniques and practices that I have observed in other language classrooms throughout my time in the MSLT program. I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to observe classes in several languages, with learners of varying proficiency levels. These observations have not only inspired me to do what works well and avoid what does not work so well, but they have also pushed me to turn inward and reflect on my own teaching and how to modify it to better suit the needs of my students. Two main aspects of my teaching that I believe have benefitted directly from these observations are my commitment to using the target language throughout instruction (at least 90% of the time) and my efforts to know my students and connect with them as people.

In my teaching philosophy, I discuss the integral use of the target language in the language classroom and how it is essential to building students' interpretive communication skills. I saw this practice also employed in most of the classrooms I observed, reinforcing my commitment to using the TL as much as possible in my own classroom. Two observations in particular, however, made me reflect more deeply on this practice. One class was a novice-level university French class that I observed near the beginning of the semester. During this class, the instructor did not use the target language very much at all, which surprised me. The class period was largely grammar-focused, and the students did not have very many opportunities to use the TL themselves; the exception was a dialog that the students practiced reading to each other. After observing this class, I tried to understand why the instructor had conducted the class in such a manner and I concluded that perhaps it was because it was still within the first month of

the semester. I wondered whether my own beginning French classes would benefit from more English during the beginning of the semester- there is, after all, evidence to suggest that prudent L1 use can enhance language acquisition (see Language Artifact: L1 Use in the Immersion and FL Classroom). However, most of this evidence points to the benefits of limited *student* L1 use, not teacher L1 use, and I remain convinced that providing students with consistent, comprehensible TL input from the first day of class is crucial to helping them build their language proficiency.

The other class that made me look more critically at my TL use in the classroom was a novice-level university Spanish class, during which the instructor and TA both used the TL exclusively. However, because of the design of the lesson plan and unfortunate circumstances (the instructor did not have a copy of the day's PowerPoint slides and had to send the TA to get them), the students did not have very many opportunities to use the TL. Even during the presentation of vocabulary, the instructor did not ask questions of the students very often to keep them engaged, nor were they given instructions or guidance about taking notes, which makes me wonder how effective this input period of the class really was, even though it was completely in the TL. Observing this class made me realize how easy it can be to get caught up in "teaching" in the target language, and that this can very easily become "talking at" the students in the TL, which does not benefit anyone. I have become increasingly aware of my tendency to continue talking to my students about vocabulary words for longer than may be necessary, or to perhaps give an overabundance of instructions before an activity to avoid ambiguity. Observing this class made me see how unengaging it is for students to simply sit (and *hopefully* listen) as the instructor speaks. It also underscored the fact that I must always

forefront the “comprehensible” part of “comprehensible input”. During this class, the instructor remained behind the computer, next to the whiteboard for most of the class and used relatively few gestures and changes in intonation to convey meaning to the students, which added, I think, to their disengagement. It’s clear that I need to catch myself before starting into longer stretches of discourse without supporting gestures, images, etc. (at least at the novice level), as many of my students will probably not catch most of what I say. This may lead to frustration or even discouragement on their part, which is certainly not my goal.

One of my goals is, however, to get to know and understand my students so that I can adjust my teaching techniques and methods to better meet their language learning goals and expectations for themselves. I gained more insight into this practice through observing four different classes. In two of the classes (an elementary-level Chinese immersion class and a novice-level university Chinese class) both instructors knew their students well and were able to create engaging, effective lessons for their students because of this. One thing that really struck me about both classes was the apparent trust that the instructors placed in their students, which was something I had never really thought about before.

In the immersion class, the students (though very young) were allowed to get up from their seats throughout the class to get tissues or hand sanitizer, use the bathroom, or get a drink of water as needed, without asking the teacher or disrupting the lesson, and this amazed me. They also chatted with each other quietly at various points during the lesson, but they always did it in Chinese. The fact that the instructor trusted the students enough to allow them this freedom spoke volumes to me and showed me what was

possible in a well-organized and engaged language-learning community. The same was true in the university-level class. The students spent most of the class period completing a mystery-solving activity during which they needed to get pieces of information from each other to figure out who had stolen someone's dog. Again, the instructor in this case gave the students a lot of freedom to use the target language how they wanted to in order to complete the activity, and there was very little off-topic conversation. Both of these classes made me realize that, on some levels, I do not trust my students enough. I don't always trust them to stay in the target language, I don't always trust them to be engaged, and I don't always trust that their side conversations are related to the class. I think that this lack of trust on my part may be creating a sort of barrier between me and my students, and I plan to start catching myself in these moments of distrust so that I can turn them into opportunities to build a more supportive learning environment for my students.

Another aspect of this idea of trust in the foreign language classroom came into play in the third class I observed, which was a university-level, third semester Arabic class. There were only four students in the class, and the instructor did a very good job of creating an engaging and communicatively-centered lesson for them, but there were some periods in the class that were a bit quiet, when the students were making notes, preparing, or collecting their thoughts. I know that I sometimes get uncomfortable when there is silence in my classroom- I always want my students to be talking, or listening to me. I learned from this lesson, and others that I have observed with this same instructor who has had other small classes, that allowing some quiet time during a lesson is okay. I have to learn to trust that my students are still engaged and focused, even if no one is talking at the moment. After observing these classes, I can see better how having some variety in

the pace of lessons, having periods of discussion and tasks, and periods of reflection and preparation can help engage more students, and play to a wider variety of learning styles.

I saw a lack of this necessary trust and empathy for students in different university-level beginning French class that I observed. While the instructor used a lot of the target language and moved the class along through various grammar explanations, the students often had very little freedom to create with the language in the class, which seemed to lower their motivation and engagement with the material. The instructor spent quite a bit of class time asking each student how old they were, and at another point in the class asking the students' their eye colors, keeping the lesson instructor-centered when it could have easily been learner-centered. At one point in the class, the instructor also told the students that they were still "babies" in the French language, that they shouldn't try to do too much with the language just yet, and this frankly shocked me. It seemed condescending and demoralizing, and it made me realize that I should never use such words with my own students, even though I am sure the instructor meant them in a positive way. Hearing the instructor say this to the students made it clear that I should be wary of ever feeling too superior as an instructor, and that I should never forget how it felt to be a beginner, how important encouragement is at that point, and how subtly discouraging a well-intentioned instructor's words can be.

Observing these classes and then thinking critically about them has allowed me to also look more critically at my own approach to language teaching and how I can improve it. These observations that I mentioned, as well as others, have made me more aware of the often-imperceptible things that affect the dynamic between a teacher and students, such as trust and empathy, which we don't often discuss in a teaching methods class. I know

that this knowledge will serve me well as I continue my teaching career and will help me make better connections with my students, which in turn will hopefully improve and enhance their learning experience.



## SELF-ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING

In this section of my teaching philosophy, I will describe and reflect upon a lesson I taught at Utah State University in February 2016 in my French 1020 class. This reflection is modeled after Spicer-Escalante's (2015) Self-Assessment of Teaching Statement model (SATS). The class during this observation was made up of twenty-three students who fell within a wide range of French proficiency: for some, this was their second semester studying the language, others had already taken two or more years in high school. All of them shared the same L1, English, and were between the ages of 18 and 26 years old. None of them had spent significant time in the target language community, though as mentioned previously, their proficiency ranged from novice-mid to perhaps intermediate-mid (one student who was auditing the class for practice). In this lesson, the students were finishing their work with the imperfect tense, and our communicative goal for the lesson was for them to write short descriptions of technological devices as if they worked in a museum, describing to the museum's visitors how the technology was used in the past. This lesson took place during week 6 of a 16-week semester, just before the students' first exam. See Appendices A and B for a detailed lesson plan and worksheets used.

We began the lesson with the completion of an activity from the previous day, where the students were giving or accepting excuses they had invented for why they did not have their homework that day. This activity worked well as a warm-up, to get the students ready for the subsequent discussions. Next, before moving to how technology was used in the past, I described how I carried out various tasks in my everyday life using technology. For example, I showed that I used my phone to take pictures, that I listened

to music on my mp3 player, and that I used my laptop to watch movies. The students had previously learned the vocabulary words for these devices and we had already discussed how often they use them. I instructed the students to listen to my own habits and, if they wanted, to note on their worksheets how they carry out the same tasks- for example, how do they read books? Do they use an e-reader or printed books? Once I had finished my description, I gave the students a minute or two to finish noting their own habits, and I then instructed them to find a partner who had at least three of the same technology habits as they did. I modeled a conversation on my PowerPoint slides to show what kind of questions to ask their partner and how to respond, which I also did while I was presenting my own habits.

Once students had found a partner, we moved on to speaking about how technology was used in the past. I asked them questions such as “How did we watch movies in 1930?” and “How did we listen to music in 1980?”, highlighting my use of the imperfect to refer to habitual past actions. The students responded appropriately with the vocabulary that they knew, and I then presented the idea of a technology museum, for which they would need to write short descriptions of various technological devices. As I walked around and had the various groups choose two devices from a bowl, I showed them two examples of such descriptions on my slides, for a typewriter and a digital camera. For the next ten minutes or so, the students worked together to write short descriptions of the devices they chose. At the end of the class, two groups shared their device descriptions and the other groups guessed, correctly, what devices they were describing.

Overall, I believe this lesson was a success and I think I did more than several things well throughout the lesson. For example, I thought my PowerPoint slides provided ample visual support for the day's activities, making it clear what devices I was referring to, and making it easy for the students to see the difference between the present-tense form of the verbs and the imperfect forms. While the students worked in groups at various points in the class, I circulated and listened while handing out papers (either the worksheet for the day or graded homework) so as not to waste class time doing this. Additionally, I repeated instructions and varied my intonation so as to highlight key words to help students understand the tasks, and I also provided models for them to follow. I received similar feedback from my supervisor who also observed this lesson: she echoed that my energy level was great for the classroom and that the topic and task were engaging and relevant for young people, and I agree.

There were, however, some ways that this lesson could have gone better. I think, overall, I need to be more aware of my demeanor in the classroom when students don't understand or respond to something right away. I think I have a tendency to become slightly exasperated in tone or facial expression, when something that is obvious to me is unclear to my students; this does not contribute to a friendly, stress-free atmosphere where my students feel comfortable making mistakes, and I need to remedy this. At certain points in the lesson, I think it would have also moved smoother if I had given definite instructions, such as when the students were listening to me talk about my technology habits. I told them they could write "si vous voulez", but I think I should have just said to write, especially since the vocabulary was not new for them. Finally, as my supervisor pointed out, I also need to vary how I check student comprehension. Instead of

simply asking “Vous comprenez?” (Do you understand?) I think I need to work smaller example questions into the presentation that will check their comprehension. This could also be an instance where I could use whiteboards for students to write their answers and hold them up for me to see.

In general, I know that I have grown a lot as an instructor during my time in the MSLT program, but I know that I also have smaller things, such as demeanor and comprehension-check techniques to continue to improve in the years to come.

LANGUAGE ARTIFACT:

Student First Language Use in the Immersion Classroom

## INTRODUCTION & REFLECTION

This artifact was originally written with my colleague Tempe Mabe as a paper for LING 6700 with Dr. Maria Luisa Spicer-Escalante in spring of 2015. In the original paper, we explored both teacher use of the L1 and student use of the L1, but during the revisions and changes I have subsequently made to the paper, I decided to focus solely on student L1 use. This topic is of utmost relevance to me as a teacher because student L1 use is not necessarily something I can directly control: I wanted to better understand when and why students would use their L1 instead of the target language, and whether this was always detrimental to their second language or L2 development. As I illustrate in the paper, I learned that student L1 use in the immersion and foreign language classrooms is a multifaceted topic, affected by many different factors; I also learned that some judicious L1 use (for task management, for example) can be beneficial to learners, especially novice-level learners.

### **Abstract**

In this paper, the author first presents an overview of bilingual and dual language immersion (DLI) education, including a brief history, as well a summary of its current state. The 4 models of DLI and the Utah model of DLI are described. Next provided is a literature review on first language (L1) use by students in the immersion classroom, with a special focus on how students use the L1 to manage classroom activities, to socialize, and to build their identities. The paper concludes with a brief discussion of how this research could be applied to the foreign language classroom and how future research could further explore this phenomenon.

**Keywords:** dual language immersion; student L1 use; first language use

### **Introduction**

One of the most striking features of dual language immersion (DLI) education to outsiders observing a class, and one of its most attractive selling points to skeptics, is the exclusive use of the target language (language being taught through the teaching of academic content) by both the teacher and students. Unfortunately, this ideal immersion classroom is, strictly speaking, a chimera. The non-target language (or native language, the L1) will, whether used indirectly by the teacher or deliberately by a student, manifest itself in almost all circumstances. This paper will examine L1 use by immersion students through a literature review in which the author will demonstrate that L1 presence is not always considered a negative thing in the immersion context. The paper concludes with proposed research topics to further expand understanding of the role of the L1 in immersion education, and a brief discussion of how this research can apply to the foreign language (FL) teaching context. First, however, I will provide an overview of dual

language immersion (DLI) education to use as a foundation to frame our discussion of L1 use in the immersion classroom.

### **Dual Language Education Overview**

This section of the paper will address key aspects of bilingual/immersion education in the United States. The following topics will be discussed in the sections that follow: the four models of bilingual/immersion education, the Utah model of DLI, and the benefits of DLI. These topics will give the reader a clear picture of DLI in the United States and how this field has developed. Because this paper focuses on the context of DLI in the United States, the assumption is made that the majority language or L1 is English.

A discussion of these topics first requires a basic definition of the general practice of dual language education. Dual language education (DLE) is a term which refers to any school “programs, primarily for students in preschool, elementary, and secondary levels of schooling, which provide literacy and content area instruction to all students through two languages” (Christian, 2011, p. 3). Bilingual and DLI education programs (which will be explained below) fall under this umbrella term of DLE.

#### **Four DLI Models**

A common way to define and categorize a language program is by the program’s goal for its students. The goals of DLI can be summed up as the ABCs: **a**cademic **a**chievement, **b**ilingualism and **b**iliteracy, and **c**ultural **c**ompetence (Spicer- Escalante, Leite, & Wade, 2015). DLI particularly has the goal of additive bilingualism and biliteracy (being able to speak, read, and write in both languages). Additive bilingualism is bilingualism that does not come at the expense of the students’ native language.



Instead, students add another language to the language(s) that they already spoke upon entering DLI (May, 2008).

The four primary program models of DLI are one-way foreign language immersion, two-way bilingual immersion, developmental bilingual programs, and both heritage and indigenous language programs. These definitions and distinctions between DLI programs come from Howard, Olague, and Rogers (2003, as cited in Christian, 2011), who use the metaphor of an umbrella to illustrate how these program types come together to form the field of DLI (Christian, 2011).

In one-way or foreign language immersion, the majority of the students begin speaking the same L1 and all of the students are learning the same L2 (Fortune & Tedick, 2008). In two-way bilingual immersion education, the class is made up of students whose L1 is one of the two program languages. Each language group moves in a different direction (hence, two-way) to acquire the other classroom language.

Bilingual developmental programs are, in effect, the inverse of one-way foreign language programs because they are made up of students whose L1 is not the majority language of the community (e.g., having Spanish as a L1 in the United States) (Christian, 2011; Cloud, Genesee, & Hamayan, 2000; May, 2008). And, finally, in heritage and indigenous language programs, students gain proficiency and literacy in a language with which they have strong cultural ties, a language which is not largely spoken in the community and is a minority language in the larger society (Christian, 2011).

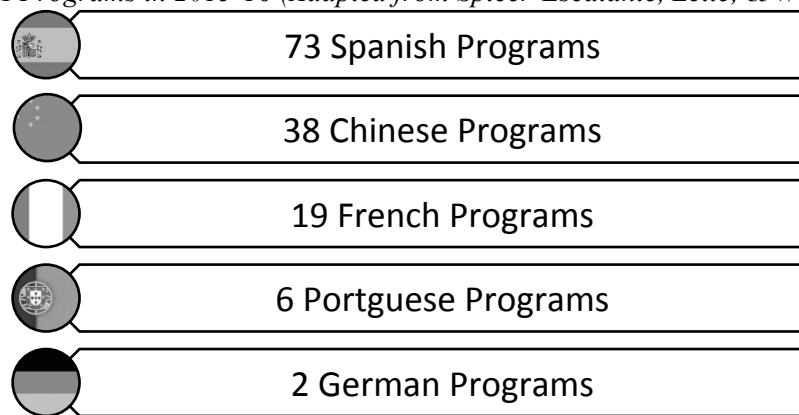
## **DLI in Utah**

Utah's approach to DLI is unique in that Utah was the first state in the United States to put in place a state-wide framework and curriculum for DLI programs, as well as to provide state funding for DLI programs. The DLI story in Utah begins in 1979 in Alpine School District with the opening of a Spanish one-way total immersion program at Cherry Hill Elementary School (Leite, 2013). Over the next 30 years, various other DLI programs emerged through the efforts of individual school administrators and community support, such as in Provo School District, in Granite School District, and Davis School District. Gregg Roberts, who was the World Language Specialist in Granite School District in 2002, was instrumental in bringing together the following sources of support for a state-wide implementation of DLI programs: Utah business owners, state legislators, educators, and parents (Wade & Roberts, 2012). This support, characterized as both "bottom-up and top-down" (Spicer-Escalante, Wade, & Leite, 2015) makes Utah DLI a unique, sustainable, and viable model for the state of Utah, as well as an example for the rest of the United States.

