Notos

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Notos, in classical mythology, was the name of the South Wind personified, the god of the South Wind. It was chosen as the title of the SLIC journal, like Zephyr for the SLIC newsletter, in recognition of the importance of the winds in Alberta.

Notos

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Editors' Acknowledgement

How Will Alberta's Second Language Students Ever Achieve Proficiency?

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, the CEFR and the 10,000-Hour Rule in Relation to the Alberta K–12 Language-Learning Context

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Abstract

Students of second and international languages in Alberta do not receive sufficient hours of instruction through formal classroom time alone to achieve distinguished levels of proficiency (Archibald et al 2006). This research study uses a constructivist approach (Guba and Lincoln 1994; Twomey Fosnot 2005) to explore what is meant by proficiency and expertise in terms of language learning, by applying what has commonly become known as the 10,000-hour rule of expertise (Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Römer 1993; Ericsson, Prietula and Cokely 2007; Gladwell 2008).

Alberta's French as a Second Language: Nine-Year Program of Studies (Grade 4 to 12) (Alberta Learning 2004) is considered as an example. This paper argues that dedicated, self-regulated informal learning is necessary to supplement classroom learning in order to achieve the 10,000 hours of dedicated practice necessary to develop high levels of proficiency or expertise, according to the definitions offered by American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Recommendations are offered to help learners and parents understand the critical role of self-regulated, informal learning in achieving language proficiency.

In the 2006 review commissioned by Alberta Education of the literature on second language learning, Archibald et al determined that students in Alberta who take second or international language classes in school are unlikely to develop the expert levels of proficiency and fluency that equate with functional bilingualism. They state that "learning a second language for 95 hours per year for six years will not lead to functional bilingualism and fluency in the second language. Expectations must be realistic" (Archibald

et al 2006, 3). This raises the question of what it would take for Alberta students to become highly proficient in a second language.

There is no clear or easy answer. This article explores Archibald et al's claim in more depth, offering examples and scenarios that are intended to offer insights into why this may be the case and what might be done to solve the problem. This article will also explore what is meant by proficiency and expertise with respect to language learning by applying what has commonly become known as the 10,000-hour rule of expertise. Further, the paper addresses the need to incorporate dedicated practice and self-regulated informal learning as critical components of language learning. Finally, directions for further research are offered. In addition, suggestions for teachers and administrators are proposed to help Alberta's students increase their chances of developing proficiency and fluency.

Theoretical Framework

This research uses a constructivist theory to frame this qualitative research study. Guba and Lincoln (1994) point out that constructivism is a values approach that is included and formative, and, unlike positivist and postpositivist approaches, is not devoid of influence, and values altruism and empowerment (p 112). A constructivist approach "describes knowledge not as truths to be transmitted or discovered, but as emergent, developmental, non-objective, viable constructed explanations by humans engaged in meaning-making in cultural and social communities of discourse" (Twomey Fosnot 2005, ix).

One of the underlying assumptions of this research is that "knowledge is socially constructed in

a dialogue between the world and human consciousness" (Kincheloe 2005, 21). This research examines the notions of proficiency, expertise and the number of hours that are required to achieve maximal performance. This article constructs theoretical arguments upon which further work, both conceptual and empirical, may be built. As language teachers, learners and researchers in Alberta, we are members of a critical community of discourse regarding our language learners and our programs. This discourse informs our practice, guides our research, and may shape or influence future policy discussions or decisions. This research offers an exploration of concepts that are both emergent and developmental in nature.

What Do We Mean When We Talk About Proficiency?

A single definition of proficiency that is accepted by practitioners and scholars alike has yet to be found. The search for adequate measures of proficiency dates back to the 1950s (Sparks et al 1997). Two organizations whose extensive work in the area of language proficiency offers definitions of proficiency are the Council of Europe (CoE) (in particular, their Common European Framework of Reference for Languages [CEFR]) and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

Although many Canadian provinces have adopted the CEFR as a standard (Rehorick and Lefargue 2005; Vandergrift 2006), ACTFL remains an authoritative body on matters of language learning. The ACTFL guidelines are often consulted by practitioners and scholars alike, even though they refer only to the American context. Alberta Education's current School Administrator's Guide to Implementing Language Programming refers to the ACTFL guidelines as a reference for school leaders (Alberta Education 2007c, 55). ACTFL defines proficiency as "what an individual can and cannot do with language at each level, regardless of where, when, or how the language was acquired" (ACTFL 2012, 3).

The ACTFL guidelines comprise five proficiency levels. From the most basic to the most advanced, these are novice, intermediate, advanced, superior and distinguished. Levels are determined for the four skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. The distinguished level of proficiency is the highest a learner can achieve in any skill. Though distinguished proficiency is described differently for each skill level, for each skill it is characterized by very low occurrences of errors, the ability to process and synthesize complex information effectively and quickly, high levels of control and mastery, superior problem-solving abilities, and highly sophisticated performance—or, in essence, the "functional bilingualism" noted by Archibald et al (2006).

Similar to ACTFL, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (CoE 2001) provides descriptors that align with particular levels or benchmarks. The CEFR articulates six levels of proficiency, moving from the most basic to the most advanced. The basic levels are A1 and A2. Users who are classified as independent are B1 and B2. Proficient users rank as C1 and C2 (CoE 2001, 32). As with the ACTFL distinguished level of proficiency, it could be argued that language learners who achieve a C2 level of competence according to the CEFR could also be considered functionally bilingual.