Utah's statewide model for DLI that provided funding and professional development support was put into place by State Senate Bill 41, which passed in 2008. Then-Governor Jon Huntsman and State Senator Howard Stephenson were instrumental in passing this bill. In the Utah Model of DLI, the students spend 50% of their school day in the target language and 50% in English with two different teachers, each teacher giving instruction exclusively in one language (Wade & Roberts, 2012). Utah's DLI programs have grown more rapidly than was originally expected when they were

Figure 1

*Utah DLI Programs in 2015-16 (Adapted from Spicer-Escalante, Leite, & Wade, 2015)*



launched in 2009 (Leite, 2013). For the 2015-2016 school year, Utah boasted 138 DLI programs in five languages. See Figure 1 above for details.

### **The Benefits of DLI**

As previously mentioned, all four models of DLI aim for bilingualism and biliteracy. The benefits of developing bilingualism and biliteracy are primarily educational, cognitive, sociocultural, and economic; Table 1 gives a brief outline of these benefits.

In this introductory section I have explained the four models of bilingual/immersion education, the Utah DLI model, and the benefits of DLI. While DLI has had opposition in the past (Christian, 2011; Crawford, 2003; Cubias, 2015; Huddy & Sears, 1990; Olsen, 1998), programs throughout the world are expanding and research on DLI is shifting from whether it is effective to how its efficacy can be increased in different contexts. One specific issue on which opinions vary is student L1 use in the classroom.

Table 1

*Benefits of DLI programs*

	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Resources</b>
<b>Educational</b>	Same <b>academic achievement</b> as monolinguals, plus a language	(Cloud et. al, 2000; Fortune & Tedick, 2008)
	High English proficiency	(Cloud et. al, 2000; Bhattacharjee, 2012)
	For English language-learners, closes the gap in achievement that English-only programs cannot	(Collier & Thomas, 2004)
<b>Cognitive</b>	Skills in problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, ability to focus, and metalinguistic awareness	(Cloud et. al, 2000; Perry, 2008)
	Bilinguals are shielded longer from disorders such as dementia	(Bhattacharjee, 2012; Perry, 2008)
<b>Sociocultural</b>	Able to interact in culturally appropriate ways, learn about different cultures, better understand own culture	(NSFLEP, 2014; Collier & Thomas, 2004)
	Develop friendships across cultures, behave better in general in a classroom setting	(Cloud et. al, 2000; Collier & Thomas, 2004).
<b>Economic</b>	Earn 5% to 20% more than monolingual counterparts	(Morsch, 2009; Padilla, 2002)
	31% of executives speak two languages or more	(Morsch, 2009).
	Better prepared for global marketplace	(Callahan & Gándara, 2015; Spicer-Escalante, Leite & Wade, 2015)

### **Student L1 Use in the DLI Classroom**

DLI teachers are confronted daily with the following challenge: how do we negotiate and handle the use of the L1 (or non-target language) in the immersion classroom? From the research literature and my own observations of Utah DLI classrooms, I know that exclusive use of the target language by every individual in the classroom is virtually impossible to achieve. In the sections that follow, I will elaborate on the current observations and research on student L1 use in various immersion settings, including both one-way and two-way immersion programs in the United States and Canada.

Overall, student L1 use during class time has been linked to two main functions: task management and completion and social interaction (Broner & Tedick, 2011; Potowski, 2004; Swain & Lapkin, 1998, 2000, 2005; Tarone & Swain, 1995). As an extension of the social interaction function, L1 use has also been linked to identity formation (Norton, 2000). These studies are discussed in detail below.

#### **L1 Use for Task Management and Completion**

Researchers have observed and studied student use of the L1 during L2 class time in immersion settings to manage and complete classroom tasks for several decades. Prominent researchers in this area of study (such as Swain and Lapkin) have adopted a sociocultural perspective on second language acquisition and see this L1 use as a natural use of an available tool to facilitate L2 learning (Swain & Lapkin, 1998). In their 1998 study on language use in collaborative learning tasks between student pairs, they noted that the focal pair (a boy and girl) used a little bit of their L1 (English) to accomplish the task of writing a story in French from pictures provided to them. These were 8<sup>th</sup> grade

French immersion students, and the focus of the study was not L1 use specifically. The students were given pre-and posttests on several linguistic forms used in the story (e.g., reflexive constructions, vocabulary items, etc.) and the researchers examined how the students' language-related episodes (LREs) correlated with their post-test scores. Swain and Lapkin define a LRE "as any part of a dialogue where the students talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or correct themselves or others" (Swain & Lapkin, 1995, as cited in Swain & Lapkin, 1998, p. 326). They found that LRE incidence was positively correlated with post-test scores, though the number of LREs across student pairs varied widely.

In a few of the LREs of the focal pair, Kim and Rick, the students used their L1 (English) to "fram[e] [their] French and set it up as an object to be manipulated and reflected upon" (Swain & Lapkin, 1998, p. 332). They used short L1 utterances such as "Wait a second", "Isn't it ...?", and "And it's..." (Swain & Lapkin, 1998, p. 335-336). Though it is not in French, this language switching clearly did not hinder their accomplishment of the task to write a story, as their story received the highest possible marks on criteria such as content, morphology, vocabulary, and syntax (Swain & Lapkin, 1998).

Similarly, Swain and Lapkin (2005) cite Behan, Turnbull, and Spek (1997) to point to the utility of L1 usage to accomplish L2 tasks. In the Behan et al. study, 7<sup>th</sup> grade late French immersion students were divided into two groups and given an oral presentation task. Half of the students were monitored closely for L1 (English) use and prompted to switch back to French if any L1 use occurred, while the other half were not monitored and ended up using more L1 in their presentation preparation. Ultimately, the

non-monitored groups produced what were considered to be better presentations, and the researchers attributed this to the L1 they used to manage the task in various ways. They concluded “that in some contexts limited L1 use may benefit both L2 development and content mastery” (Behan, Turnbull, & Spek, 1997, p. 42).

Swain and Lapkin found similar uses of the L1 for task management in their 2000 study of 8<sup>th</sup> grade French immersion students in Toronto (Swain & Lapkin, 2000). In this study, two academically comparable classes of students were tasked with constructing a story from two different sources of input: one class used a dictogloss (oral text) and the other used pictures (a jigsaw task). Though the jigsaw class used the L1 for searching for vocabulary items almost twice as much as the dictogloss class, the two classes’ L1 use for various task management techniques (sequencing, understanding, focusing on form, etc.) were roughly the same (Swain & Lapkin, 2000). Similar to the results of Behan et al. (1997), those students who used the L1 more to facilitate their task completion, in general, produced work of a higher quality than those who did not. Swain and Lapkin conclude:

[S]tudents’ use of the L1 is not for naught. A socio-cultural theory of mind suggests that the L1 serves as a tool that helps students as follows: to understand and make sense of the requirements and content of a task; to focus attention on language form, vocabulary use, and overall organization; and to establish the tone and nature of their collaboration. (Swain & Lapkin, 2000, p. 268)

Broner and Tedick (2011) examined language use among 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in a one-way, early total immersion program, and found that the 5<sup>th</sup> graders’ language use (L1 or L2) often matched with the task they were to complete. In the brief excerpts of the

student LREs from the Broner and Tedick (2011) study, we can see similar “framing” uses of the L1 to move the task along (p. 174), though the study does not examine L2 learning as a result of these specific interactions so we cannot say if or how this use of L1 affected their L2 development. In Potowski’s study of 5<sup>th</sup> grade two-way Spanish immersion students (discussed in more detail in the following section), she found that 57% of “management” turns in Spanish language arts and social studies lessons were conducted in English.

As we can see from these studies, some judicious allowance of student L1 use in the immersion classroom may in fact benefit their L2 development. In the following section, I will discuss how L1 use can contribute to students’ social development and identity formation.

### **L1 Use for Social Interaction and Identity Formation**

One of the seminal articles for this area of research in the immersion context was Tarone and Swain’s 1995 sociolinguistic investigation of L1 use by immersion students. Though not a full-scale study, their paper places the immersion classroom in a sociocultural framework and posits “diglossia may be the norm” (Tarone & Swain, 1995, p. 166); that is, the two languages of the classroom (in this case English and French) end up in superordinate and subordinate positions, where one is the language of academics and formal conversation (here, French), and the other is used in a vernacular variety for social interactions (English, in this case). Through speaking with an immersion program alumna and examining the research of Liu (1991, 1994), Tarone and Swain support this sociolinguistic explanation for why student L1 use seems to increase as the students advance through middle school, junior high, and high school. They point out how



students may use the L1 vernacular for social interactions because they have no exposure to equivalent L2 vernacular to achieve the same social functions. Tarone and Swain offer a few remedies for reducing this imbalance of exposure to L2 vernacular (such as by pushing students to study abroad in the L2 community or combining field trips for the immersion students with those of nearby L2 schools), but they admit that these options may not be possible for many immersion classes (Tarone & Swain, 1995). This framing of L1 use as a social function however, paved the way for future research, such as the studies conducted by Potowski (2004) and Broner and Tedick (2011).

Potowski's 2004 study closely examined the use or non-use of Spanish by 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in a Spanish two-way immersion class in a magnet school in Chicago. She focused on two English L1 speakers and two Spanish L1 speakers (one girl and one boy in each group) and examined their language use over 12.5 hours of Spanish language arts and Spanish social studies lessons. She performed quantitative analyses of their language use as well as qualitative analysis through student journal entries, interviews, and interviews with the students' parents and their teacher. Potowski found a strong connection between students' Spanish use and whether they were speaking to the teacher or to a peer- 82% of times that they spoke to the teacher, they did so in Spanish, in contrast with speaking to their peers in Spanish only 32% of the time. Upon closer inspection and through in-depth interviews with students, their parents, and teacher, Potowski drew a connection between the students' identity formation and their (non)use of Spanish: the students who were highly invested in their identities as good students and Spanish speakers used more Spanish than the students who did not want to risk social exclusion or perceived incompetence through their use of Spanish (Potowski, 2004).

Broner and Tedick (2011) found similar results with their focal 5<sup>th</sup> grade students, though they did not conduct interviews that were as in-depth as those done in Potowski's study. Broner and Tedick presented their quantitative data as the probability that the L2 would be used under certain circumstances, and they found that the students would use Spanish with their teacher or when the teacher was nearby 100% of the time. Two of the three focal students would use Spanish about 45% of the time with peers during Spanish instructional time when the teacher was not around, echoing the use of English for social interaction seen in Swain and Lapkin (1995) and Potowski (2004). The third focal student was a bit of an anomaly in his high Spanish use (91% of the time, overall), and the researchers discovered through interviews that one reason he used Spanish so much was because he also used it at home with his twin brother as a secret code, and thus had heavily invested in his identity as a Spanish speaker, like two of the students in the Potowski study (Broner & Tedick, 2011).

These studies show that L1 use in the immersion classroom that serves the function of social interaction and identity formation for the students, especially those in the middle school grades, may be an inevitable part of the students' personal development. Though teachers may worry about this L1 use interfering with their L2 development, these studies, and particularly the Potowski (2004) study, demonstrate that student L1 use is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that may not be easily reduced or eliminated from the immersion classroom. From the studies on L1 use for task management, we can glean that some judicious allowance of student L1 use may in fact benefit students' L2 development through the mediation and management of tasks. However, according to the research, in most separation-oriented classrooms, teachers

should not encourage L1 use, even explicitly for the purpose of helping with L2 tasks. Students can switch to the L1 for off-task discourse (Potowski, 2004; Tarone & Swain, 1995) as well as on-task discourse and need no further encouragement to switch to the off-task language.

### **Conclusion: Application to FL Teaching and Suggestions for Further Research**

The previous literature review demonstrates that student L1 use is a highly complex phenomenon and much remains to be understood about it. In exploring this topic, I also read about student L1 use in FL classrooms, and I believe almost all of what can be concluded from the research discussed in this review can be encapsulated by this quote from the introduction of Turnbull and Dailey-O’Cain’s volume on L1 use:

From this work, it seems clear that if we are to regard the language learner not as an imperfect monolingual speaker of the second language but as a budding multilingual whose model is the multilingual speaker, it therefore seems reasonable to expect and allow codeswitching to emerge naturally within second and foreign language classrooms. (Turnbull & Dailey-O’Cain, 2009, p. 7)

This perspective shift, from viewing students as “imperfect monolingual speaker[s]” to viewing them as “budding multilingual[s]”, clinches the case for judicious L1 use in immersion and FL classrooms, as it seems counterproductive to see language learners as anything but “budding multilingual[s]”. Even though students in FL classrooms may not continue their language learning journeys as long as immersion students often do, I believe applying this “budding multilingual” lens to my students as a FL teacher will set them up to be successful and life-long language learners, instead of students just trying to fulfill a graduation requirement. The studies in the previous review show that students

use their L1 in immersion classrooms for various reasons and that doing so contributes to their personal development as well as their L2 acquisition—it is very possible that the same is true in the FL context, and that the same judicious use principle should be applied there as well.

Future studies involving student L1 use could be integrated with studies regarding teacher L1 use (another fascinating and much-debated) topic, by analyzing to what extent student L1 use occurs in response to teacher L1 use, such as reported by Ballinger and Lyster (2011). The diglossic immersion classroom (Tarone & Swain, 1995) is another aspect of student L1 use that presents many questions, such as: does the shift to a diglossic classroom occur consistently around 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade or do other factors affect it, and what are some empirically testable ways to diminish this shift and encourage L2 use among peers?

As immersion programs continue to launch and flourish across the globe, research on every aspect of DLI will become increasingly necessary. L1 use in the immersion classroom, specifically on the part of the students, is an inherent part of the DLI classroom and the better we understand its effect on student learning, the better we can harness it to achieve the goals of dual language immersion education.

LITERACY ARTIFACT:

Vocabulary Acquisition through Writing Tasks in the Foreign Language Classroom

## INTRODUCTION & REFLECTION

This artifact was originally written with my colleague Yasmine Kataw for the LING 6500 course with Dr. Joshua Thoms in spring of 2015. I have since made my own revisions and changes to the paper, namely expanding the explanation of Craik and Lockhart's (1972) levels of processing framework. This was an area of interest to both of us because we could see that our students were not always learning their vocabulary words as quickly and efficiently as the pace of a university-level language course demands. We wanted to explore how we could help our students build vocabulary through writing, because we already employed many speaking-centered activities in our classrooms. One of the most valuable things I learned about while writing this paper was Laufer and Hulstijn's (2001) Involvement Load Hypothesis; this framework has helped me to rethink and be more careful in how I design activities and assessments for my students. I am much more aware of what my classroom tasks actually ask them to *do*, how they require the students to engage with and use the language, and I believe attention to this aspect of task design will help me to continue to create effective activities in the future.

### **Abstract**

In this paper, the author reviews recent studies that compare the effectiveness of various writing tasks in promoting incidental vocabulary acquisition in the foreign language (FL) classroom. The sections of this review outline studies comparing writing to non-writing tasks, studies comparing different writing tasks, and studies examining non-traditional writing tasks. The studies discussed are framed within the construct of Laufer and Hulstijn's (2001) Involvement Load Hypothesis. The author concludes this review with a proposal for future research which would examine the effects of a single writing task on incidental vocabulary acquisition in two languages with different scripts, Arabic and French.

**Keywords:** vocabulary acquisition, writing activities, writing tasks, involvement load hypothesis

### **Introduction**

This literature review will focus on writing as a means for vocabulary acquisition because foreign language instructors must strive to develop all facets of students' foreign language (L2) proficiency in the classroom, to engage them in all three modes of communication: interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational (NSFLEP, 2014). I have observed that relegating writing tasks to out-of-class time can lead to students' over-reliance on dictionaries and sluggish vocabulary acquisition, whereas the research outlined in this review suggests that carefully constructed in-class activities could enhance vocabulary acquisition. As an L2 learner myself, I understand firsthand the importance of building vocabulary in the L2, as this is what facilitates both written and spoken language production, in and out of the classroom. Incorporating writing activities

aimed at vocabulary acquisition with the oral communication activities that are common in the communicative classroom can introduce more variety to the CLT classroom and help students actively build their L2 vocabulary. When learning any language, students must make connections between the sounds, the written forms, and the meanings of words from the very initial stages of their studies, especially if they are to adapt to the rigorous pace of university-level language courses. The following literature review will discuss the many studies that show that these connections can be promoted through in-class writing tasks.

This literature review begins by briefly explaining two theoretical frameworks in which several of the examined studies are based: Craik and Lockhart's (1972) Levels of Processing and Laufer and Hulstijn's (2001) Involvement Load Hypothesis. Next, it discusses the findings of recent research in comparing writing tasks and non-writing tasks and in comparing different types of writing tasks. Third, non-traditional writing tasks such as blogging and keeping vocabulary notebooks are discussed. In the conclusion, I offer an outline of a possible research study to compare the effectiveness of a writing task on incidental vocabulary acquisition across two languages with different writing systems, as this is one area of potential growth related to this topic.

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

Several studies reviewed (Barcroft, 2004; Hulstijn & Laufer, 2001; Keating, 2008; Pichette, De Serres, & Lafontaine, 2012; Wong & Pyun, 2012) construct their research in light of two complementary frameworks: Craik and Lockart's (1972) Levels



of Processing framework and Laufer and Hulstijn's (2001) Involvement Load Hypothesis.

The first of these, the Levels of Processing (LOP) framework, was formulated as an alternative to multi-store models of memory, or the conception of memory for given input as discrete modules of sensory stores, short-term memory, and long-term memory (Murdoch, 1967, as cited in Craik & Lockhart, 1972). Craik and Lockhart instead conceived of memory of given information to exist as a function of the depth at which that information was processed, which could range from relatively shallow, which can be defined as processing only at the sensory or structural level, to deep processing at the semantic level (1972). They describe these levels "as a continuum of analysis", ranging from "the transient products of sensory analyses to the highly durable products of semantic-associative operations" (p. 676). For example, this continuum encompasses the processing depth achieved when a student simply reads or hears a sentence (sensory processing, taking in the utterance) to when the student must paraphrase the sentence (semantic processing). Craik and Lockhart contended that processing at these deeper levels would lead to greater retention, while only engaging with information at more shallow levels of processing would result in weaker retention of the information. Furthermore, they claimed that information would be lost from memory at a rate proportional to the depth at which it was processed. Though this framework was constructed outside the field of second language acquisition (SLA) research, it laid the groundwork for Laufer and Hulstijn's (2001) Involvement Load Hypothesis, which would reconceive 'processing depth' as 'involvement' and operationalize this phenomenon.

Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) separate the ‘depth of processing’ required by a L2 task into three identifiable and measurable components, one motivational and two cognitive: need, search, and evaluation. The motivational component is need, which refers to the “drive to comply with the task requirements [which]... can be either externally imposed or self-imposed” (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001, p. 14). This need can be moderate in its overall effect on the task’s involvement load, such as when it is externally imposed, or it can be strong in its effect, such as when it comes from the learner. An example of these two levels of need could be two composition tasks, one in which the student is required by the teacher to include certain new vocabulary words and one in which the student wishes to include new vocabulary words because they express what the student wants to write. The first scenario is an example of moderate need, since it is coming from the task requirements and the second is an example of strong need, since it is derived from the student’s own wish to express a certain idea in the composition.

The two cognitive components of involvement are search and evaluation. Search refers to “the attempt to find the meaning of an unknown L2 word or trying to find the L2 word form expressing a concept...by consulting a dictionary or another authority” (p. 14). Evaluation refers to comparing the found words to one another, comparing the multiple meanings of a single word, “or combining the word with other words in order to assess whether a word (i.e. a form-meaning pair) does or does not fit the context” (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001, p. 14). An example of this evaluation could be a student deciding between different words expressing the word *boy* in French (*gars*, *gamin*, and *garçon*) while writing a composition.

The Involvement Load Hypothesis posits that incidental word retention through tasks will depend on the presence and degree of the three components of involvement in the task (together termed the ‘involvement load’) and that “words processed with higher involvement load will be retained better than words which are processed with lower involvement load” (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001, p. 15). They extend this to apply to tasks, putting forth that “other factors being equal, teacher/researcher-designed tasks with a higher involvement load will be more effective for vocabulary retention than tasks with lower involvement load” (p. 17).

For example, a task with a high involvement load might be a composition task during which the students are given a certain prompt to answer without specific words or constructions that must be used in the composition, and without a model composition to use as reference. The need and search components would be strong in this scenario, as students would be looking up the words they wish to use, as well as any necessary grammar. The evaluation component could also be strong if the students must combine new words to express the ideas they wish to convey. A low involvement load task might be a reading comprehension task in which unfamiliar words are glossed for the students (eliminating the search component) and during which the comprehension task requires attention to the glossed words, but no evaluation of the words is necessary.

Hulstijn and Laufer (2001) found evidence for the Involvement Load Hypothesis in their study with advanced EFL students in Israel and the Netherlands when they compared the effects of a reading task, a reading task plus a fill-in task, and a composition task on incidental vocabulary acquisition. The first task, reading only, was

judged to have the lowest involvement load of the three tasks, as it was receptive and did not require the students to produce or use words during the activity. The second task was deemed as having a middle-range of involvement load, since it did require the students to produce words, but it also provided them with support and guidance in the form of incomplete sentences. The third task, the composition, had the highest involvement load, because the students had to independently produce original sentences, forcing them to draw more deeply on their memory resources. As predicted by the hypothesis, the task with the heaviest involvement load, the composition, resulted in the highest incidence of vocabulary acquisition. In replication studies, Keating (2008) and Kim (2008) also reported results that supported this hypothesis.

When comparing different writing tasks as well as writing and non-writing tasks, this framework allows researchers and teachers to identify why certain tasks might be more effective for vocabulary acquisition, but it does not account for a possible upper limit on the benefit of increased involvement load, as is shown in the studies by Barcroft (2004), Folse (2006), Lu (2013), and Wong and Pyun (2012). From this theoretical point of departure, the various empirical studies which compare writing tasks to non-writing tasks will now be discussed.

## **Writing Tasks**

### **Writing versus non-writing tasks**

Researchers have compared writing and non-writing tasks, such as reading, and have illustrated the potential of writing tasks in vocabulary acquisition. Pichette, De

Serres, and Lafontaine (2012) asked the following question: “Which individual activity is more likely to promote the retention of a new word by the learner: Is it reading a word in context or writing that word in a sentence?” (p. 66). This question connects their work to Swain’s Output hypothesis (1985), which asserts that L2 production leads to more L2 development than L2 reception alone. It follows that since writing is a productive task, writing should enhance more vocabulary acquisition than reading alone. Pichette, De Serres, and Lafontaine hypothesized in their 2012 study that writing tasks will better promote vocabulary acquisition. The researchers tested for incidental acquisition of new vocabulary words and the retention of recently encountered words through immediate and delayed recall after reading sentences and writing sentences with intermediate and advanced French L1 ESL learners. The writing task chosen for this study was sentence writing to better facilitate making form-meaning connections through context, which cannot be done through writing isolated words. According to the researchers, “Reading or writing isolated words out of context is not a normal task” (p. 66); in other words, this is not something a L2 user would do in the real world to accomplish something, and form should not be separated from meaning when learning vocabulary if the instructor’s goal is contextualized, real-world-like activities.

Based on the results, the authors concluded that writing the new words in sentences lead to higher recall than merely reading the words in context. According to this research, the sentence writing task was more effective because of the “greater cognitive demands” (Pichette et al., 2012, p.4) of writing. That is, writing demands more attention and deeper processing of the new word, or a higher involvement load, than

reading in terms of form and semantics. As a result, the students retain the target words better after the writing task. Furthermore, the authors point out that “while writing necessarily involves a certain amount of reading, the contrary is not true” (p. 69). They called this ‘task-overlap’, which L2 teachers can take into consideration when choosing writing tasks for vocabulary learning. In addition to their conclusion, they mention that the more time is given to students to complete the sentence writing task, the more words students will retain in the long term.

Time is an important factor in the effect writing has on vocabulary acquisition. One study where time plays an important role is Webb’s (2005) research in which the author investigated the effects of receptive word knowledge through reading tasks and productive word knowledge through writing tasks. The researcher conducted two experiments with first-year university-level Japanese ESL learners, both testing five aspects of vocabulary knowledge. The author explained that testing word knowledge merely based on meaning and form is not an appropriate measure, and expanded the aspects tested to include orthography, syntax, association, and grammatical functions as well. Both experiments were necessary because the first measured the five aspects through reading and writing tasks with limited time, whereas, the second measured them under the condition of unlimited time. This difference showed opposite results. With limited time, the reading task was more effective and with unlimited time the writing task was more effective; reading tasks promoted more receptive knowledge and writing tasks more productive knowledge. Since productive learning is more effective in the long run for both productive and receptive proficiency (Swain, 1985), employing writing tasks

during which learners can take their time is an overall more effective strategy for gaining word knowledge.

This explains why productive learning through writing tasks is more effective for vocabulary acquisition as long as teachers give students enough time to complete the writing task. Webb (2005) concludes his research by stating that “[i]f we consider the time spent on the tasks to be a function of the tasks and consider the results to be ecologically valid, then writing a sentence may be a more effective method of gaining vocabulary knowledge than reading three sentences” (p. 50). Thus, time is an important factor that teachers need to keep in mind when expecting a writing task to enhance vocabulary knowledge for L2 learners during class.

In addition to considering the time allotted for the task, the studies conducted by Barcroft (2004) and Wong and Pyun (2012) show that when comparing writing to a non-writing task, intended use of the target words must also be taken into account; that is, whether the demands of the task will be form- or semantically-focused. In Barcroft’s study, 44 second-semester university-level L2 learners of Spanish were shown 24 vocabulary words with pictures indicating their meanings. For half of the words, students had to learn them through writing a sentence using the word while being shown the picture and for the other half of the words, the students had to learn the words only through four different viewings of the pictures. In the testing phase, the students were again shown the pictures and directed to produce the target word in Spanish. The results of both the immediate and delayed post-tests showed that the words learned during the non-sentence-writing learning condition were better retained and produced than those

learned through the sentence-writing condition. Barcroft had hypothesized that this would be the outcome in light of his ‘type of processing-resource allocation’ or ‘TOPRA’ model (Barcroft, 2000, as cited in Barcroft, 2004), which posits that sufficiently-high semantic processing demands during a task can decrease a learner’s capacity to process both the meaning and the form of the word, allowing them to focus only on the semantic dimension of a word.

In a replication study, Wong and Pyun (2012) employed the same learning and testing design as Barcroft (2004) but with first-year university-level L2 learners of French and Korean; they also added an additional research question concerning the effect of orthographical distance between the learner’s L1 and L2 on vocabulary acquisition. With 69 learners of French and 29 learners of Korean, all of whom were native speakers of English or highly familiar with English, Wong and Pyun’s findings echoed those of Barcroft. The students exposed to the new vocabulary words through the non-sentence-writing condition scored almost twice as well as the sentence-writing group on the immediate and delayed post-tests during which the students had to write the target words after being shown the corresponding images that they had seen in the learning phase. As Wong and Pyun point out at the end of their study, these findings do not contradict Laufer and Hulstijn’s (2001) Involvement Load Hypothesis, but they highlight its limitations in explaining incidental vocabulary acquisition at the form level through the performance of semantically-focused tasks.



### **Comparing different types of writing tasks**

Writing has been recognized as a productive task that can facilitate L2 vocabulary acquisition and retention (Pichette, De Serres, & Lafontaine, 2012; Walters & Bozkurt, 2009; Webb, 2005). Yet, despite this recognition, other research has claimed that this is not always the case and mentions factors that affect how certain types of writing tasks may or may not lead to vocabulary acquisition and retention (Barcroft, 2007; Folse, 2006). These factors include the type of writing task, the vocabulary words chosen for the writing task, and the amount of time given for completion. The different types of writing tasks mentioned in various studies include fill-in the blank, composition, cloze-tests, sentence-level writing, word-level writing, and fragment writing. The factors mentioned above and these different types of writing tasks will be discussed in this section.

As was the case when comparing writing tasks to readings tasks, time is also an important factor when comparing the efficacy of certain writing tasks. Lu (2013) investigated the effect of several types of writing tasks when paired with a reading task on vocabulary learning by conducting a study with 10th and 11th grade ESL learners, who had been studying English for about seven years. The researcher gave them four different tasks: single blank filling (the students had nine unconnected sentences to complete with the target words), triple blank filling (students had three sets of nine unconnected sentences to complete), blank filling of a summary (students filled in words missing from a summary of the reading passage), and summary writing (students produced their own summary of the reading passage using the target words). The study focused on the effect of time allowed for completion on task results since many L2

learners face difficulties in completing writing tasks during limited classroom time. The results showed that the composition task was less beneficial to vocabulary learning than the triple blank task and unsuitable under classroom time constraints. However, the author suggests that teachers can use blank-filling tasks as scaffolding activities that will help learners complete composition tasks within a limited time period.

In contrast to the aforementioned study, Talebzadeh and Bagheri (2012) found that for EFL learners in Iran, the composition task was the most beneficial to vocabulary acquisition, when compared with sentence writing and cloze tests, given that the students had unlimited time to complete the composition. The authors concluded that the composition was most effective because learners were able to use the words in meaningful contexts in addition to using their higher level cognitive functions and the lack of time constraints allowed them to do this slowly and deliberately. The conclusions of both the Lu (2013) and Talebzadeh and Bagheri studies support the Involvement Load Hypothesis in that when students are given sufficient time, they are able to better engage with the higher involvement load of a composition task, which can result in the acquisition of L2 vocabulary.

These two studies show the importance of time when it comes to designing and implementing classroom writing tasks. When teachers choose the type of writing task they wish to use, they should consider how much classroom time is suitable to complete the task and learn the new vocabulary. Some teachers may resort to having students write single vocabulary words or fragments to practice the new vocabulary and save time. Yet, Barcroft (2007) asks the following question “Does copying a word while attempting to

learn it constitute a compatible dual task that improves the ability to learn new words, or is it an incompatible task that decreases the ability to learn new words?" (p. 714).

Barcroft (2007) claims that asking L2 learners to copy down words or fragments without associating the form with meaning actually exhausts processing resources that otherwise could be used to make form-meaning connections that result in vocabulary acquisition and retention. The study was conducted with first-semester university-level Spanish learners learning new words under three conditions: word writing, fragment writing, and no writing while seeing the words and pictures of the words. This study found that 'no writing' resulted in the highest level of vocabulary acquisition on the post-tests during which students had to produce the target words in Spanish and also provide the English equivalent when given the Spanish word. The main conclusion of this research was that teachers should avoid directing L2 learners to write down isolated words in order to remember them, and that output associated with meaning is effective whereas the opposite is not, when the vocabulary items are being tested on the semantic level. This conclusion echoes that of the Barcroft (2004) study in that task demands should align with task preparation if vocabulary acquisition is to be shown to have taken place. The final study examined in this section shows however, that even when students are not writing whole sentences, they can still make apparent vocabulary gains, per the Involvement Load Hypothesis (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001).

Folse (2006) focuses his study on the semantic acquisition of vocabulary items through three different writing tasks with intermediate EFL learners. The students were given 24 vocabulary words to learn through completing a practice booklet containing a

mini-dictionary of the words (created specifically for the study, which served as the input for the study) and three different types of written practice exercises: a single fill-in-the-blank exercise (during which the student had to provide a missing word in the sentence), three different fill-in exercises, and a composition task. The 24 words were divided into three groups which were learned through the different written exercises in different orders, resulting in 36 possible combinations, or 36 different practice booklets. In the immediate and delayed post-tests, the students had to demonstrate their knowledge of the vocabulary words by providing L2 synonyms or L1 equivalents as well as L2 sentences that used the words in context.

The results of the post-tests showed that the students best retained and produced synonyms for the words learned through the three fill-in exercises. Folse (2006) dismissed the effect of processing depth or involvement load in light of these results, and attributed the retention to number of exposures. However, closer examination of this study's design would suggest that involvement load actually did play a role. Doing three different fill-in exercises would necessitate three times the searching (in the mini-dictionary) and evaluation (comparing the possible words) to place the target words correctly in the exercises, thereby increasing the involvement load of the task considerably in comparison to the other two tasks.

### **Other writing tasks**

This final section of the literature review will discuss non-traditional writing tasks in the FL classroom in the forms of keeping vocabulary notebooks (Walters & Bozkurt, 2009) and blog writing (Fellner, 2006; Rahmany, Sadeghi, & Faramarzi, 2013; Sun,

2010). Walters and Bozkurt examined the first of these, keeping vocabulary notebooks, with EFL students aged 17 to 20 years studying at an English preparatory school in Turkey. In the study, they compared the vocabulary acquisition of a group of target words over a four-week period across three groups of students: one treatment group that kept vocabulary notebooks and two control groups who did not. In the vocabulary notebooks that the treatment group kept, the students recorded the target words as well as linguistic information about the words, such as the part of speech, a definition, and a L1 equivalent. The students also used these notebooks in classroom activities in addition to using them as records of the words. The students were administered post-tests of both receptive and productive vocabulary acquisition, which focused on the words' meanings, as well as asked to do a free-write composition and complete a survey about their attitudes towards using the vocabulary notebooks.

The post-tests and analysis of the compositions showed that those students who kept the vocabulary notebooks had significantly higher receptive and productive vocabulary acquisition than the control groups and that they used significantly more of the vocabulary words in the free-write composition task. These results support the Involvement Load Hypothesis in that the students had high incidences of search and evaluation throughout the vocabulary notebook tasks (finding information about the words, deciding among multiple definitions or L1 equivalents to include), even if the need was only moderate, as it was externally imposed on the students. The results of the survey about vocabulary notebook use showed, however, that few students were likely to continue using the notebooks in the absence of the teacher requiring their use, casting

doubt on the practical viability of this writing task in promoting L2 vocabulary acquisition.

Blog writing as a task to enhance vocabulary acquisition has been shown to increase student engagement and motivation as well as produce positive effects on student writing fluency and accuracy (Fellner, 2006; Rahmany, Sadeghi, & Faramarzi, 2013; Sun, 2010). Rahmany et al. focused explicitly on vocabulary acquisition through writing blog entries and word recommendation between students, while Fellner and Sun considered vocabulary only as a component of writing fluency through daily micro-blogging exercises during a seven-day workshop, but one that nevertheless benefited from the writing of blog entries. As writing a blog entry would carry a considerable involvement load, with strong need and evaluation as well as search dimensions, the results of these studies corroborate the Involvement Load Hypothesis and show blogging to be an effective and engaging non-traditional writing task that enhances vocabulary acquisition in the FL classroom.

As the previous literature review has shown, there is a clear connection between writing activities and L2 vocabulary acquisition, which can be explained with the Involvement Load Hypothesis. However, there are still areas yet to be explored. In the final section of this paper, I will propose a research project to help answer one of these remaining questions.