Using the CEFR framework, learners are assessed on the following skills: listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production and writing, using a variety of competencies including declarative knowledge, or "knowledge of the world" (CoE 2001, 101), as well as lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological, orthographic, orthoepic, sociolinguistic and intercultural competence (CoE 2001).

Numerous factors influence a learner's ability to achieve of proficiency. These include the learner's cognitive abilities, natural talent, aptitude, personality, learning preferences, beliefs, environment and motivation (CoE 2001; Archibald et al 2006; Lightbrown and Spada 1999; Mercer 2012). This list is by no means exhaustive. Rather, it is offered to show the complexity of the many factors that affect the development of language proficiency. The CEFR also notes that a student's "existential competence" plays a role in his or her ability to achieve proficiency. Existential competence includes attitudes, motivations, values, beliefs, cognitive styles and personality styles (CoE 2001, 10). In addition, students' ability to learn and their study skills also affect their proficiency levels (CoE 2001, 11).

Lightbrown and Spada (1999) point out that "learner characteristics are not independent of one another: learner variables interact in complex ways. So far, researchers know very little about the nature of these complex interactions" (p 68).

Some researchers have also pointed out that in addition to the personal characteristics of the learner, the amount of time a person dedicates to learning a language affects his or her proficiency (CoE 2001; Archibald et al 2006; Lightbrown and Spada 1999; Mercer 2012).

The age of the learner may affect his or her ability to develop proficiency quickly (Cummins 1981; Genessee 1978; Lightbrown and Spada 1999). Lightbrown and Spada point out that "when learners receive only a few hours of instruction per week, learners who start later (for example, age 10, 11, or 12) often catch up with those who begin earlier" (p 68). In this instance, Lightbrown and Spada may be implying that the amount of time that a person invests in language learning may have greater importance than the age at which a person begins to learn a language. At present, however, there is no empirical evidence to back up such a claim.

This article focuses on the amount of time a person invests in learning the language and examines it in depth. This article also focuses on achievement of the highest levels of proficiency, such as the distinguished level as defined by ACTFL (2012) and C1 and C2 levels of the CEFR (CoE 2001).

Proficiency, Expertise and the 10,000-Hour Rule

When Archibald et al state that "95 hours per year for six years will not lead to functional bilingualism and fluency in the second language" (2006, p 3) for Alberta's students, they do not explain why this may be the case. The answer may be found in research into what it takes to develop expertise in general and in applying the same notions to language learning. The characteristics described by ACTFL of a learner who has achieved a distinguished level of proficiency, as well as the characteristics outlined by the CEFR for the C1 and C2 levels, are not unlike the definitions other scholars use to describe an expert:

People who have developed expertise in particular areas are, by definition, able to think effectively about problems in those areas. … experts have acquired extensive knowledge that affects what they notice and how they organize, represent, and interpret information in their environment. This, in turn, affects their abilities to remember, reason, and solve problems." (Bransford, Brown and Cocking 1999, 31)

Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Römer (1993) and Ericsson, Prietula and Cokely (2007) note that the development of expertise is closely related to the amount of time a person spends developing his or her skills. To be precise, Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Römer (1993) and Ericsson, Prietula and Cokely (2007) determined that 10,000 hours of deliberate learning and practice have been found to be the length of time necessary to develop high levels of expertise.

The notion was dubbed "the 10,000-hour rule" by Gladwell (2008). Though a cursory reading of Gladwell's book *Outliers* (2008) may lead the reader to believe that Gladwell invented the notion of the 10,000-hour rule, in fact he cites the work of Ericsson, Prietula and Cokely (2007). In effect, Gladwell popularized the theoretical notions of expert performance that were originally published as academic research. While this researcher acknowledges the contribution made by Gladwell in ascribing the title "the 10,000-hour rule," every effort has been made to seek out the primary sources upon which Gladwell's work was built.

Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Römer (1993) specifically studied the investment required to achieve "maximal level of performance for individuals in a given domain" (p 366). In their earlier work, they determined that expertise was likely to take a minimum of ten years to develop. Some years later, in their 2007 article, Ericsson, Prietula and Cokely (2007) had refined that notion, and instead of looking only at the number of years needed to develop maximal levels of performance, they also examined how many hours would be involved in the development of high levels of expertise. They state that "even the most gifted" need to invest "a minimum of ten years (or 10,000 hours)." In other words, they assume approximately 1,000 hours per year over ten years to achieve a total of 10,000 hours of a combination of training and deliberate practice.

Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Römer (1993) and Ericsson, Prietula and Cokely (2007) examined the

performance of world champions and prodigies, exploring what sets them above others in their field. But other researchers expanded upon the notions proposed by Ericsson and his associates in 1993 and 2007 by proposing the 10,000-hour model of expertise as necessary to achieve high levels of proficiency in any given skill area (McGonigal 2010; Oblinger 2005; Prensky 2001), including language learning (Eaton 2011a; Mercer 2012).