### **Conclusion and Proposal for Future Research**

As the previously discussed studies have shown, many factors can affect L2 vocabulary acquisition during classroom writing tasks, such as time-on-task, the amount of involvement load associated with a task, and the students' level of engagement or

motivation in relation to the task. Many questions remain unanswered in this field, and many variables remain untested, so this review will conclude with a brief outline for a study that would answer one of these questions, namely: does a sentence writing task enhance incidental vocabulary acquisition to the same extent in a non-Latin-based script language such as Arabic, as it does in a Latin-based script language such as French for English speaking learners of these languages? The study below is proposed to answer this question.

This study would be conducted in two second-year university-level French and Arabic courses, where the majority of the language learners are native speakers of English and the students of both languages have the same number of class-time hours per week. The study would be carried out during the regular class time of two consecutive class periods.

On the first day, the students in both languages would be given a brief pre-test during which they would write the English equivalents of the same lists of target words, such as the list found in Table 2. These words would be specifically chosen to avoid cognates between the English and French words that might give the French class an advantage and relatively low scores on the pre-test would be expected. After the pre-test, students would be given the English equivalents of the words and directed to write one sentence per word for up to twenty minutes. After the exposure part of the study, the two classes would proceed as normal, without any additional repetition or use of the target words in the class by the teachers, or indication to the students that they will be tested on the words.

Table 2  
*Target words for study*

English	Arabic	العربية	French
drinking glass	koob	كوب	une verre
plate	sahin	صحن	une assiette
spoon	mila'qa	ملعقة	une cuillère
fork	shoka	شوكة	une fourchette
knife	sakeeneh	سكينة	un couteau
napkin	mendeel	منديل	une serviette
coffee mug	funjan qahweh	فنجان قهوة	une tasse
frying pan	miqlah	مقلاة	une poêle
pot	tanjareh	طنجرة	une casserole
oven	furun	فرن	un four

The following day, the two class periods would both begin with the testing phase of the study, which would be the administration of a cloze test. The students would have to produce the target words and correctly place them in a paragraph, with no word bank—they would be encouraged to show what they know, even if they may not be 100% correct. They would be given up to 20 minutes for this task as well. The class would then proceed as normal, without the intentional use or repetition of the target words in the class by the teachers, or indication to the students that they will be tested again on the words. An identical delayed post-test would be administered one week later and students would be asked if they had encountered or studied the target words in the interim.

Both post-tests would be evaluated for two signs of vocabulary acquisition (correct spelling of the words and correct semantic use of the words) and the results compared between the two languages. I hypothesize that for this particular set of words



(see Table 2), the two groups would have comparable gains in vocabulary acquisition when pushed to produce the words in the cloze test, with the Arabic group possibly doing better in acquiring the meaning of the words and the French students doing better in producing the correct forms of the words, with a possible significant difference between the groups in this respect. These particular outcomes are likely for two reasons. First, all of the forms of the Arabic words are distinct from one another, whereas there are three French words that end in *-ette*, as well as a few ambiguous or quasi-cognate words, such as ‘casserole’ and ‘serviette’, which might lead some students to mix up the meanings of these words. Second, despite the fact that Arabic is a phonetic language, several of the sounds of these words do not exist in English and may cause Anglophone students to spell them wrong when producing them from memory. Besides these differences, I believe the students’ vocabulary acquisition as a result of this task would be about the same, with no significant difference between their levels of vocabulary acquisition. I came to this hypothesis in light of the Involvement Load Hypothesis, in that for both groups, the search and need components of the task and test are moderate or low (since the students may not use dictionaries during the test) but the evaluation component, comparing the words when making sentences and putting them in the cloze test, is relatively strong. It would then be possible to see the differences (if any) in vocabulary acquisition that arise as a result of the choice of language being studied, and hypothesize further about how to facilitate vocabulary acquisition in the specific languages.

This study would help fulfill the need for comparing writing task efficacy for vocabulary acquisition across languages with two different scripts, in the same way that Wong and Pyun (2012) did in their replication of Barcroft (2004). It would also provide

insight into the viability of the Involvement Load Hypothesis when students are exposed to and tested on both form and meaning of words, instead of meaning or form alone. By the nature of the post-tests (cloze tests) it would be possible to examine the students' knowledge of both form and meaning of the words, since they would be producing the words from memory. For example, a student may remember that "fourchette" means fork and be able to recognize it, but unable to spell it correctly—they could approximate the spelling on the test, and it would be clear that this student retained the meaning of the word, but not the form. By not divorcing form and meaning in the structure of the test, a more accurate picture of the students' vocabulary acquisition (or lack thereof) could be obtained.

CULTURE ARTIFACT:

Using and Teaching “Tu” and “Vous” in the French Foreign Language Classroom

## INTRODUCTION & REFLECTION

This artifact was written for LING 6900 with Dr. Karin de Jonge-Kannan in fall of 2015. As an L2 French speaker, I know that the “correct” usage of *tu* and *vous* (T/V) is of utmost importance to communicating politely and effectively in French, but that it is also a complicated and nuanced aspect of the language that can be difficult for learners to understand at first. I wanted to better understand how the T/V distinction developed in French and how the usage of these pronouns might have changed even once norms had been established. It was encouraging to read that, even among L1 French speakers, there are mostly only strong trends as to how to use T/V, but very few cut-and-dry rules. Writing this paper has underscored for me the importance of using authentic materials whenever possible in the classroom to expose students to as many different ways to use the language as possible; it would be difficult, or nearly impossible, for them to get an idea of the many different ways T/V are used if their only model of French was what they heard from me in the classroom.

### **Abstract**

In this paper, the author addresses the struggles of and approaches implemented by foreign language teachers when teaching second person pronoun (“tu” and “vous”) usage in French foreign language classrooms. The literature review is divided into two parts: the first part illustrates the complexity of second person pronouns in French and the second part explores how second language acquisition (SLA) researchers have approached the challenge of teaching this sociolinguistic feature of the language. In the final part of this paper, the author presents lesson plans for teaching *tu* and *vous* in the French foreign language (FFL) classroom created in light of the insights gained from the literature review.

**Keywords:** French language teaching; second-person pronouns; TU/VOUS; pragmatics teaching;

### **Introduction**

Though it is a facet of the French language often addressed within the first week of instruction, the distinction and different functions of the second-person address forms *tu* and *vous* (T/V) are not nearly so neat and tidy (Lyster & Rebuffot, 2002; ETCETC) as many students may initially believe. After some exposure to this feature of the language, however, students often do perceive its complexity and the difficulty of mastering it (Dewaele & Planchenault, 2006), which then leaves teachers with the question of how best to handle it in the classroom. This literature review will first discuss some of the most prominent features of the T/V distinction and how they can pose difficulties for learners of French. Next, it will explore some approaches to teaching T/V in the French as a foreign language classroom, and it will conclude with a set of proposed lessons based

on insights the author has gained through undertaking this research. The ultimate goal in effectively teaching T/V, as is clear from the research presented, is to help students appreciate the multifaceted roles that both pronouns of address play in the French language. They are tools to create meaning in the context of social interactions between individuals or groups and the goal in explicitly addressing them in the classroom is to move students away from seeing the two pronouns as mutually exclusive ‘categories’ in which students should place their conversation partners.

### **Tu and Vous Usage Overview**

Unlike in the modern English language which only has one pronoun of address, ‘you’, the French language counts two, *tu* and *vous* (T/V), among its distinguishing linguistic features. In general, novice learners are instructed by textbooks to draw the distinction between these two pronouns in terms of formality or politeness and in terms of distinguishing between singular and plural subjects of address. *Vous* is generally confined to designating formal situations and addressing groups (such as when an instructor gives instructions to a classroom of students) and *tu* is then reserved for friends, peers, or family. Framing the complex system of second-person pronoun address forms that exists in French as an easy-to-swallow, three-quarters-of-a-page-at-most explanation renders it more digestible to beginner learners, but it does them no favors in terms of giving them the skills for sociolinguistically competent French usage in the future.

Brown and Gilman (1960) put forth one of the more influential hypotheses about second-person pronoun usage in European languages (they discuss French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese) when they proposed the power/solidarity dichotomy as

being primarily responsible for pronoun choice in these languages. The authors trace the history of the T/V semantic, discussing how the Latin *vos*, initially only used to designate the plural, was first used in the singular to address the Roman emperor. Over time, it was then used to address an expanding group of individuals with power, meaning individuals “able to control the behavior of [an]other” (Brown & Gilman, 1960, p. 255). This dynamic resulted in the relatively widespread use of non-reciprocal pronoun use between superiors and inferiors by about the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> century, in which the superior would address the inferior as *tu* and the inferior would address the superior as *vous*. As the authors point out, this system of power-based pronoun choice only works in a society with “a social structure in which there are unique power ranks for every individual” (Brown & Gilman, 1960, p. 256), so they propose a second side to the dichotomy, the “solidarity semantic” (Brown & Gilman, 1960, 257). Learners of French often learn this aspect of *vous* early, usually with the example of using *vous* with the president or other important people, and *tu* with peers or family members.

The solidarity semantic (Brown & Gilman, 1960) posits that individuals with certain aspects of their lives in common, such as “attend[ing] the same school, hav[ing] the same parents, or practic[ing] the same profession” (Brown & Gilman, 1960, p. 258) over time began to use *tu* with each other as sign of intimacy or shared experience. The authors specify: “The similarities that matter seem to be those that make for like-mindedness or similar behavior dispositions. These will ordinarily be such things as political membership, family, religion, profession, sex, and birthplace” (Brown & Gilman, 1960, 258). This aspect of *tu* use in French is often pointed out to learners, and they are often instructed to use *tu* with their classmates and peers. Though this framework

of power/solidarity is useful in explaining the history of T/V use, further examination of more recent T/V use will help illustrate the true complexities of this feature of French.

As Norrby and Warren (2012) discuss briefly in their article on forms of address in European languages (French, German, and Swedish), there are several primary factors that influence the pronoun, T/V, used by a French speaker in a given situation. Perhaps the most salient, and easily identified, are age and social distance, which echo the Brown and Gilman (1960) framework. That is, the closer in age and social distance interlocutors perceive each other to be, the more likely they will use *tu*; in the opposite case, *vous* is more likely to be used (Norrby & Warren, 2012). Gardner-Chloros found this to be true in her seminal 1991 study of T/V use among French-speakers in the Alsace region, where one of her primary goals was to ascertain if there were real ‘rules’ of T/V usage that could be gleaned from asking French-speakers about their own speaking tendencies.

This questionnaire- and interview-based study had 78 participants chosen “au hasard” (Gardner-Chloros, 1991, p. 143) on the streets of Mulhouse, Colmar, and Haguenau, ranging in age from 20 years old to 80 years old, where the average age was 44. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with 34 of the participants, 19 women and 15 men. The primary research questions in this study were: 1.) How does T/V usage change as a result of the age of the speaker and/or the addressee? 2.) How does speaking to a known/unknown addressee affect T/V usage? and 3.) How do these two factors interact? Overall, the results showed that strict tendencies exist for some situations: when speaking to a known addressee of less than 15 years of age, for example, almost all participants would use *tu*. However, the ‘rules’ were much less clear when it came to other situations, and participants stated that other factors besides age and whether the



addressee was known or not would need to be considered, such as when the addressee is known but older than the speaker. Gardner-Chloros also found that the older a speaker is, the more they tend to use *vous* with more groups of people, especially with those individuals older than the speaker (Gardner-Chloros, 1991).

The in-depth interviews shed light on additional factors, which included: context, hierarchical relations at work, the outward demeanor of a person, and a person's personality. Most participants agreed that in the context of sports or leisure, using *tu* was more acceptable with more people than *vous*; the author makes the distinction, however that while an opera and a rock concert are both leisure activities, *vous* would certainly be expected at the former and *tu* at the latter. In the workplace, according to the respondents, it's common for those workers at the lowest hierarchical tier to use *tu* amongst themselves and *vous* with management, while those in the higher ranks would use *vous* with everyone in the company. Quite interestingly, the participants highlighted that the way an addressee is dressed would also affect the pronoun a speaker would employ. An individual dressed in what would be called the 'preppy' style (BCBG or 'bon chic bon genre' in French) would elicit the usage of *vous* from a speaker more than someone of the same age dressed in the more trendy, teenager-like fashion of the moment. This might be a vestige of the 'power' aspect of pronoun use (Brown & Gilman, 1960). Participants also mentioned that the simple fact of whether a person looks nice or not can affect which pronoun they elicit from speakers, with those individuals who look kinder or more 'sympathique' garnering more *tu* usage (Gardner-Chloros, 1991).

Perhaps most revealing of the complexity of this issue, participants also discussed how one's personality could affect pronoun usage and that some people just use *tu* more

easily than others (Gardner-Chloros, 1991). The author points out that people often rarely openly discuss the issue of using T/V with each other, and that “the passage from *vous* to *tu* must be felt” (Gardner-Chloros, 1991, p. 153), which does not necessarily help FFL teachers in deciding how to present this sociolinguistic conundrum to their students.

Gardner-Chloros also discusses how T/V habits can change over time and through different stages of life. She gives the example of an elderly person using more *tu* later in life once they feel less constrained by the hierarchy associated with their work life, while a young adult will probably start using more *vous* as she enters the workforce. Gardner-Chloros concludes that it is very difficult to define hard and fast rules for T/V use that apply to every situation. In the abstract to her article she states:

Les résultats montrent avant tout la diversité des comportements et des motivations dans ce domaine et notre conclusion porte sur la difficulté, d’après ces résultats, à énoncer des ‘règles’” [The results show above all the diversity of behavior and motivation in this realm, and our conclusion discusses the difficulty, according to these results, in formulating ‘rules’”] (Gardner-Chloros, 1991, p.139)

Morford (1997) illustrates how context also plays a large role in pronoun use, when interlocutor social distance and age may be relatively close: “She gives the example of two lawyers who know each other well and would normally address each other by *tu* but who adopt the reciprocal use of *vous* in the court as a means of acknowledging the official setting” (Norrby & Warren, 2012, p.228). They also discuss how T/V can be used to exclude or include people from groups, or even insult, depending on the context of the situation. Peeters (2004) discusses the reversal of T/V use between police officers and criminals: earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the police would use the belittling *tu* with criminals

and they would receive the address of *vous*; more recently, this has reversed and the police use the formal, distant *vous* when speaking to criminals and they receive *tu*. Clearly, though the roles of these two groups had not changed, something else in their relationship had, prompting the switch and further illustrating the complexity of T/V.

### **Approaches to Teaching Tu and Vous**

Perhaps one of the most important starting points when considering how to teach or present something to students is the students' current attitudes and previous knowledge toward the topic. Dewaele and Planchenault (2006) examine this phenomenon in their study on student perceptions of the difficulty of the French pronoun system. They analyzed data from written questionnaires from 125 participants: 102 L2 speakers of French (L1 speakers of various European and African languages) and 23 L1 speakers of French. The average age for both groups was about 31 years old. The researchers wanted to ascertain the effects of various demographic variables on the students' perception of the difficulty of the French pronoun system, such as length of time spent in a French-speaking community/ frequency of French usage, and presence of similar pronoun system in the students' L1. Their results surprised the researchers. The relationship between time spent speaking French and perceived difficulty of the pronoun system was shown to exhibit U-shaped behavior, that is, at the beginning of the students' study of French, they perceive the system as difficult. After some time they perceive it as being easier, and then after even more time has passed and they have spent more time with it, they judge the system to be difficult again. Though each group of students is different, this is certainly an important insight for French instructors to consider when planning lessons. At the end

of their study, Dewaele and Planchenault suggest regularly revisiting the concept of second-person pronoun address forms throughout formal instruction, and also adopting Lyster's (1994) method of functional analysis instruction. This approach gives students the opportunity to analyze communication in terms of the social context and roles of the speakers, and to notice how linguistic forms change and vary as a result of these social contexts (Lyster, 1994). They do this by listening to or reading exchanges from authentic materials, discussing the context, and role-playing.

Other approaches to teaching the difficult T/V system come from Liddicoat (2006) and Van Compernelle (2010). In a vein similar to Lyster (1994), Liddicoat focused on raising students' awareness of the usage of different pronouns and forms of address (the researcher also looked at use of interlocutor's first names and titles in addition to pronouns) in different social contexts. The subjects in this study were 10 volunteer, university-level beginner learners of French, 3 male and 7 female, between 17 and 19 years old. They were all L1 speakers of Australian English and none had previously studied French. They participated in three 30-minute instruction periods over eight weeks that were specifically focused on the usage of second-person pronouns and forms of address.

During the periods of instruction, the students analyzed exchanges from a variety of authentic texts, with the help of some guiding questions from the instructor (Liddicoat, 2006). They were guided to look at the roles and identities of the interlocutors, as well as their relationship to one another to gain a better understanding of how these relationships were reflected or challenged, albeit in a nuanced manner, through the forms of address and pronouns used. Data about the students' progress with French address forms and

pronouns were collected through pre-and post-instruction interviews with the students and “[i]n all cases, students have begun to move away from interpretations of French linguistic behavior based on classes of interlocutors to begin to view these behaviors as interpersonal” (Liddicoat, 2006, p. 74). That is, through the intervention in the study, the students were able to deepen their understanding of T/V usage beyond the simplistic categories and ‘rules’ presented by many mainstream French textbooks (Liddicoat, 2006). Some students in the study were also able to examine their own native culture behavior related to forms of address through the lens of the French context, demonstrating that even beginning students, using linguistically simple authentic texts can begin to develop deeper understandings of complex cultural practices (such as T/V usage) from the very first semester of study.