The 10,000-Hour Rule in Language Learning

In this section, the notion of the 10,000-hour rule is applied to language learning, with specific focus on learners of French as a second language (FSL) in the Alberta K–12 system. The following examples provide insight into how many hours Alberta students might spend engaged in formal language education. The examples demonstrate precisely why Archibald et al's claim that the number of instructional hours may be insufficient to achieve proficiency may be true and why their conclusions support what other researchers have found about the number of hours needed to develop expertise (Eaton 2011a; Ericsson et al 1993; Gladwell 2008; McGonigal 2010; Lightbrown and Spada 1999; Mercer 2012; Prensky 2001).

An Alberta Example: French as a Second Language: Nine-Year Program of Studies (Grade 4 to Grade 12)

The situation of FSL in Alberta provides a snapshot of the situation described by Archibald et al. Currently, Alberta students in elementary and junior high are guaranteed 950 hours of instruction per year; in high school, students receive 1,000 hours of instruction per year (Alberta Learning 2003b), though the number of school days per year may vary from 190 to 200 (Alberta Education 2007a). These numbers apply to courses across the curriculum. Let us focus briefly on languages.

The Alberta program of studies for French as a second language (FSL) states that "a second language is best taught between 30 and 40 minutes a day over the course of the school year to enable students to develop communication skills, linguistic knowledge, cultural understanding, intercultural competence and language learning strategies" (Alberta Learning 2004, 1). Spending 30 to 40 minutes per day may be best for maintaining students' attention levels and learning efficiency, but this does not mean that it is the best way to achieve fluency or proficiency. It takes a significant investment of time to learn a language. This is acknowledged a few pages later in the same document, when it states that the "French as a Second Language program of studies reflects current knowledge about second language learning, learner-centred teaching and crosscurricular integration. It is based on the premise that students acquire language knowledge, skills and attitudes over a period of time and that over time their ability to communicate grows" (Alberta Learning 2004, 4). The accompanying *French as a Second Language (FSL) Guide to Implementation* specifically states that 95 hours per year is the number of hours required for the French as a second language program of study in Alberta (Alberta Education 2008, 4). What is missing is a correlation between the number of hours students spend learning French in the classroom and the length of time we can expect it will take them to achieve high levels of fluency.

If we apply the 10,000-hour model, how long would it take for learners in this program to achieve high levels proficiency such as the ACTFL Distinguished level or the CEFR C1 or C2 levels? The answer is achieved by dividing 10,000 hours by 95 hours of instruction per year. The result is that a student of French as a second language in Alberta would require 105.26 years to achieve expert levels of proficiency.

A Focus on Excellence: The Alberta FSL Example in Perspective

It could be argued that examining the development of language proficiency in terms of the number of instructional hours may be overly simplistic. It is important to reiterate that at the beginning of this article it was stated that numerous factors affect a learner's ability to become proficient in a language. These examples are not meant to contradict that notion or to imply that the number of class hours is the only factor affecting how long it may take a learner to achieve high levels of expertise in the language, defined by ACTFL as a distinguished level or by CEFR as a C1 or C2 level of proficiency. These examples are offered simply to illustrate, in greater depth, Archibald et al's (2006) point that 95 hours of instructional time per year is insufficient.

McGonigal (2010) points out that by the time a student graduates from high school, he or she will have spent approximately 10,000 hours learning the skills and knowledge associated with a basic overall education. We know that students in Alberta spend between 950 and 1,000 hours per year in school (Alberta Education 2007a), which supports McGonigal's assertion. Though somewhat paradoxical, we could conclude that by the time a student graduates from high school he or she might be considered an "expert" learner at the most basic level. Notwithstanding the irony of the notion of a basic level of expertise, we could argue that while a student might have invested 10,000 hours of formal classroom instruction, that does not make the student an expert in any one subject area. Students must take a variety of subjects across the curriculum throughout their K–12 experience. Developing expertise in any one particular subject area, such as French as a second language (or any other second or subsequent language, for that matter), requires an investment of hours far beyond what is achievable by the end of high school, if one relies on formal classroom instruction alone.

Solution: Deliberate Practice Through Self-Regulated Informal Learning

The question posed at the beginning of this article was, What would it take for Alberta students to become highly proficient in a second language? If formal instructional hours are insufficient, how do learners get sufficient hours to gain high levels of proficiency?

Archibald et al examined the Alberta program of studies for second languages and drew their conclusions based on their examination of those documents. However, determining the number of hours that second language learners spend engaging in language learning activities outside of formal classroom instructional time is much more difficult. While the evidence suggests that the amount of time a learner dedicates to language studies can affect the learner's level of proficiency, it is almost impossible to track the number of hours a learner spends trying to achieve proficiency. The activities associated with language learning often include formal, nonformal and informal learning activities, which have been discussed at some length in previous work (Eaton 2010).

What scholars agree upon is that deliberate practice is necessary to achieve high levels of expertise (Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Römer 1993; Prensky 2001; Gladwell 2008; McGonigal 2010; Eaton 2011a; Mercer 2012.) Ericsson, Prietula and Cokely (2007) define deliberate practice as "considerable, specific, and sustained efforts to do something you can't do well" (p 118).

Deliberate practice for acquiring language proficiency means engaging in informal learning outside of classes. Informal learning is less structured and less organized than formal learning and often has no particular learning objectives. (Organisation of Economic Development and Cooperation nd; Werquin 2007; Eaton 2010.). Though opinions differ on whether informal learning is intentional (Werquin 2007), informal learning can be defined as "any activity involving the pursuit of understanding, knowledge or skill which occurs without the presence of externally imposed curricular criteria" (Livingstone 2001, 4). According to Livingstone, informal learning includes self-directed learning or what Ericsson and his associates refer to as "deliberate practice" (1993, 2007).