Van Compernelle (2010) proposes an approach aligned in the same way toward fostering students’ understanding of the relationship variables and dynamics that contribute to a speaker’s use of *tu* or *vous*, instead of relying on generalized and misleading rules from a textbook. In this article, the researcher does not discuss a study carried out, but rather puts forth possible lesson plans to facilitate students’ progress toward this goal by employing what Van Compernelle calls “sociolinguistically responsive pedagogy” (p. 450). By this, the author means, “widening the range of communicative situations and types of interaction in which the learners engage, both in and beyond the classroom” (p.450). As Van Compernelle discusses, choices for conversation topics in the foreign language classroom are often constrained by the textbook, which has as its goal “to reinforce previously introduced vocabulary and grammar lessons” (p. 451). To remedy this, the author places his approach within the

New London Group's (1996, as cited in Van Compernelle, 2010) multiliteracies framework, and illustrates how the parts of the framework (situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice) are not necessarily a sequence, but are interchangeable to best suit the goals and needs of a given group of learners.

In the proposed sequence of instruction, the students are first introduced to the T/V conceptual framework; they then watch a scene from a film where they can see some of the deeper social implications of T/V usage; next, the students are given the opportunity to role play in an online chat, during which they can take on new roles for themselves and experiment with using an address form outside of what they would normally use in class; finally, the students analyze their transcripts from the chat and reflect on how they used one pronoun or the other to create "social meaning" (Van Compernelle, 2010, p. 457). As the author explains: "This type of post-activity analysis can help learners to realize the dynamic nature of pronominal address, focusing on the negotiation of social meaning, rather than categorical rules for second-person address" (p. 457). This echoes Liddicoat's (2006) endeavor in the same direction of creating opportunities for students to go beyond the simplified treatment of the T/V distinction that is often presented in textbooks.

As also echoed in Lyster and Rebuffot (2002), a combination of awareness-raising activities and activities where the students must 'try-on' usages of T/V that are outside of the language classroom norm seem to be effective in moving students toward a deeper understanding of the complexity of T/V usage in French. The lessons proposed in the following section of this paper will also attempt to bring these two key elements together

so as to create an effective learning opportunity for students to better appreciate this particular feature of French.

As the preceding literature review has shown, T/V use is a complicated, nuanced issue, one which, as Gardner-Chloros says “calls into question every notion of ‘rule’” (Gardner-Chloros, 1991, 154). The choice of pronoun can depend on easily identifiable things, such as age and social power relative to the interlocutor; other factors such as individual personality and context of the conversation can complicate the issue further. The same individual may change their T/V use habits over the course of their life, with *vous* use increasing with age (Gardner-Chloros, 1991). The literature on teaching these nuances advocates raising students’ awareness of these complexities through the exploration of authentic texts and authentic language use (Liddicoat, 2006; Lyster and Rebuffot, 2002; Van Compernelle, 2010). In the following lesson plans, the author draws on these insights and proposes a lesson in which students not only discuss and reflect their own T/V use and the T/V use of characters in film, but they also practice using these pronouns in a more intentional way through role-play and further reflection.

### **Proposed Lesson Plans**

The lesson plans proposed in this section are intended for university-level intermediate students of French, in at least their fourth semester of language study. At this level, the students will be able to carry out discussions and role-plays with relative ease, using the present indicative tense and some past tense. It is also hoped that they will have had some contact with L1 French speakers, or at least more authentic Francophone materials, which would not be the case with beginning students. This lesson on T/V is

meant to span two days, but the awareness-raising activities could be expanded into a total of three to include the examination of texts as well as the video clips. Each class period lasts 50 minutes, and this lesson is meant to take place either between chapters or near the beginning of the semester, since it does not use material or vocabulary words drawn from a specific textbook unit. The overall goal of this lesson plan is for students to be able to understand and apply more nuanced uses of T/V, beyond the general ‘rule’ of *vous* being formal and for groups of people and *tu* being used for friends, peers, and family.

On the first day, students will take part in awareness-raising activities, per the suggestions of Van Compernelle (2010), Liddicoat (2006), Lyster and Rebuffot (2002), and Tatsuki and Houck (2010). After a brief warm-up activity, students will brainstorm by themselves on what they already know about using T/V, how they use the pronouns, how they have noticed other French speakers using them, etc. The instructor will then ask for students’ ideas and make a knowledge map on the board about what the class already knows. Next, the students will watch a series of film clips from *La Haine* (1995), *La Reine Margot* (1994), and *Les Intouchables* (2011), each one demonstrating non-conventional pronoun use, or situations where pronoun use ‘rules’ may not apply, or can be applied in different ways. After each video clip, students will discuss with a partner or a small group about why the characters in the films used the pronouns they did in the given situation. After these film clips, the class will discuss as a whole once more how what the students observed in the film clips either confirmed, contradicted, or expanded what they knew about T/V. For homework, students will reflect on T/V usage that they have observed in other Francophone texts (such as songs, films, novels, comic books,



etc.) and whether these instances of T/V use confirm, contradict, or expand what they already know about T/V.

On the second day, students will discuss their homework reflections as a warm-up. Then, students will find partners and rotate through various role-playing scenarios (see Appendices C and D for handouts and role-play scenarios). Each group will have about 8 or 9 minutes to act out the scenario (for example, meeting another foreign exchange student at a party in a Francophone country) and they will be instructed to take notes on what pronouns they used. After class, students will use an online class management platform, such as Canvas, to post reflections on their pronoun use during two of the four scenarios for the rest of the class to read. After posting their own reflections on why they think they used the pronouns they did during the roleplays, students will then comment on two other reflections, not focused on the same scenarios. For example, if Fatima wrote her reflections on scenarios 1 and 3, she would comment on the reflections of other students focused on scenarios 2 and 4. The instructor will assess through these reflections and comments how successfully the students have gained and applied new awareness and understanding of the second person pronoun system in French. Similar but smaller activity sequences could of course be incorporated into the textbook curriculum to further expose students to the variety of ways T/V are used.

### **Conclusion**

As the previous literature review has shown, the complexity of T/V is certainly not something that can be reduced to a colorful box in the first or second chapter of a beginning French book and then ignored. T/V use subtleties from situation to situation

present French learners with a unique challenge and a unique opportunity: to step outside of the comfortable world of language ‘rules’ and to embrace the variety and ambiguity that comes with constructing true social meaning through the choice of one pronoun over the other. The previously proposed lessons attempt to help students make this leap, not only for the sake of their proficiency in using French in a pragmatically correct way, but also for the reflection on one’s native culture (such as in Liddicoat, 2006) that this can bring about.

**ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES**

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Perspectives on Communicative Language Teaching

## INTRODUCTION & REFLECTION

This was the first annotated bibliography that I wrote for this program; the first version was for the LING 6400 course with Dr. Maria Luisa Spicer-Escalante in fall of 2014. I know that the critical stance I was pushed to take in this annotated bibliography shaped the other topics I would eventually research throughout the program and ultimately this entire portfolio. This bibliography discusses several different perspectives on communicative language teaching; most of them point to a more “contextualized” approach that advocates adapting CLT to one’s current classroom circumstances instead of applying it like a panacea to address all language-learning situations. This emphasis on the importance of classroom context has stayed with me throughout the rest of my time in the MSLT program and beyond, and as such, it became one of the principal parts of my teaching philosophy.

In this annotated bibliography, I will look at the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in the language teaching profession as it progresses into the twenty-first century. CLT has been a critical part of the profession for over two decades, and I believe it is important for me, as I develop my own foreign language teaching practice, to look at the evaluations, estimations, and predictions of other professionals concerning CLT. This will help me to better understand how CLT's place in the profession of language teaching may be changing and whether it will endure through the years of my language teaching career, or if and how I should prepare to adapt my methods and techniques to keep up with current research on best practices.

I began this exploration with **Stephen Bax's** article *The End of CLT: A Context Approach to Language Teaching (2003)* because I was very curious about what professionals have argued against CLT. In this short article, Bax characterizes CLT as not only a language teaching approach, but also as an "attitude" held by many language teaching professionals: an attitude that denies the value of other language teaching methods and dismisses them as "backwards" simply because they are not CLT, despite the fact that students do succeed in acquiring languages with them. Bax sees this as detrimental to the profession as a whole, and instead proposes that language teachers shift away from clinging to the idea that CLT will work in every classroom to a mindset of "contextual analysis." This mindset lets the context of the teaching situation (the culture in which the classroom finds itself, the learners' needs and dispositions, etc.) take priority over the teacher's preferred methodology. The author does not argue for the complete abandonment of CLT, but only that we remove it from a prioritized, untouchable place in the minds of many language teaching professionals to make room for an approach to

language teaching based not in “dogmatic beliefs” but in “contextual analysis” that better meets the needs of the learners. I thought that this was a valid case against the idealization of the CLT approach, and was eager to read the responses and reactions of other professionals in the field.

Several responses to Bax’s article appeared, the first of which was the counterpoint article published in the same issue of *ELT Journal* written by **Jeremy Harmer** titled *Popular culture, methods, and context* (2003). In this article, Harmer posits that not only is the implementation of CLT not as widespread as Bax suggests, but also that the “CLT attitude” that Bax describes is only held by a relatively few language professionals- or not widely enough to be a detriment to the profession as a whole (Harmer, p. 288). Harmer next tackles Bax’s idea of shifting language teachers’ priorities from methodology to context analysis and cautions that this, if taken to an extreme, would “damage an essential element of a teacher’s make-up—namely what they believe in, and what they think they are doing as teachers” (p. 290). This is also an important distinction to be made when considering the place that CLT should hold in the repertoires of language teachers, but Harmer is going a step beyond what Bax actually argued.

Reading Harmer’s case against teachers being “merely reactive” (p.290) definitely made me think more about how an ideal balance between teachers’ reliance on methodology and consideration for learners’ wants, needs, and cultural dispositions can be struck and whether I am actively working towards this in my own classroom. He gives a great example from an article by Dilys Thorp where she and her students reach a compromise about goals for the students’ listening exercises. In Thorp’s article, she explains that the students wanted to listen for every word and the exact meaning of a

recording, whereas Thorp wanted them to work on listening just for the gist or the main idea of the recording, and they were eventually able to find an arrangement that met both goals to certain extent (Thorp, 1991, as cited in Harmer, 2003). I hope I will be able to incorporate such student-teacher communication and compromise into my own teaching practice should the need arise, since university students often do have more clearly defined language learning goals and expectations than secondary or elementary FL learners. Harmer finishes the article by discussing how he agrees with Bax on several points, namely that methodologies should not be treated as “one-size-fits-all” phenomena. However, he also makes clear that, unlike Bax, he sees methodology and context as deserving of equal consideration by language teaching professionals and that it is through a balance of these two elements that truly effective language teaching and learning can occur (p. 294).

Another interesting discussion arose from Bax’s article in the form of two articles by **Xiaoqing Liao** and **Guangwei Hu**, which argued, respectively, for why CLT is the necessary approach for English teaching in China and for why this claim is unfounded. In *The Need for Communicative Language Teaching in China (2004)*, **Liao** points largely to the fact that because the centralized Chinese education system mandates the use of CLT, it is the method that ought to be adopted by teachers in China. He also asserts that retraining the hundreds of thousands of Chinese teachers of English in methods of “contextual analysis” would be impractical. He concludes his article by stating that “the Western notion of ‘relativism’ does not work in China”(p.272).

In his article ‘*CLT is Best for China*’—*an untenable absolutist claim (2005)*, **Hu**, however, quickly deconstructs Liao’s arguments and points out that not only do



government policies not reach classrooms in the “linear, predictable” (p.65) way that Liao suggests they do, but also that context analysis is already an integral part of being an educator, not something for which teachers would need to be “retrained”. Hu also discusses the lack of widespread, uniform teacher training in CLT and “the array of diverse contexts in which ELT in China is situated” (p.67). These two articles underscore, I believe, Bax’s call for a renewed look at the larger contexts in which we implement CLT, whether they are EFL settings or FL classroom settings in Anglophone countries. They are a caution against the simplification and generalization of the language learning climate in a given country (in this case, China) and encourage foreign language educators to reexamine for themselves the contexts in which they find their own classrooms and how such a reexamination can benefit their teaching.

Yet another response to Bax’s and Liao’s articles brings up another very important aspect of the CLT discussion: the clear definition of what we mean when we speak of “CLT” and how this clearer definition can help us see that implementing CLT and respecting the context of the language classroom do not have to be mutually exclusive. In *Communicative Language Teaching: Unity within Diversity*, **Pham Hoa Hiep (2007)** discusses and distills the tenets of CLT to the following:

In other words, their common agreement is that the needs for meaningful communication supports the language learning process, and thus classroom activities should focus on learners’ genuine communication. While communicative activities are considered to be the means to develop learners’ communicative competence in the second/foreign language, these activities cannot take place without the control of grammar, but

situate grammatical competence within a more broadly defined communicative competence (Savignon op. cit.) (p. 195).

Hiep goes on to explore how CLT is used in various classroom contexts and makes a very valuable distinction between the utility of CLT in the ESL classroom vs. the utility of CLT in the EFL classroom- I would like to find more research on this same distinction in the context of foreign language teaching in the United States. Hiep talks about how EFL teachers in Vietnam have reported more difficulty in using CLT in their classrooms because their students do not have the immediate need to use English nor do they even have the opportunity to use it in a real-world setting in the same way that ESL students do.

The most important part of Hiep's article, I believe, is his discussion of real teachers' experiences with using CLT in English classrooms in Vietnam. He describes how these teachers do their best to carry out what Bax and Harmer are essentially calling for: a compromise between the classroom's context and the teacher's methodology. This is an important discussion because it illustrates the difficulties that these teachers face, such as their students' reluctance to engage effectively in group and pair work, and shows that there is still research and work to be done on how teachers can best approach making these compromises.

**Greg Ellis** also explores this challenge in his article *How Culturally Appropriate is the Communicative Approach?* (1996) in discussing, specifically, how CLT has been implemented and received in Asian EFL/ESL classrooms. He offers the solution of a "teacher as mediator" (p. 217) to help mitigate the disconnection or conflict between teachers' methodologies and the cultural environments in which they find themselves.

That the onus is now increasingly falling on the teacher to mediate between methodology and classroom context, and that this may be the new direction that language teaching takes as it progresses, is also the conclusion of **Sandra Savignon**'s article *Beyond Communicative Language Teaching: What's Ahead?* (2007).

Like Ellis and Hiep, Savignon discusses what we mean by CLT; additionally, she describes what CLT is not. This is an important distinction that will help language educators as we continue to find our own balance between how we implement CLT and the classroom contexts in which we find ourselves. Savignon's article addresses the issues raised by Bax in that she specifically describes how context and CLT work together to the benefit of the learners and the teachers: "...CLT is properly viewed as an approach, or theory of intercultural communicative competence to be used in developing materials and methods appropriate to a given context of learning" (p. 213). She clarifies that it does not exist as a dogmatic set of rules, but a way of approaching the task of language teaching that gives teachers a solid foundation of theories and principles from which they can build their own specific classroom practices that work with their own classroom contexts.

From Savignon's article, I came across the work of **B. Kumaravadivelu, (2003 and 2006)** which focuses in large part on an emerging "postmethod" condition of language teaching. In *TESOL Methods: Changing tracks, challenging trends* (2006), he briefly discusses some of the cultural difficulties in implementing CLT in non-western countries, such as Pakistan, Thailand, India, South Africa, South Korea, and Japan, echoing the concerns of Ellis, Hu, and Hiep. He goes a step beyond these authors, though,

by proposing that at least English foreign language teaching has moved into to an era that leaves the concept of “method” behind (2003, p. 540).

In his article *A postmethod perspective on English language teaching*, (2003) Kumaravadivelu discusses his own framework for a postmethod approach to ELT and why this framework is necessary to the “decolonization” of ELT. He explains that the idea of “method”, that is, theoretical constructs put forth by scholars, not actual classroom practices (p. 540) is a “construct of marginality” (p. 541) because of four key characteristics. First, it does not value the local knowledge and experiences of the communities where ELT is taking place and instead emphasizes the value of Anglophone expertise and literature (p. 541). He illustrates this with a quote from Thomas Macaulay from 1835, as cited in Alvares (1979): “...a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia...” (p. 541). Second, the concept of “method” marginalizes the local language by holding “the monolingual tenet”, a term coined by Phillipson (1992), which posits that English is the only acceptable language through which non-native speakers can learn English (p. 542). Third, the method construct not only holds the tenet of monolingualism in the EFL classroom, but also the idea of monoculturalism, only exposing students to how native of English speakers use the language within their native Anglophone culture, but not how English could be used in the cultures of the non-native speakers. Finally, the method construct is one of “marginality” because of its economic dimension, which continues to focus on providing employment for native English speaker teachers and economic gain for native English-speaking countries, particularly Britain, through the ELT industry (p. 543).

These characteristics, as well as the fact that the “method construct” also leads to self-marginalization by ELT teachers and students (i.e., they often unjustifiably value the expertise of native speakers of English in the realms of both linguistic and pedagogical knowledge over their own), call for an alternative to “method” in non-western ELT classrooms, according to Kumaravadivelu (p. 544, 547). I thought this was a very insightful and valuable discussion of certain aspects of language teaching, specifically ELT, that the beginning language teacher might not think of. I think it’s very important to look at how methods, including CLT, interact with the larger historical context of language teaching, and I thought that Kumaravadivelu’s proposed framework for a postmethod approach could be very useful, and actually still very compatible with CLT.

Kumaravadivelu outlines what he calls “macrostrategies” for language teaching in the latter part of his article. These are guiding principles that language teachers can employ and adapt according to their particular classroom context- “particularity” is actually one of the three “parameters” upon which Kumaravadivelu bases these macrostrategies. The other two are “practicality and possibility” (p. 544).

Kumaravadivelu’s ten macrostrategies are:

1. Maximize learning opportunities [...]
2. Minimize perceptual mismatches [...]
3. Facilitate negotiated interaction [...]
4. Promote learner autonomy [...]
5. Foster language awareness [...]
6. Activate intuitive heuristics [...]
7. Contextualize linguistic input [...]
8. Integrate language skills [...]
9. Ensure social relevance [...]
10. Raise cultural consciousness. (p. 545-546)

Even without delving into each of these strategies, it’s clear that certain principles of CLT overlap with some of them, particularly numbers 1, 3, 4, and 8.

Though Kumaravadivelu dismisses adherence to a certain method, even CLT, in favor of an approach not unlike that proposed by Bax, I think his discussions about the underlying implications of methods, especially in ELT, are extremely valuable. They have made me reflect upon my own interactions with EFL teachers, as a native English speaker, as well as reflect upon my interaction with native speakers of French as a French foreign language instructor, and how these internalized attitudes may impact my teaching or how I view my teaching. For example, I certainly felt a degree of complacency at times when I was teaching English in France in that I was confident in almost any lesson plan I came up with, simply because even if it actually was not a highly effective lesson plan or activity, I was still a native English speaker and they were still “learning” just from listening to me speak. I would not have the same attitude today, after learning about comprehensible input and intake, but this personal example serves to underscore the relevance and applicability of Kumaravadivelu’s discussion.

The final work that has contributed to my better understanding of CLT is **Norton’s (2013) *Identity and Language Learning: Extending the Conversation*** (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), in which she discusses in detail her 1990-1991 study of the ESL experience of female immigrants to Canada. Though Norton makes many thought-provoking points about identity and its dynamic, multifaceted nature, her argument about Bourdieu’s (1977) “right to speech” (p. 48) and how it should be counted among the other widely accepted communicative competences: grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence (Savignon, 1998, as cited in Lee & VanPatten, 2003) as critical to language acquisition.

In her study, Norton (2013) met with five women immigrants to Canada over roughly a one-year period; she spoke to them about their English learning experiences and interactions with native speakers and the women also kept diaries about their language learning experiences. She noticed in her research that a key component of their language learning success (or lack thereof) was what Bourdieu (1977) called the “right to speech” or the condition that, when engaging in communication, “those who speak regard those who listen as worthy to listen, and [...] those who listen regard those who speak as worthy to speak” (p. 48). Norton explains Bourdieu’s position that linguists “take [this condition] for granted” (p. 48), and that this social aspect of communication is something that language learners (and to a certain extent, language teachers) cannot control. This point about the right to speech really struck a chord with me, as I’ve seen it and experienced it in my own language learning, but had never been able to articulate what was happening. It completes the picture of the necessary components for effective communication by pointing out a reality that few want to grapple with: people can explicitly or implicitly deny a language learner the right to speech, and there is little that the learner can do to overcome this without being aware of the power dynamics inherent in communication. Norton’s work contributed a much-needed grounding to my view of CLT, and brought it back to the forefront of my mind that communication is social, and that imbalances of power are usually present in social exchanges, even among peers. I hope to use what I’ve learned about these power dynamics to create a more welcoming and encouraging classroom environment for my students.

One conclusion that I have drawn from the literature is that CLT in and of itself may not be losing its relevance, but that professionals are still delineating how exactly we

conceptualize CLT and that we *must* do this before we can move forward with solutions for how to reconcile this approach with the cultural practices that clash with it. It seems that giving CLT a broader, more theoretical definition (i.e. a set of principles about what language means in our lives and how we ought to go about teaching it in light of these principles, in the vein of Hiep and Ellis) helps to dispel the arguments against its seeming lack of compatibility with a consideration for a given learning context. It also appears, as Savignon concludes in her article, that the focus in the language teaching profession is shifting from a concentration on methodologies to a focus on how teachers adapt methodologies to their own learners' needs. Further along the spectrum of ideas about CLT and the role of methods themselves, there are other highly valuable perspectives, such as those of Kumaravadivelu; the work of Norton brings an important social grounding to CLT implementation, reminding us that we do not always operate in a perfect world where everyone is always granted the right to speech. These viewpoints encourage FL teachers to not only look at their methods, but at how confining themselves to methods and the "method construct" may impact their teaching. This implies that a true "context approach" to language teaching may only exist outside of the method framework that has characterized the profession for decades.



ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Motivation and Anxiety in the Foreign Language Classroom

## INTRODUCTION & REFLECTION

This annotated bibliography was originally written for LING 6400 with Dr. Maria Luisa Spicer-Escalante in fall 2014. It had quickly become apparent to me, even in my first months as a graduate instructor, that motivation and anxiety both play pivotal roles in a student's progress or lack thereof in building language proficiency. I was familiar with my own experiences with motivation and anxiety (having lived in France twice, I was quite familiar with both and how they affected me), but I knew I needed to understand these two phenomena better as a language professional if I was going to effectively address them in my classroom practices. In my subsequent semesters as a graduate instructor, I have been able to put into practice some of what I have learned from writing this bibliography, with varying degrees of success.

This annotated bibliography will explore two closely related topics in L2 learning: motivation and anxiety. I decided to explore these in further detail after reading briefly about them in the first chapter of Shrum and Glisan's *Teacher's Handbook* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) (2010). While motivation and anxiety are important factors in any L2 classroom, I think they are especially important in the postsecondary L2 classroom, where it is very probable that students have already-formed visions of themselves as language learners (i.e., whether or not they have a 'talent' for language, whether or not they consider themselves to be motivated, etc.) and what they expect of a foreign language class (e.g., it's difficult, it's not worth their time/effort, they think they will enjoy it, etc.). I wanted to learn more about how language-learning professionals frame these two topics so that I could get a better understanding of how I can adjust my teaching methods and classroom practices to encourage motivation and minimize anxiety in my students.

I decided to explore both motivation and anxiety for this annotated bibliography instead of just one or the other because, to me, they often act as the metaphorical angel and devil sitting on either shoulder of language learners: the former usually encouraging the students to put forth effort and highlighting the effects of doing so (i.e., progress and achievement in language learning), while the latter can inhibit students from trying and can draw their attention to shortcomings and errors. Though they may affect learners to varying degrees, these two forces do not affect students in isolation, and I thought it would be most effective to read about them in combination.

The first article about language learner anxiety that I read was "Foreign language classroom anxiety" by **Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986)**, which provides an overview of the developing understanding of L2 classroom anxiety from that time. The authors

begin by explaining that at that point in time, research had not drawn a clear, empirical relationship between language learning anxiety and achievement- only Gardner and his colleagues had employed an “instrument specifically designed to measure foreign language anxiety”, and it was a component of their larger “test battery on attitudes and motivation”, with which they were collecting data from a relatively small and non-representative group of language learners: Canadian students learning French (p. 126). Horwitz et al. continue the article by presenting some anecdotes about specific students’ manifestations of language learning anxiety and then relate language learning anxiety to three types of performance anxiety: “1) communication apprehension; 2) test anxiety; and 3) fear of negative evaluation” (p. 130).

After reading this description, it seems evident that one would describe language learning anxiety in these terms, but reading these more detailed descriptions of each performance anxiety gave me a much better idea of specific things I can do in my classroom to alleviate any anxiety my students may experience. For example, to help alleviate communication apprehension, I can foster friendship and camaraderie among my students and give them the choice of who they work with during group activities. To help minimize test anxiety, I can make sure my students know what is expected of them during assessments and what the assessments will entail. The fear of negative evaluation is especially strong in adult language learners as Horwitz et al. explain, because adults already “perceive themselves as intelligent, socially-adept individuals” and communicating in a foreign language, where they will be “evaluated according to uncertain or even unknown linguistic and socio-cultural standards [...] entails risk-taking and is necessarily problematic” (p. 128). Adults are used to a certain level of

communicative ability and agility which they do not yet have in the L2, which can lead to “reticence, self-consciousness, fear, or even panic” in the L2 classroom (p. 128). As the language instructor, I can try to create an environment where errors are not seen as negative, but as evidence of effort, and where my students support each other through their struggles and triumphs in learning to communicate in the L2.

In the latter part of the article, the authors explain the importance of identifying language learning anxiety, present a possible survey to facilitate this, and then present the pedagogical implications of what was known at that time about language learning anxiety. They propose that teachers can “1) help [students] learn to cope with the existing anxiety-provoking situation; or 2) they can make the learning context less stressful” (p.131). In my own experience, I have found that the latter is more effective, as it benefits all students in the learning context, but I also wish to explore ways of helping individual students cope with and perhaps overcome their more severe and debilitating language learning anxiety.

This article gave me a good foundational understanding of how anxiety is approached in the L2 classroom context. I continued my exploration by reading a more specific study about the relationship between anxiety and perfectionism by **Gregersen and Horwitz (2002)**. In this article, the authors present a study of the reactions of Chilean students of English, in their second year of university, to their own oral performance in a brief interview conducted in English. The participants in this study were eight students exhibiting very high and very low self-reports of language learning related anxiety, and they were all studying to become teachers of English. The authors found a correlation between the presence of high anxiety and the presence of perfectionist

tendencies, such as procrastination, concern over errors, and high personal standards. At the end of the article, however, the authors also explain the limitations of the study in that the sample size was small and not very representative of language learners in general (especially because these students were studying to become language teachers, which may have increased the likelihood of perfectionist tendencies and anxiety). Regardless, I found this article valuable for its discussion of how to identify perfectionist tendencies in students and its emphasis that students exhibiting these tendencies in fact actually need help and support from their teachers to overcome them. The authors cite Brophy in stating: “teachers may tend to ignore perfectionist students because they do good work and do not cause trouble” (p. 569), and this is a fact that I had not considered before. This article brought to my attention a frequent demonstration of language learning anxiety, perfectionism, which is often overlooked by teachers, and made me realize that I need to pay attention and address all manifestations of anxiety in my classroom, not just the ones that keep students from producing good work.

The third article I read about FL classroom anxiety was a study conducted by **Hewitt and Stephenson (2012)**, who replicated a 1992 study by Phillips, which investigated FL learner anxiety and its effect on learner performance in an oral exam. I chose to read this article because giving oral exams is one of the parts of my class that I’ve noticed makes my university students particularly anxious, and I wanted to see what this study could tell me about this relationship and if there was any way to lessen the effects of student anxiety when it comes to oral exams. I plan to incorporate more oral exams (or assessments) into my class in the coming semester, so I felt this article could be particularly useful in better understanding how to help my students succeed in them.

As mentioned, this study was a replication of Phillips' 1992 study titled: *The Effects of Language Anxiety on Students' Oral Test Performance and Attitudes*. In both studies, the researchers (one of which was also the students' teacher, in both cases) used several instruments to determine the students' FL ability (a written exam, teacher ranking, and an English proficiency test, the Quick Placement Test, 2001), their level of anxiety in relation to the FL class and tasks (Horwitz et al.'s (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)), as well as an oral examination, and post-examination interview questions (Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012). They conducted post-oral exam interviews with six students (three high-ability, high-anxiety students and three low-ability, high-anxiety students) to gain other insights about the students' attitudes not otherwise discernable through quantitative analysis alone. Both studies used the following research questions:

1. 'What effect does anxiety have on students' oral performance as measured by the test scores and several performance variables related to accuracy and amount of comprehensible speech?' (p. 15-16)
2. 'What do highly anxious students say about the experience of taking an oral exam in a foreign language?' (p.16) (Phillips, 1992, as cited in Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012, p. 173).

The Hewitt and Stephenson study examined university-level Spanish-speaking students of English as a foreign language in an elective course, with  $n=40$  (28 women, 12 men; the average age was about 21 years old) (Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012). The researchers carried out the study over the course of about 12 weeks, beginning from about the 4<sup>th</sup> week into the students' semester with the Quick (English) Placement Test

and culminating with the oral exam near the end of the semester. With their data on the students' anxiety levels from the FLCAS questions, they grouped the students into three categories: high-anxiety (10 students), moderate-anxiety (20 students) and low-anxiety (10 students) for further analysis.

The researchers' results echoed those of the original study in many respects, and they found, like Phillips (1992), "a moderate negative relationship between [the] participants' language anxiety and their achievement on the oral exam" (Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012, p. 181). However, unlike the Phillips study, Hewitt and Stephenson also found that those students with moderate anxiety performed better than both their high- and low-anxiety peers in terms of comprehensibility (as measured by the proportion of their oral exam that was not considered a "maze" or "a word, or several words, or a fragment of a word that is extraneous, incorrect, or in the learner's mother tongue, and which does not contribute to successful communication" (Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012, p. 175)). This led Hewitt and Stephenson to point to the phenomenon of "facilitating anxiety" (Alpert & Haber, 1960, as cited in Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012, p. 183) as a possible explanation, that is, a level of anxiety in students that heightens their attention and focus enough to enhance performance, but is not so high as to hinder it.

Though this study is very valuable in its validation of Phillips' study, the authors did not offer pedagogical suggestions in light of their result relating to facilitating anxiety, which slightly disappointed me. However, with this empirical support for the existence of facilitating anxiety even in the FL learning context (in contradiction of Horwitz (1990)), I am encouraged to continue learning about the two sides of anxiety in the FL classroom and how I can manage both in my classroom.



The final article that I read on the subject of foreign language anxiety was a study by **Yan and Horwitz (2008)**. The researchers investigated student perceptions about the role that anxiety plays in their language learning and how it influences or is influenced by other factors related to their learning. They interviewed 21 Chinese students of English at a university in Shanghai; the students represented four different course levels as well as three levels of foreign language anxiety, as measured by the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz et al., 1986). The researchers used grounded-theory analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, as cited in Yan & Horwitz, 2008), which “was developed... to derive meaningful, data-based categories in discovery-oriented qualitative studies” (Yan & Horwitz, 2008, p. 154). They employed a multi-level coding procedure to the interview data to tease out the various categories or “affinities” (p. 157) that either influenced anxiety in the language classroom or were influenced by anxiety.

Yan and Horwitz (2008) found twelve major categories of affinities: regional differences (i.e., between different regions of China); language aptitude; gender; foreign language anxiety; language learning interest and motivation (here, interest refers more to “favorable attitudes” (p. 158) towards language learning and motivation is more focused on goals related to language learning); class arrangements (including organization of the class, activities, textbooks, seating arrangements, etc.); teacher characteristics; language learning strategies; test types; parental influence; comparison with peers; and achievement. Based on the interview data, the researchers inducted relationships between these factors and foreign language anxiety; they divided the factors into several categories based on their relationship to anxiety. The first group was called “primary

drivers” (p. 169) meaning that they exert more influence over other affinities than they are influenced, and these were: gender, regional differences, teacher characteristics, test types, class arrangement, and parental influence. The second group was called “mediating drivers” (p. 169), meaning that they both drove other factors and were influenced by the primary drivers; this category was composed of: language aptitude, comparison with peers, and learning strategies. The third category was called “mediating outcomes” (p. 169) and only consisted of two affinities: language anxiety and language interest and motivation. This third category was largely influenced by the other affinities and thus only indirectly influenced achievement, which was labeled “primary outcome” (p. 169). From these relationships and categories, the Yan and Horwitz (2008) were able to conclude that for this particular group of Chinese learners of English, the factors with the most immediate affect on foreign language anxiety were comparison with peers, language learning strategies, and language motivation and interest; the primary driver category of affinities indirectly affected anxiety via the factors just listed. Interestingly, the researchers did not find a bidirectional relationship between anxiety and achievement, i.e., high or low achievement did not affect anxiety, but anxiety levels *did* affect achievement.

From the conclusion to the study, I was able to draw a valuable insight: anxiety-reducing strategies need to be employed based on the specific context in which I find myself. Though Yan and Horwitz (2008) construct an impressive model of foreign language anxiety and the factors that affect it, based on the experiences of the students they interviewed, they emphasize that their model is truly applicable only in that particular context of Chinese learners of English; cultural and other differences would

surely paint a very different picture in any other classroom, even in a different classroom in the same country. A final noteworthy point from this study was the observed bidirectional relationship between motivation and anxiety (Yan & Horwitz, 2008), that is, that students perceive that motivation (or lack thereof) can play a role in the anxiety they experience, and that experienced anxiety can impact their level of motivation. It is to motivation that I now turn my attention for the remainder of this annotated bibliography.

I first read three overview-type articles by Dörnyei (1994), Oxford and Shearin (1994), and Gardner (2007), which each presented valuable frameworks for and perspectives on classroom motivation that I had not considered before.

Dörnyei's article, *Motivation and motivating in the foreign language classroom*, and Oxford's and Shearin's article, *Language learning motivation: Expanding the theoretical framework*, both propose more comprehensive models of L2 learner motivation based on the foundational model developed by Gardner and his colleagues over the preceding decades. **Dörnyei (1994)** proposes a model made of three general levels of foreign language learning motivation: the language level, which encompasses the integrative and instrumental aspects of motivation previously researched by Gardner and his colleagues; the learner level, which is composed of aspects such as the learner's need for achievement, language use anxiety, and self-efficacy; and the learning situation level, which is made up of three sets of components—course-specific motivational components (the learner's level of interest in the course, perceived relevance of the course, etc.), teacher-specific motivational components (authority type, how compelled the students feel to please the teacher, etc.), and group-specific motivational components (the level of group cohesion, the group's goal-orientedness, etc.) (p. 280).