Informal learning can include both intentional deliberate practice and unintentional learning. This paper considers informal learning that is both deliberate and intentional, such as
- self-study,
- homework,
- active participation in conversation clubs,
- tutoring from volunteers or friends,
- a trip to the grocery store with a native speaker with the objective of learning the names of food items,
- watching television or movies with a particular focus on learning the target language,
- listening to music with lyrics in the target language while making a deliberate attempt to learn, understand and correctly pronounce the words, and
- reading a newspaper with the intention of trying to understand the content and details of the articles.

These are only a few examples; there are many more. What the examples share is learners' deliberate focus on improving their language skills as they engage in the activity.

Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Römer (1993) note that "the maximal level of performance for individuals in a given domain is not attained automatically

as a function of extended experience" (p 366). In other words, it is not enough to simply spend time sitting in a class or otherwise being exposed to the language. High levels of metacognition and intentionality are necessary elements to effective learning, regardless of whether it is formal or informal. Although the term *self-awareness* is used rather commonly as a desirable quality for a learner to have, Zimmerman (1995) points out that learners must go beyond developing self-awareness to develop self-regulation, and that this "involves an underlying sense of self-efficacy and personal agency and the motivational and behavioral processes to put these self-beliefs into effect" (p 217).

Expanding Our Understanding of *What Is Required* to Achieve 10,000 Hours of Dedicated Practice

Let us reconsider the example of the nine-year program of studies (Grade 4 to 12) for French as a second language and its 95 formal instructional hours per year. This example presumes no homework, purposeful informal learning or dedicated practice. Through the construction of three hypothetical scenarios, we can see how a student could achieve the 10,000 hours necessary to develop expert levels of proficiency more quickly.

Scenario 1: 95 hours per year, supplemented by one hour of dedicated informal learning per day

We know that Alberta students spend approximately 190 days per year in school (Alberta Education 2007a). If a student were to dedicate one hour per school day to deliberate informal language learning (eg, homework, conversing with a native speaker, self-study), he or she would increase his or her total number of hours per year to 285 (95 instructional classroom hours plus 190 hours per year of informal learning).

In this scenario, it would take a learner 35 years to achieve 9,975 hours, which is very close to the 10,000 hours necessary to achieve expert levels of proficiency. So, even a student who diligently spends one hour a night on his or her French homework is unlikely to become fluent in the language by the time he or she graduates from high school.

Scenario 2: 95 hours per year, supplemented by one hour of dedicated informal learning per day and immersion experiences

If the same student were to supplement 95 hours per year of class time and an hour per school day of dedicated practice with an annual holiday to a francophone region every year with the intention of learning the language, the number of informal learning hours increases dramatically.

Let us suppose that the student travels every year to Quebec and spends 14 days there, during which time the student engages in deliberate practice and self-regulated informal learning every hour that he or she is awake—say 16 hours per day. Though exhausting, this would add up to an additional 224 hours (14 days multiplied by 16 hours per day).

The student in scenario 2 would have the 285 hours described in scenario 1, plus an additional 224 hours from the immersion experience in Quebec. The result is 509 hours per year. This is more than five times the number of hours that the student who attends only 95 instructional hours per year receives.

With an investment of 509 hours per year, it would take 19 years to achieve 9,671 hours, which is close to the 10,000 hours required to achieve expert levels of proficiency. Theoretically, it could take this learner almost two decades to achieve a distinguished level of proficiency or a C1 or C2 level on the CEFR.

So, even with the boost of an annual two-week immersion holiday, it is unlikely that students could achieve very high levels of proficiency if their only other exposure to the language is the time spent in the classroom, supplemented with regular homework or study. Greater exposure to the language is necessary, such as speaking the language at home or investing more heavily in informal learning on a weekly basis.

Scenario 3: Total immersion in the target language

This final scenario considers how long it would take a student who participates in a study-abroad program, in which he or she lives in a francophone region, attends a francophone school and lives with French speakers, to achieve 10,000 hours of language learning.

If we assume that in a 24-hour day 8 hours are spent sleeping, we are left with 16 possible hours for study, practice and informal language learning

through daily activities. For the purposes of argument, let us assume that the highly motivated and dedicated student in this scenario spends every waking moment engaged in language learning. In one year of total immersion in the new language, the maximum a learner could spend is 5,840 hours (16 hours per day × 365 days = 5,840 hours). By extrapolation, it could take a learner a little less than two years to achieve 10,000 hours.

Cummins (1981) noted that even children who are fully immersed in a language may take years to achieve high levels of proficiency. In his study on second language learning of immigrants to Canada, Cummins found that "it takes at least five years, on the average, for immigrant children who arrive in the host country after the age of six to approach grade norms in L2 CALP" (p 148). *CALP* is defined as "cognitive/academic language proficiency" (p 133). Cummins also notes that a number of factors affect a learner's ability to achieve proficiency; nevertheless, he notes that the length of time necessary to achieve proficiency may be much longer than language program administrators and policy makers might like to admit.

Though the calculations set out in this paper show that we can arrive at 10,000 hours after approximately two years, Cummins proposes that even in full-immersion situations the achievement of language proficiency could take up to three times as long as I have proposed here. Again, he cautions that the development of high levels of proficiency may take much longer than we might want to admit.

Why These Scenarios Are Incomplete

In scenario 2, the proposed 19 years may seem like an inordinately long time for a student to achieve high levels of expertise. This may well be because the scenarios themselves are somewhat artificial. The family that travels to Quebec for two weeks every year may well have deeper motivations, such as francophone roots, that would take them on a family holiday there every year. If that were the case, the student in scenario 2 might well spend more than one hour per school day engaged in informal learning activities during the school year in Alberta, because his or her family would be deeply connected to Quebec and probably emotionally connected to its language and its culture. This alone would increase the learner's informal language

learning far beyond the walls of the formal classroom.

The scenarios are, at best, artificial constructs. They are provided to illustrate that dedicated practice, informal learning and immersion experiences could greatly accelerate the language learner's journey to high levels of proficiency. If 95 instructional hours per year are insufficient to achieve proficiency and fluency, then the answer to proficiency lies in supplementing formal instruction with nonformal and informal language learning in a deliberate and self-regulated manner over an extended period of time.

Directions for Further Study

Further research is needed to understand the notion of expertise as it relates to language learning in more depth. Directions for future research may include the following:

1. **A systematic examination of the number of hours of all French programs in Alberta.** This paper has focused specifically on one example: the French as a Second Language: Nine-Year Program of Studies (Grade 4 to Grade 12) (Alberta Learning 2004). Next steps may include examining bilingual and immersion programs in more detail. The *School Administrator's Guide to Implementing Language Programming* (Alberta Education 2007c) states that in order for a French immersion program to be eligible for funding from the provincial government, students must receive at least 5,000 hours of instruction from Grade 1 to Grade 12 (p 56). There are indications that 5,000 hours of instruction is insufficient in and of itself for students to achieve the "functional bilingualism" discussed by Archibald et al (2006), particularly since bilingual programs in Alberta aim to "develop an advanced level of proficiency" (Alberta Learning 2003a, 7).

An examination of the role played by deliberate practice and intentional informal learning needs to be further articulated. Is it possible that informal learning combined with 5,000 hours of formal classroom instruction is enough for Alberta's students to achieve expert levels of proficiency, as defined by ACTFL or the CEFR?

2. **A systematic examination of the number of hours of other language programs in Alberta.** In addition to French, numerous other languages are offered in the K–12 system in

Alberta, including Spanish, German and Mandarin, to name a few. Future research might examine different types of programs and the total number of hours of instruction that a student might receive in a given language, depending on when he or she began those studies and what type of program he or she was enrolled in (eg, second language, bilingual, immersion, intensive, etc).

3. **Qualitative and quantitative classroom-based research that examines what students are actually doing during their hours of instruction, and how much homework or "dedicated practice" they are investing in their language studies.** Questions such as "Do language students who spend more time on independent practice achieve higher test scores?" or "Do language students who take part in immersion programs achieve proficiency more quickly?" would be worth exploring.

4. **Comparative studies with other Canadian jurisdictions.** This paper has addressed only the case of Alberta. Further study is required to understand how Alberta compares to other Canadian jurisdictions in terms of its K–12 students' language proficiency.

5. **Comparative studies with European nations.** The CEFR that has been adopted in Europe was originally developed for use in Canada. While the author fully supports its implementation in the Canadian context, it must be noted that Canada's plurilingualism differs from that of Europe. Parents and teachers alike often ask, "If students in Europe can learn so many languages, why can't my child become fluent in a second language?" The answer to this question is complex and well beyond the scope of this study. Insights may be found, however, by looking at the number of hours European students spend informally learning languages. Further study would be required to deeply explore such a notion.

6. **Assessment of informal language learning.** If we accept the 10,000-hour rule as a viable model to achieve high levels of proficiency and fluency, we must track (or, at the very least, approximate) how many hours a learner dedicates to language learning and, in particular, nonformal and informal learning that happens outside of classrooms. Assessment tools such as student portfolios (California Foreign Language Project 1997; Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers nd; Eaton 2011b) and language "passports" (National Centre for Languages 2006) have become more prevalent both in learning and as subjects of research. Further study is needed that specifically addresses learners' dedicated informal and nonformal learning in light of the 10,000-hour rule of expertise.

7. **A correlation of the Alberta program of study for FSL for Grades 4–12 with the CEFR.** The current Alberta program of studies for FSL for Grades 4–12 outlines numerous outcomes in a detailed fashion, but there is no obvious correlation between these outcomes and the CEFR. If students were to write the Diplôme d'études en langue française (Diploma in French Studies) (DELF), which is correlated to the CEFR, what level could students realistically be expected to achieve by the end of Grade 9? Grade 12? A correlation of provincial language learning outcomes with the CEFR is necessary not only for French, but for all languages taught in Alberta.

Suggestions for Language Teachers and Program Administrators

As we understand what is required for Alberta's second language learners to achieve greater levels of proficiency, these recommendations are offered for school leaders and language teachers:

1. **Make it clear to students and parents alike that learners are unlikely to develop high levels of proficiency through formal classes alone.** Help parents and learners understand that regular, dedicated practice through informal learning is a critical component of achieving proficiency. Make it clear that students must not rely solely on classes or formal instructional hours alone as a means to achieve fluency or proficiency. Help learners to develop a long-term personalized language-learning plan that includes formal classroom learning and dedicated informal learning that takes place outside the classroom.