Much like my reading on classroom anxiety, this article opened my eyes to the multifaceted nature of student L2 classroom motivation, and the final section of the article, which consisted of a list of classroom practices for teachers to help foster motivation, offered helpful suggestions for increasing and maintaining student motivation. For example, Dörnyei recommends “promot[ing] favourable self-perceptions of competence in L2 by highlighting what students *can* do in the L2 rather than what they *cannot* do” (p. 281), and “model[ing] student interest in L2 learning by showing students that you value L2 learning as a meaningful experience that produces satisfaction and enriches your life” (p. 282). While I was probably unconsciously aware that I needed to be doing these things, this article brought these and other good practices back to the forefront of my mind, and I know I will use them more intentionally and frequently in my teaching next semester.

Much in the same vein as Dörnyei, **Oxford and Shearin (1994)** presented other aspects of motivation, such as those from “general, industrial, educational, and cognitive developmental psychology” (p. 15), which they posit should be included in our framework for L2 learning motivation. Oxford and Shearin also discuss another important aspect of motivation that I will definitely be taking into consideration when I plan how I will address the issue of motivation next semester: how students’ L2 motivation can change over time. While the examples that the authors give are changes in motivation that take place over the course of years, I think it will also be important for me to not only survey my students about their L2 motivation at the beginning of the semester, but also periodically during the semester, so that I have an idea of where my

students' motivations lie at any given point during the semester. I believe this will help me better plan my instruction and tailor it as much as I can to their current needs.

Another important aspect of motivation that Oxford and Shearin address in detail that Dörnyei does not is the practice of goal-setting and its effect on motivation in the L2 classroom. They discuss this as an aspect of the expectancy theory of motivation or instrumentality theory, which puts forth that “individuals engage in activities instrumental in achieving some valued outcome” (p. 18). The authors discuss how goal-setting behaviors will vary from student to student based on their individual personality tendencies, and they cite Locke and colleagues by emphasizing that “goals affect task performance by focusing attention and action, mobilizing energy, prolonging persistence, and motivating the development of relevant strategies for goal attainment” and “hard, specific goals produce higher performance than no goals, easy goals, or vague ‘do your best’ goals” (p. 19). After reading this article, I know that I will make goal-setting, evaluation, and modification a part of my class next semester, as it is even clearer to me now how important this practice is to fostering and maintaining student L2 motivation.

The next article I read on student motivation was by **Gardner (2007)** who proposes another framework for approaching student L2 motivation—one that is more streamlined than those proposed by Dörnyei (1994) and Oxford and Shearin (1994), and that was slightly less helpful for my purposes in this respect. At the beginning of his article, however, Gardner also puts forth another conception of language acquisition, which breaks it into four stages: the elemental stage, the consolidation stage, the stage of conscious expression, and the stage of automaticity and thought (p.12). I found this way of breaking up the language acquisition process to be helpful in that it uses broader terms

than the ACTFL proficiency guidelines and makes it easier to place students on the timeline of acquisition progress, and therefore determine what they need to focus on to move forward to the next stage.

In his framework of L2 learning motivation, Gardner presents L2 motivation as being affected by: 1) the educational context of the learner, which applies to the motivation to learn most school subjects, and includes factors such as the “educational system, the immediate classroom situation [...] and the interest, enthusiasm, and skills of the teacher” (p. 14) and 2) the cultural context, which includes beliefs or feelings the learners may hold about language learning that are based in their native culture which influences them. He then posits that student L2 motivation is composed of two parts: students’ “integrativeness” or their openness to the L2 culture, interacting with members of the L2 community, and even becoming a part of the L2 community; and “attitudes toward the learning situation” which includes the variables of the educational context (p. 15). In the rest of the article, Gardner discusses how these variables interact and affect student English grades in two different classes of Spanish students. This latter discussion, of the interaction of the variables, was the other important thing I gleaned from this article, in that I will be more conscious of how similar variables are likely to interact in my own students and affect their French grades, for better or for worse.

Next, I read **Csizér and Dörnyei’s (2005)** study on motivation in which they propose a more comprehensive framework for connecting the disparate variables affecting motivation, like the ones discussed in the previous Gardner article.

In this study, Csizér and Dörnyei used data from questionnaires completed by over 8,500 Hungarian 13- and 14-year olds (in the years 1993 and 1999) on the subjects

of their intended foreign language study in high school and “the amount of effort the students intend to exert on learning a given language” (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005, p. 20). The authors looked at the student choices of second language among English, French, German, Italian, and Russian and their attitudes towards the following TL communities: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia. In the construction of their model, the authors broke down motivation into the following aspects: “*Integrativeness, Instrumentality, Vitality of the L2 Community, Attitudes toward the L2 Speakers/ Community... and Cultural Interest*” (p. 20, italics original), and eventually also added the variables of “milieu” and “self-confidence” (p. 28) to the final model of the relationships between all of the variables.

While the relationships that were demonstrated by the model (such as milieu affecting self-confidence as well as instrumentality, and cultural interest and vitality of the L2 community affecting students’ attitudes toward the L2 community, etc.) were interesting and the diagrams illustrating them impressive (especially the first, un-pared-down version of the model), I thought the most valuable part of this article was the authors’ discussion of what ‘integrativeness’ actually means when we talk about language learning motivation.

The model pointed to this variable of ‘integrativeness’ as being the one that most directly affects the students’ choice of language and the effort they intend to put into learning the language. The authors discuss integrativeness at length, offering a newer, broader definition that makes it easier to make sense of in discussions of language learning motivation. The original definition of integrativeness, given by Gardner (2001) is “‘emotional identification with another cultural group’ (p.5)” (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005,

p. 28), and we often think of this aspect of motivation as being related to a drive to belong to the L2 community. However, Csizér and Dörnyei point out that (according to their model) attitudes toward the L2 speakers/community affect integrativeness, and that cultural interest does so indirectly (*through* attitudes toward the L2 speakers/community), and that instrumentality affects integrativeness as well, even though we often associate this with the practical, real-world usefulness of the L2. With so many disparate variables feeding into this one aspect of motivation, Csizér and Dörnyei propose expanding the definition of integrativeness to include the concept of the self and ‘possible selves’, or “‘individuals’ ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming, [which] provide a conceptual link between cognition and motivation” (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954, as cited in Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005, p. 29). Csizér and Dörnyei propose changing our term for integrativeness to the Ideal L2 Self, which encompasses not just actual integration with the L2 community, but the competent L2 speaker and user the learner sees him- or herself becoming. According to this view, L2 learners integrate their concepts of themselves with their concepts of the L2 community and speakers, taking on these many new aspects of knowing the L2 (including the utility of it in the variable of instrumentality) and making them a part of their ‘possible selves’. I thought this was a very useful way to think about integrativeness when it comes to motivation, especially since the traditional definition of integrativeness may not apply to FL students who will probably never actually integrate themselves with the TL community in the physical world, but who may have the chance to do so in virtual space.



The final article I read on motivation was **Boo, Dörnyei, and Ryan's (2015)** meta-analysis of motivation research over the years between 2005 and 2014. This study was an appropriate way to sum up the research I had done on motivation in language learning, as it provided a concise snapshot of the most recent research being done in the field, highlighted current trends, and also made some projections about how the field may continue to develop in the coming years. The authors first discuss the “surge in research output” (p. 148) that occurred over this period. To illustrate that the case of motivation research is unique and not simply a function of an overall increase in SLA research, they compare the research output examining motivation and the research output examining learner aptitude, i.e., “the other traditionally conceived major individual difference factor in SLA” (p. 148). This comparison yields a stark and wide difference between the two levels of research output, with motivation research gaining markedly more in frequency over the time period under investigation, and the authors continue the discussion of the motivation research confident “that the growth in motivation studies is unique and not merely a function of the overall increase in published papers on learner differences” (p. 148). They hypothesize that this growth may be attributed to how motivation in language learning is a field that can be easily and productively approached both theoretically and practically

In this study, the researchers examined over 400 scholarly articles and chapters in edited volumes; they categorized them by:

The source of the paper [scholarly paper or anthology chapter]; the type and focus of the paper: empirical or conceptual...; the theoretical paradigm... that guided

the paper...; the demographics of participants...; the geographical location...; in empirical studies, the target language... under investigation [and] the type of research methodology employed: quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, and innovative approaches (Boo et al., 2015, p. 147).

They found, overall, several major trends for the years between 2005 and 2014: empirical studies tended to focus on students at the university level; English was the dominating L2 under investigation; East Asian students (from Japan, mainland China, and Taiwan) made up a considerable part of the students taking part in the studies; the theoretical underpinnings of research studies shifted visibly away from the instrumental/integrative dichotomy of Gardner (1985) towards Dörnyei's (2009, as cited in Boo et al., 2015) L2 Motivational Self-System (in part explored in the discussion of the previous source from Csizér and Dörnyei (2005)); and researchers employed largely quantitative research methods, but the number of studies using qualitative, mixed methods, and innovative research methods increased.

For me, the one of the most relevant parts of this study was final section, in which the authors provide their projections for the direction of L2 motivation research and also provide some suggestions of their own to fill gaps in the existing research. Boo et al., (2015) posit that, based on the trends seen in the studies examined, the field of L2 motivation will continue to advance and innovate in terms of research methodologies employed; i.e., they predict a continued shift away from “traditional research designs that focus on linear cause-effect relationships” (p. 156) and towards more dynamic research methods that more adequately capture the true, changing nature of motivation itself. This

will hopefully lead SLA researchers not only to a better understanding of L2 motivation, but also to better practical applications for instructors to implement in the classroom to build and sustain student motivation.

Overall, this exploration into more detailed discussions of student motivation and anxiety in the L2 classroom has made me far more aware of how multifaceted both of these factors are when it comes to affecting student performance and achievement in the L2 classroom, and how all of these facets are further affected by the specific learning situation. Now that I have a more solid understanding of the foundation of how these topics are treated in the language learning literature, I would like to read more specific studies of motivation and anxiety in university-level language learners, or adult language learners, who began their language learning endeavors after the onset of adolescence. This will help me gain an even better understanding of how to address these two things in my specific language-teaching context of teaching beginning-level French at the university level.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Teaching Intercultural Competence with Technology

## INTRODUCTION & REFLECTION

This annotated bibliography was originally written with my colleague Katie Reynolds for the LING 6520 course with Dr. Joshua Thoms in spring 2016. It remains largely similar to the version that we submitted at the end of the course; however, this latter version contained several additional sources. This topic was of great interest to me because, as a L2 speaker of French teaching French language and culture, I am often unsure about how to best help my students build intercultural competence within the context of my FL classroom. The sources I read and reflected upon in this bibliography helped me to understand that intercultural competence goes beyond knowing how to be polite in a restaurant in the TL community; according to Byram (1997), it is also made up of attitudes and knowledge, things that can certainly be developed in the FL classroom, with the right guidance and with the help of technology. This research gave me more than several ideas about how I could use technology to connect my students with TL community, whether through TL speakers or authentic materials, or other sources of cultural insight.

In this annotated bibliography, I will be focusing on the teaching and development of intercultural competence through technology. I believe this topic merits further investigation because it is often under-addressed in foreign and second language classrooms, yet it is a vital component of language learning, according to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (NSFLEP, 2014). From our own experience, teaching culture can be a difficult and intimidating undertaking for teachers who do not belong to the target culture. Technology, however, provides many tools that can facilitate cultural connections between students and native speakers, as well as other learners of the target language. With increased access to authentic materials via the internet, as well as the means to interact with those materials with Web 2.0 technologies, students have more opportunities for exposure to the target culture without the need to physically be in a target culture community. Teachers can take advantage of these opportunities in their classrooms and direct student engagement to focus on building intercultural competence.

As I began my investigation of this topic, it quickly became clear that I needed to have a solid understanding of what is meant by ‘intercultural competence’. One of the most-cited sources I encountered in relation to this was **Byram (1997)**, who lays out a framework of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) made up of four components: “attitudes, knowledge, skills to interpret and relate, skills to discover and/or interact,” (p. 34) and critical cultural awareness.

By ‘attitudes’, Byram describes cultivating a mindset in which the students not only value the culture and viewpoints of those from cultures other than their own, but also “relativize” their own culture, i.e., view their own culture in relation to others and

not simply as objective, monolithic, and unchanging. In other words, students must move towards a mindset that does not assign values to one culture or another, avoiding both negative and positive stereotypes; they must develop a mindset of “curiosity and openness, of readiness to suspend disbelief and judgement with respect to others’ meanings, beliefs, and behaviors” (p. 34).

‘Knowledge’ refers to both knowledge about the speaker’s own country and culture and those of the interlocutor, as well as knowledge about successful “interaction at the individual and societal levels” (p. 35). Byram describes this first set of knowledge as being “relational” (p. 36), that is, as “acquired within socialisation in one’s own social groups and often presented in contrast to the significant characteristics of one’s national group and identity. For example, knowledge of the history of another country is through the stories from the history of one’s own nation-state” (p. 36). He goes on to discuss how once interlocutors become aware of this socialization (i.e., the inherent bias when it comes to knowledge and perceptions of other peoples and cultures, and in how they are perceived by others) they can apply this understanding to how they approach the processes of interaction. They can better understand the cultural forces at play in any given interaction (e.g., why a person from X culture may be acting in Y fashion) and use them to inform their knowledge of intercultural interaction, which in turn leads to more successful and interculturally competent communication.

From this knowledge of one’s own and other countries and cultures come the next components of Byram’s framework, the skill of interpretation and relation and skill of discovery. The former skill allows the individual to make connections between “documents” from other cultures and their own, and identify “common ground” or

“dysfunctions” between the two groups (p. 37). Byram cites this skill as significant not only for these connections and new understandings that can be built, but also because this skill can be developed without the pressure of another interlocutor and real-time social interaction. The skill of discovery may also be developed independent of social interaction, though social interaction provides the learner with more ‘instrumental’ areas of interest to investigate, ones that have proven to apply directly to their endeavors in successful interactions and relationships with individuals from other cultures. To distinguish this final skill from the skill of interpretation and relation, Byram defines the skill of discovery as “the ability to recognise significant phenomena in a foreign environment and to elicit their meanings and connotations, and their relationship to other phenomena” (p. 38), in other words, being able to put the attitudes, knowledge, and interpretations that may have been developed in the classroom to use ‘in the field’ of intercultural interactions.

Byram defines the final component of his framework, critical cultural awareness, as “[a]n ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries” (p. 53), that is, to participate in interactions as one who can see the values and perspectives inherent in the contributions of both cultures and act as a mediator between these viewpoints. Though this framework is very general, as a result, it lends itself to many different foreign language (FL) teaching contexts, including those which aim to utilize technology to build ICC. With this framework in mind, I move to sources focused specifically on using technology to this end.



One of the first articles I read, by **Guth and Helm (2011)**, gave us a better understanding of how technology can be used to increase intercultural competence by outlining three broad types of activities to engage students with people and materials from different cultures. Since all students have different learning styles, it is important for teachers to be aware of the types of activities available through technology and how to use them. The activity types are: access and produce, communicate and collaborate, and bridge. Access and produce activities entail students accessing a wealth of cultural materials online as well as producing their own materials to share with a global audience. Careful selection of materials and design of activities by the teacher are essential to this type of activity. Also, students should be informed of the risks that come with access to the internet. The second type of activity, communicate and collaborate, includes interaction with distant peers through telecollaboration. Through communication and collaboration, students can have an intercultural experience in the classroom or through their own computers. Bridging, the third type of activity, encourages students to take advantage of technology and online personas that they already use to interact with people from different cultures. Also, students are encouraged to employ “real world” resources to increase their intercultural competence rather than resources created exclusively for students. This article informed me that there are various types of activities through which students can use technology to increase their intercultural competence, bringing to light that even though a new technological tool may seem useful, teachers should focus on *how* exactly it is to be used and toward what type of learning outcome. Reading this article lead me to another overview article by Godwin-Jones which discusses more specific

ways that instructors can facilitate the development of intercultural competence in the foreign language classroom.

The article by **Godwin-Jones (2011)** is about using technology to integrate the development of intercultural competence with other activities typically employed in the traditional classroom. The author points out that, too often, cultural learning in the classroom is superficial and “tourist inspired”. It only looks at the more visible aspects of a culture and does not include valuable, “culture-general” topics. Students need to learn the skills to adapt to different contexts and interact appropriately. He suggests that teachers move away from textbooks and seek out other sources of cultural information. The author makes a valid, interesting point when he mentions that sometimes teachers might not feel informed enough themselves to be the source of cultural information for the students. In this case, the internet can be a useful tool in accessing authentic materials and language use. Although teachers are not expected to be an all-knowing source of cultural information, it is their responsibility to find materials and design appropriate activities for the students even though it takes more time and effort than assigning a textbook activity. Some of the technological activities and tools the author suggests include telecollaboration, Wordles or word clouds, word association, blog posts, online translation programs, polls and videos. He also mentions utilizing mobile phones to access materials and connect with distance students since they are so common and students use them every day. As do other authors, Godwin-Jones mentions the difficulty of assessing intercultural competence, but he suggests using a combination of assessment strategies rather than only one.

The previous article mentioned moving away from textbooks and using other materials to develop intercultural competence. I wanted to know more about what other kinds of materials I could use. The article by **Gilmore (2011)** is about accessing authentic materials rather than relying solely on a textbook. The article does not focus on technology, but gives helpful insights on the value of authentic materials in building intercultural competence. Here, authentic materials are defined as materials produced by fluent TL speakers for a real-world purpose in the TL community. The purpose of Gilmore's study was to find out how the use of authentic materials affects the factors that make up intercultural competence. The control group used a textbook only and the treatment group used a variety of materials including films, documentaries, reality shows, TV comedies, Web-based sources, home-produced video, songs, novels, and newspaper articles all produced by native speakers. Gilmore found that the students who used authentic materials improved in more areas of intercultural competence than those who did not. Gilmore hypothesizes that the students improved because authentic materials are a richer source of input and because they are more interesting and "real" than textbooks. This is important for us to know from a technology-teaching standpoint because one of the greatest benefits of technology in teaching intercultural competence is the access to authentic materials. Teachers can find a variety of written and recorded materials online that offer students access to real cultural material without having to be physically in the target culture environment. The findings of this study suggest that in order to help students develop intercultural competence, teachers should move away from heavy textbook use and carefully select applicable, authentic materials that are available through technology. As Guth and Helm (2011) illustrate, the materials chosen are only part of the

story—the specific learning outcomes and tasks assigned to the students are of utmost importance when it comes to effectively implementing technology in the classroom for the development of intercultural competence. In the articles I explore below, researchers employ primarily communication and collaboration activities to investigate how intercultural competence can be developed in various foreign language learning contexts.

**Schenker (2012)** focuses on the development of intercultural competence through telecollaboration, specifically email exchanges between native speakers and learners of the target language. This study underscored the value, but also some of the challenges, in using telecollaboration to help students to increase their intercultural competence. Schenker explains that the research shows many benefits to telecollaboration, but also a few drawbacks. She used the definition of intercultural competence by Byram (1997) to measure whether the students had made progress. These include attitudes of openness and curiosity, interpreting and relating, and critical cultural awareness. Schenker read the students' emails to determine whether their comments and conversations met the criteria for of Byram's definition. She found that all of the objectives were met. This suggests that with appropriate implementation and guidance, telecollaboration can help students develop intercultural competence. Even misunderstandings and problems can be discussed as learning opportunities. The scope of this study was very limited, but it presents a creative, intriguing activity through which language learners can interact with distant students and build their understanding of how another culture views the topics discussed. Although the students did improve their intercultural competence according to the measures the author used, this article demonstrates the difficulty and complexity of assessing the concept, as each interaction was unique and students displayed cultural

understanding in different ways. It appeared that the assessment of intercultural competence in this study was quite subjective, applying only to the specific definition employed by the instructor in this context, and not necessarily applicable to other learning contexts.

In contrast to the interactions between native speakers of the TL and TL learners, **Elola and Oskoz (2008)** examined the use of blog interaction to build intercultural competence between North American students studying abroad in Spain and North American students at home. The study's participants were third-semester Spanish students at two North American universities; one group of 23 students was studying in Spain for the spring 2007 semester and the other group of 15 students stayed at their home institution in the U.S.A. The students were divided into ten blog groups of two study abroad (SA) students with one or two at-home (AH) students. Over the course of two months, the groups discussed various cultural topics through the blogs in the L1 (through posts, comments, etc.). Data about the interactions and students' initial attitudes about culture learning were collected with two questionnaires; blog entries and comments were also analyzed. Elola and Oskoz used an adaptation of Byram's (2000) guidelines for assessing intercultural competence. One aspect of student attitudes examined in the questionnaires was the students' perception of the importance of learning about the Spanish culture; at the beginning of the semester, the SA students found this to be more important than the AH students. At the end of the semester, however, this gap in perception had narrowed significantly: the AH thought learning about Spanish culture was more important than they had at the beginning of the semester. Both groups also demonstrated other aspects of intercultural competence, such as showing awareness of

their own culture and the target culture and developing ways to resolve misunderstandings. The authors discuss at the end of the article how this project, though it consisted of learners interacting with other learners, helped both groups. The students in Spain were pushed to articulate and reflect more deeply on their cultural experiences through the blog posts and the AH students were able to ask specific, direct questions of their peers to gain deeper insights into Spanish culture despite not being in the target culture community. I thought this study was valuable to discuss because it demonstrates the value of ‘outsider’ discussions of the target culture, illustrating that even students who are not in-country or interacting with native speakers can still build intercultural competence.

Since several of the sources discussed above mention the difficulty of assessing intercultural competence, I think it is important to understand some methods of assessment that have been tested. This led me to the article by **Deardorff (2011)**. Throughout the article, the author emphasizes that the critical first step to assessing intercultural competence is choosing a definition of intercultural competence based on research. It is impossible to assess progress without a clear definition of what is expected. The teacher must determine what the key elements of intercultural competence are and then create clear, measurable goals for the students to work towards. Since every class is different and has unique goals, it is important for teachers to select the most appropriate assessment tools for their own situation. One method of assessment is “learning contacts”. This would be most useful in a situation where a student is frequently interacting with members of a different culture, such as in a study abroad. In this method, native observers, such as a host family, give their feedback on the competence of the

student. Another assessment tool is the e-portfolio. In this method, artifacts that demonstrate competence, such as term papers or photos, are placed in a portfolio. Students should be provided with clear rubrics for the assessment of their materials. One more approach is self-reflection, for which students ponder and describe their experiences and progress. Deardorff suggests a combination of these methods since intercultural competence is a complex idea. Through reading this article I learned that even though assessment of intercultural competence is complex, it is possible. By having a clear definition of intercultural competence and through the implementation of a variety of assessment methods, teachers can assess how their students are doing in their development of intercultural competence and whether this progress is meeting the needs of students and the goals of the instructor. This led us to look at a study which explored one of these methods in more detail, the use of learner diaries.

**Helm (2009)** examined students' development of intercultural competence during their participation in the *Confronti* project, which involved personal diary reflections. The *Confronti* project is based on the *Cultura* model, where two groups of students, belonging to different linguistic and cultural groups, compare and discuss various topics from their two cultural perspectives. For example, both groups of students might fill out a questionnaire (in their L1s), consisting of word-association and sentence completion items that demonstrate their attitudes towards various things, such as family, money, work, etc. The students then compare their answers with those of the other group and gain more insight into the values of the target culture and their native culture. This particular study looked at the diaries produced by 25 university-level Italian students of English who were participating in the *Confronti* project. The researcher analyzed the

weekly diaries required of the students, which directed them to reflect on the interactions and discussions of the project, but also asked students about other specific issues, such as “their expectations, the relationship between language and culture, and texts they were given to read about language, culture, and social identity” (p. 94). It should also be noted that the students wrote their diary entries in English, not their L1. Helm first employed a corpus approach to analyzing the learner diaries, which were electronic, to perhaps bring to light certain patterns and “keywords” (p. 95) which might not have been apparent from traditional qualitative analysis. In the second half of the article, the researcher also discusses the qualitative analysis of the diaries for evidence of Byram’s components of ICC and demonstrates that all five components are visible in the diaries of the case study student chosen for discussion. Though the article concludes with a conclusion similar to Deardorff’s, that multiple assessment tools should be used to look for evidence of developing ICC as no single method can be conclusive, it also shows how a quantitative approach can be taken to look more objectively for broader themes and high-frequency words. Finally, it also corroborates the positive findings of other research on projects like *Confronti* and *Cultura*, which bring students together through technology to compare and discuss their cultural perspectives and values.

Through the examination of these sources, I have learned that there are many technological tools available to facilitate cultural connections between students and native speakers and to aid in teaching intercultural competence, by facilitating the development of the attitudes, knowledge, and interpretation aspects of ICC (Byram, 1997), outside of social interactions. It was emphasized in most of the articles that is important to have a clear definition of intercultural competence, or which specific aspects



will be addressed by the tasks that the students are to carry out. Teachers also must communicate their expectations to students and implement an effective combination of assessment tools. When technology is used to appropriately incorporate high-quality cultural materials into language classes, students can develop their intercultural competence beyond what might be possible in a traditional classroom.

## LOOKING FORWARD

As I finish my work in the MSLT program, I know that I have many possibilities open to me for how I might continue my teaching career. I have accepted a position to teach English in Japan with the JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) program; this opportunity will not only provide me with experience teaching English as a foreign language, but it will also give me the chance to experience and learn from a new, non-Western culture and begin learning another language from the novice level. I believe that this language-learning experience will be especially valuable for me as an instructor, as it will remind me of the struggles and challenges of being a beginner once again, and it will help me to better empathize with my novice-level students. Upon returning to the United States, I believe I would like to pursue a doctoral degree in either applied linguistics or teacher education, but I know that I need more classroom experience at this point in time.

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APPENDICIES



## Appendix A

Lesson Plan for Observation Feb. 16, 2016

**Communicative Goal:** Students will be able to describe how they use various technologies both today and how people used technologies in the past to write short descriptions of technologies for a museum.

**Number of students:** 19-23

**Level of students:** Novice Mid to Intermediate Mid

**Class Time:** 50 minutes

This lesson takes place at the end of a unit; the students have been working on using the imperfect tense for the last two days; after this lesson, we will review for the exam on Thursday.

**Order of Activities:**

**Warm-up (7-10 minutes)**

Students will finish an activity that we started on Thursday during which they must explain to their “professor” why they don’t have their homework, describing their bad day. The “professor” then accepts or rejects their excuse- they must talk to three “professors”- then the students switch roles.

**Input 1: Comment j’utilise la technologie (10 minutes)**

The teacher will describe to the students how she uses various technology to accomplish various things- for example, that she reads news stories on her phone, but reads printed books and scholarly articles; how she watches television on her computer because she doesn’t have a television; how she uses her phone normally as a camera, but also uses a nicer camera on vacation, etc. She’ll use PowerPoint slides to provide visual support and help students to understand. After describing how she uses technology, she’ll pose the same questions to students and they will note their own technology habits on their worksheets- how do they watch television? Movies? How do they listen to music? How do they read? How do they stay in contact with family and friends?

**Activity 1: Des Habitudes semblables (10-15 minutes, including explanation time)**

Then, after reflecting on their own technology use habits, students will find a partner who uses technology for at least three of the same things, asking questions like “Comment est-ce que tu prends des photos?” “Comment est-ce que tu lis les actualités?” “Comment est-ce que tu regardes des séries télévisées ? » « Comment est-ce que tu parles avec ta famille ? Tes amis ? » and responding with « Je prends des photos avec mon portable. » « Je lis des actualités dans un

journal. » etc. They must find a partner with at least three of the same habits. They'll stay with this partner for the next activity.

**Input 2: La technologie du passé (8-10 minutes)**

After discussing technology use in the present, the teacher will ask students how various tasks were completed, using which technology, at various points in time, such as « Comment est-ce qu'on lisait en 1950 ? » “Comment est-ce que nous prenions des photos en 1980?” “Comment est-ce que nous regardions des films en 1930?” and provide example answers, depending on student responses. Then, she'll present the idea of creating a technology museum in the year 2100 where visitors learn about how we used various technologies in the past. In their groups, students will draw two technological devices from the past and the present (television, typewriter, tablet, iPhone, washing machine, etc.) and work together to create short descriptions for our technology museum.

**Activity 2: Notre Musée de Technologie (10-15 minutes)**

Teacher will provide two example descriptions for students before they start working together to write their own descriptions about the technologies they've drawn and how they were used in the past. Depending on how much time is left when students finish, the teacher may have some groups share their descriptions and have the rest of the class guess the device.

## Appendix B

Handout (sides 1 & 2) for use with Lesson in Appendix A

(side 1)

**Comment est-ce que j'utilise la technologie ?**

À VOUS – Répondez aux questions suivantes :

Comment est-ce que tu regardes les films et la télé ?	Comment est-ce que tu lis?	Comment est-ce que tu parles avec tes amis et ta famille?	Comment est-ce que tu prends des photos?	Comment est-ce que tu écoutes de la musique?
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Qui a des habitudes similaires ?

Mon partenaire :

La technologie d'hier :

Comment est-ce que nous regardions des films en 1930?

Comment est-ce que nous écoutions de la musique en 1980?

Comment est-ce que nous lisions en 1950?

(side 2)

**Notre Musée d'Aujourd'hier™ (en l'année 2100)**

Avec un partenaire ou groupe de trois, vous allez écrire des descriptions des technologies d'aujourd'hui et d'hier. Décrivez ce que nous faisons avec cette technologie (ex. Un smartphone : on lisait les informations, on regardait des vidéos de YouTube, ils envoyaient des textos et des photos). Faites des descriptions de deux objets et dessinez des images !

**Objet:**

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**Objet:**

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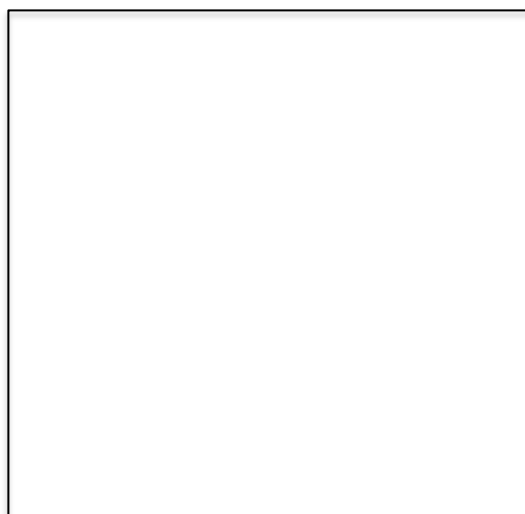
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## Appendix C

Handout for TU/VOUS Lesson

**TU et VOUS: En plus de détail** (*side 1*)

Réfléchissez: Dans votre classe de français, quand est-ce que le prof emploie le pronom « VOUS » et quand est-ce qu'elle emploie le pronom « TU » ? Quand est-ce que vous employez les deux pronoms, dans quelles circonstances ? Qu'est-ce que vous savez sur l'usage de ces deux pronoms ?

**Clip #1 : La Haine** (personnage : Vinz, un jeune homme qui veut du respect)

Notes sur l'usage de TU/VOUS :

Avec un partenaire : Pourquoi utilise-t-il les pronoms ainsi ?

**Clip #2 : 8 Femmes** (personnages : Une grand-mère, une mère, et deux filles, pendant les années 60)

Notes sur l'usage de TU/VOUS :

Avec un partenaire : Pourquoi utilisent-elles les pronoms ainsi ?

**Clip #3 : Les Intouchables** (personnages : Un employeur et son employé, qui deviennent amis éventuellement)

Notes sur l'usage de TU/VOUS :

Avec un partenaire : Pourquoi utilisent-ils les pronoms ainsi ?

**TU et VOUS: En plus de détail: Jouons les rôles ! (side 2)****Scenario #1 :**

Mon rôle :

Rôle de mon partenaire :

Mes Notes :

**Scenario #2 :**

Mon rôle :

Rôle de mon partenaire :

Mes Notes :

**Scenario #3 :**

Mon rôle :

Rôle de mon partenaire :

Mes Notes :

**Scenario #4 :**

Mon rôle :

Rôle de mon partenaire :

Mes Notes :

## Appendix D

## TU/VOUS Lesson: Scenarios Posted Around Classroom and Canvas Questions

**Scénario #1 :** Vous êtes étudiant(e)s à l'université (francophone). Un partenaire est étudiant(e) en première année, l'autre est étudiant(e) en deuxième année, alors ce dernier(ière) connaît mieux le campus et la vie à l'université. L'étudiant(e) en première année pose des questions à l'autre étudiant(e) à propos de la vie scolaire, comment réussir les cours, etc.

**Scénario #2 :** Vous êtes étudiant(e)s étrangers(ère)s à l'université dans un pays francophone. Vous suivez des cours de français langue étrangère ensemble (FLE), mais vous venez de deux pays différents, L'Espagne et L'Italie. Un(e) étudiant(e) arrive en retard un jour et il/elle doit demander à l'autre un stylo, une feuille de papier, et ce qu'ils discutent en classe. Supposez que vous parliez pendant une activité de groupe- vous n'interrompez pas le prof.

**Scénario #3 :** Un partenaire est étudiant(e) étranger(ère) à l'université dans un pays francophone et l'autre partenaire est le prof qui s'occupe des étudiants étrangers (il/elle les aide à s'installer, s'inscrire dans les cours, etc.). L'étudiant(e) pose des questions au prof à propos de la vie en ville, les choses qu'il faut faire au début du semestre, etc.

**Scénario #4 :** Vous êtes étudiant(e)s étranger(ère)s dans un pays francophone et un ami commun vous vous introduit à une soirée pour les étudiants étrangers. Parlez comme vous faites la connaissance. Présentez- vous ; vous venez de deux pays différents, mais vous avez des choses en commun (les sports, les loisirs, etc.).

#### Questions/Instructions sur Canvas :

Réfléchissez à deux conversations (deux scénarios) que vous avez eues en classe : vous avez employé quels pronoms (TU/VOUS), et dans quelles circonstances ? Pourquoi avez-vous choisi un pronom, et pas l'autre ? Quels aspects du contexte pesaient (*weighed on, affected*) sur votre choix ? Pourquoi ?

Ecrivez un ou deux petits paragraphes sur votre usage des pronoms. Puis répondez à deux réflexions de vos camarades, sur D'AUTRES scénarios, auxquelles les autres étudiants n'ont pas déjà répondu. (Par exemple, si vous avez écrit sur les scénarios 2 et 3, répondez à deux réflexions sur le scénario 1 et 4.)