2. **Help parents set realistic expectations.** Teachers and administrators need to help parents

understand what level of proficiency a child can realistically achieve in a second language program. Even with a combination of formal and informal learning, Alberta's language students are likely to achieve, at best, an intermediate level of proficiency on the ACTFL scale, or a B1 or B2 on the CEFR scale. Advanced levels of proficiency will require more time than most second language learners can realistically invest in a nine-year program of studies. Students who wish to develop advanced or expert levels of proficiency will need to invest more hours, either through a significant immersion experience or through continued studies beyond Grade 12, or both.

3. **Tell students and parents about the 10,000-hour rule.** Talk to learners and parents about how long it takes to develop high levels of proficiency in a language. Explain that the 10,000-hour rule extends beyond language learning and has been documented by researchers over several decades and that, due to this growing body of research, this model is gaining widespread acceptance across a variety of disciplines. Help learners develop realistic expectations about how much time is needed to develop deep levels of proficiency. Pointing out how much faster students are likely to gain proficiency when they engage in deliberate practice may be particularly helpful.

4. **Explain the concept of self-regulated learning to language learners.** Mercer (2012) notes that learners who believe that they can develop proficiency are more likely to become proficient. It is not enough for students to simply put in time. Motivation, beliefs and attitudes are critical pieces of the puzzle. Students must first believe that they can learn a language and that their own attitudes and motivation play a significant role in their achievements. Point out that personal agency and self-efficacy are critical to becoming a self-regulated learner (Zimmerman 1995).

5. **Explicitly state how many hours of intentional informal learning (including homework) are expected of Alberta students enrolled in second language courses.** Instead of merely pointing out that practice is helpful or that homework is a necessary part of learning, develop specific expectations to address the minutes or hours per day or per week that students are expected to engage in deliberate practice, intentional informal learning and dedicated self-study. *International Languages: Tips for Parents* (Alberta Education 2007b) has numerous suggestions for how parents can help their children learn a new language. The document contains numerous recommendations for deliberate practice and other forms of intentional informal learning. What is missing is an indication of how many hours per week or per month this type of learning should be incorporated into the learner's schedule. Help parents set weekly goals for how many hours their children should invest in their language studies.

Conclusions

The results of this work could be depressing for the language student or parent who believes that a language can be learned quickly and that fluency can be achieved easily. Basic competence, however, can be achieved in far fewer hours than the current study proposes. It is worth reiterating that both the ACTFL models and CEFR models mentioned earlier note a number of levels of competence across a variety of skills. This study does not concern itself with the amount of time required to develop novice, intermediate, advanced, or even superior levels of proficiency, as described by ACTFL (ACTFL 2012) or the A1, A2, B1 or B2 levels of the CEFR. Rather, we are concerned with what is required for a learner to develop high levels of expertise, which might arguably correlate to a distinguished level of proficiency under the ACTFL model or the C1 and C2 levels of the CEFR model.

The question addressed by this study was, What would it take for Alberta students to become proficient in a second language? The answer remains complex. One element of the answer may be found in research that demonstrates that 10,000 hours of dedicated learning are required to achieve what Ericsson and his colleagues in 1993 and 2007, among others (Prensky 2001; Gladwell 2008; McGonigal 2010; Eaton 2011a; Mercer 2012) consider to be the "magic number" to achieve expertise.

Archibald et al (2006) claimed that 95 hours of formal instruction over six years was, in and of itself, unlikely to lead Alberta's students achieving proficiency or fluency. They are not alone in their insistence that classroom instruction itself is insufficient

for learners to achieve proficiency in another language. Lightbrown and Spada (1999) also state that "school programs should be based on realistic estimates of how long it takes to learn a second language. One or two hours a week will not produce very advanced second language learners, no matter how young they were when they began" (p 68). This paper proposes that a critical component of achieving the high number of hours necessary to achieve expert levels of language proficiency is self-regulated, dedicated practice, in the form of informal learning. Mercer (2012) notes that "a personal willingness to invest time and effort and engage in repeated practice" is necessary for learners to achieve proficiency. In other words, students who are serious about achieving high levels of proficiency in another language must invest thousands of hours outside the classroom, engaged in deliberate practice and independent study.

Ericsson and his colleagues (1993, 2007) found that expert musicians and athletes put in daily practice over a number of years in order to rise to their levels of excellence beyond what most others achieve. It stands to reason, then, that in order for language learners in Alberta to improve their current levels of competence by the time they graduate from high school, dedicated informal learning must be an explicit and critical aspect of their language learning experience.

Learners and parents alike must understand that no amount of class time will ensure that learners achieve distinguished levels of language competence. In order for language learners to achieve 10,000 hours of deliberate practice, they must not rely on classes alone to achieve proficiency. Intentional self-directed study and informal learning are critical to getting sufficient practice in order to gain proficiency.

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Reframing the Undergraduate Major in Spanish in the Canadian Context: A Curriculum for the 21st Century

Cecilia Sessarego

Abstract

In the last decade, the need for change in undergraduate modern language programs in North America has gained some urgency, mainly in response to students' new educational goals and the advances in second language teaching arising out of sociolinguistic and second language acquisition (SLA) research. Many students want to acquire "translingual and transcultural skills" (Modern Languages Association [MLA] 2007) for the growing number of jobs of an applied nature that require these abilities, which traditional literary programs can only partly address. Additionally, research in sociolinguistics and SLA has clearly shown that the acquisition principles of the traditional model are limited. Both the structural view of language that still dominates instruction models and the separation of language and literary courses in undergraduate programs impede the implementation of an articulated development of the pragmatic language proficiency that learners need for career paths other than postgraduate studies in literature.

The purpose of this article is to propose some guidelines for an undergraduate curriculum that integrates the literary and applied language components. It is based on a sociosemantic view of language (Halliday 1978; Kramsch 1993b) and the cross-cultural perspective that maintains that different societies interact according to their own pragmatic norms. It draws from SLA research on pragmatic language ability (Kasper 2001; Kasper and Rose 2002), the learning of language and content (Cummins 1983; Doughty and Varela 1998; Papai 2000; Master 2000), and empirical studies on undergraduate Spanish majors' language proficiency in North America (Oxford 2008; Klee 2002, 2006). This article also briefly discusses the new Spanish major BA program at Mount Royal University, and the initiatives that are being carried out within this theoretical framework.

Introduction

For some time now in North America, the need for change in university modern language programs has been the subject of discussion in academic circles. Two decades ago, Byrnes (1991) and Kramsch (1993a) described a new paradigm for language learning and its curricular implications. They stressed that both the profiles of the student population and students' goals for learning an additional language had evolved, particularly with the advent of globalization and the increase in the number of jobs that require multilingual skills. Nowadays, university students want to enrol in programs that will help them build enriching and well-paid careers. Furthermore, positions requiring foreign language skills are most often of an applied nature. These goals are in contrast with the aims of programs pre-1970, when, for the most part, students studied languages mainly to read original versions of great works of literature. Current trends in second language pedagogy have also resulted in a rethinking of the traditional graduate studies literary model, and a re-evaluation of the academic objectives of a well-rounded education in the liberal arts tradition.

In the United States, the Modern Language Association's (MLA) "Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World" (MLA 2007) and the *Report to the Teagle Foundation on the Undergraduate Major in Language and Literature* (MLA 2009) discuss several significant changes to both the content and the structure of the undergraduate foreign language major and graduate studies curricula. The aim is to provide an updated vision to better address the needs of a new generation of students, and also to overcome the dichotomy

between the proponents of an instrumentalist view of language, who see language as an instrument for communication, and those who view canonical literature as an essential knowledge base for the development of a broad humanistic perspective. The MLA proposes a model of interdisciplinary specializations, whose objective is the development of students' translingual and transcultural competence. This outcome refers to the learners' ability to operate between languages and cultures in the 21st century.

In Europe, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (2001) has been a landmark tool for the design, evaluation and implementation of language programs. It sets clear standards to be attained at increasing levels of language proficiency and, since its inception, has been widely adopted by 46 European member states. Based on theoretical and empirical research into second/foreign language acquisition and pedagogy, it is considered to be an appropriate framework to meet the vision, needs and possibilities of European citizens for bi- and multilingual learning. The CEFR addresses not only linguistic competence, but also pragmatic and sociolinguistic competences, to be developed through a variety of cultural texts, including literary pieces.

In Canada, the CEFR has been used as a basis to develop a common framework of reference for languages (Vandergrift 2006) for the teaching of official languages across the country. In Alberta, the Ministry of Education has adopted it for the reform of second languages curricula in the K–12 system. Today, the CEFR principles are increasingly being used for the design and implementation of syllabi as well as for the creation of assessment instruments in elementary and secondary schools. Curricula in the school system are based on an integrated approach to the development of learners' linguistic, sociolinguistic and cross-cultural competences.

College and university programs in Canada have closely followed the American model with respect to their organizational structure and use of textbooks. A study carried out for Mount Royal College's New Degree Proposal, Part B: Bachelor of Arts Spanish (2007) found many similarities in American and Canadian course sequences and content. Additionally, most [language] textbooks used in Canadian universities are written by American professors and published in the United States.

Undergraduate programs typically consist of language courses that focus on the formal aspects of language in the first two years of study. Beginning in the third year, the emphasis shifts to canonical literature and some historical–cultural inclusions. Paesani and Allen (2012) stress the "long-standing and well-documented bifurcation in many FL programs … characterized by fixed lines of demarcation between lower-level language courses on one end and advanced literature and culture courses on the other." Faculty consists mainly of instructors who teach language in the first two years of the program and specialists in literature hired to teach their areas of expertise. The assumption is that, by the end of second year, students will possess the language skills necessary to engage in literary analysis. A variety of other senior content courses are included, such as translation, business Spanish and linguistics, but for the most part they are stand-alone courses that are not fully integrated with the mainly literary curriculum. The central goal of these undergraduate programs continues to be for students to gain an understanding of the cultures of Spain and Spanish America by studying their great literary works and being introduced to literary analysis. This focus is tied to the goals of most graduate studies programs in Spanish.

Recent articles on how to revamp modern language undergraduate programs have suggested a variety of streams for the program. For example, Doyle (2010) proposes a responsive, integrative Spanish curriculum that offers two tracks: literature/culture or applied language (translating, business Spanish or linguistics). Students in one stream can also take courses in the other, thereby achieving a more well-rounded preparation in a variety of fields. This division of streams, however, maintains current teaching approaches to literary and content courses, and both segments continue to function independently. For students to benefit from taking courses in both streams the two streams need somehow to be linked so that learners can navigate their program in a seamless manner. The dichotomy of approach between the applied language field and the literature-based one still needs to be addressed.

The purpose of this article is to propose some guidelines for an undergraduate curriculum that integrates the literary and applied language components. It is based on a sociosemantic view of

language (Halliday 1978; Kramsch 1993b) and on the crosscultural observation that different societies interact according to their own pragmatic norms. It draws from SLA research on pragmatic language ability (Kasper 2001; Kasper and Rose 2002) and the learning of language and content (Cummins 1983; Doughty and Varela 1998; Papai 2000; Master 2000), and empirical studies on undergraduate Spanish majors' language proficiency in North America (Oxford 2008; Klee 2002, 2006). This paper also briefly discusses the new Spanish major program at Mount Royal University and the curriculum work being done within this theoretical framework.

Language, Culture and Pragmatics

In the field of second language teaching, the conception of the nature of language has evolved in the last few decades from a structuralist view (Chomsky 1965) to a sociolinguistic perspective. The former presents language as a system of ordered rules. It studies syntax and semantics at an abstract level, as mentally represented knowledge, outside its context of use. The latter perspective, sociolinguistics, focuses on language in use, conceived as behavioural habits shared by a community of speakers. The use of grammar is therefore considered to be influenced by the interactional negotiation of meaning in discourse. Halliday (1978), for example, emphasizes a human being's innate need to communicate and suggests that the meaning-making process occurs within a sociocultural framework.

This social view of language has led to the adoption of "communicative competence" (Hymes 1972) as the guiding principle of language syllabi. Language is presented in real-life, authentic contexts, and learners are encouraged to learn how to participate socially in the target culture. In turn, the approach to teaching culture is very much tied to a sociolinguistic perspective—culture is addressed within the contemporary way of life of a society. Curricula of language courses are designed so that language is taught in an integrated fashion within its small-c cultural contexts in everyday life (Brooks 1971).

This paradigm shift in our understanding of the nature of language and culture in the field of language teaching has brought about an evolution in curriculum content. Language is explored in its social contexts and in some accessible literary pieces in the first two years of undergraduate programs. The intent is to integrate language development and cultural content knowledge to provide learners with meaningful experiences in the language.

New perspectives on grammar (Celce-Murcia 2007; Ellis 2006) are also finding their way into language courses. These conceptualizations move away from abstract linguistic models and stress the connections between grammar and pragmatic uses. Larsen-Freeman (2002) points out that grammatical knowledge consists of knowing when to use forms to convey meanings that fit our intentions in particular contexts. Pragmatic language use is the manifestation of language, communication and culture in interaction. It relies heavily on conventional, culturally appropriate and socially acceptable ways of interacting, and these appropriate ways result in regular and expected behaviours in language use.

Most important, pragmatic meaning is constructed through discourse, which can be either oral or written. A growing number of researchers in the field of second language pragmatics (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain 2000; Koike, Pearson and Witten 2003; Sessarego 2009) have adopted a discourse-analysis approach to exploring text. The focus is on the broader context of language use, using a top-down perspective, in contrast to the traditional approach of analyzing isolated sentences. The lexicon, syntax, organization, pragmatic purpose and perspective of the text are viewed as a whole. The discourse approach to language teaching is quite new, but it is increasingly being adopted in the production of pedagogical materials.

Unfortunately, the approach to language teaching taken by many professors of literary courses has, for the most part, remained unchanged. Language learning is still mainly regarded as the acquisition of a formal system of ordered rules that are expected to give students the necessary tools to read and understand original works of literature and other cultural texts. The assumption is that students learn language first (as a lesser but necessary step) and then take content courses in literature and culture.

The curricular goals of these courses consist of developing content knowledge and critical thinking

skills. There is also a perception among literary faculty that the growing importance of the conversational and instrumental uses of language and small-c culture is devaluing the deep cultural literacy that learners need to acquire. Their view of culture is that of big-C Culture; that is, great works of literature and civilization. Barnes-Karol (2010), in her defence of the role of literature in an undergraduate Spanish curriculum, posits that if students simply want to talk to native speakers, conversation will be superficial without an appreciation of the vast cultural texts out of which engaged communication arises.

The issue is not one of choosing between the conversational goal and the literary goal. The MLA report states that the language major should have as a specific outcome "educated speakers who have deep translingual and transcultural competence" (MLA 2009). There is no doubt that literature provides a means to an in-depth understanding of cultural narratives of a society and its specificities and world view. However, transcultural understanding is not achieved only through literature—cultural narratives are present in other types of expression such as journalism, mass media, music, advertising and so on. In terms of the translingual aspect, students need to acquire functional language ability in order to navigate a great variety of cultural contexts. One of the reasons for the push toward a conversational goal is that in the traditional model the focus is limited to reading and writing skills. Students' second language proficiency needs to be developed in the four skills, synchronically with insights into the target culture.

In anglophone and francophone North American educational contexts, it is assumed that undergraduate Spanish programs are aimed at nonnative speakers of the language. However, in the traditional model, the focus of third- and fourth-year courses, mainly literary ones, has been in specialty subject matter areas, with no attention given to language development.

An analysis of some of the latest research literature on second language acquisition (SLA) can provide some insights into the processes second language learners go through on their journey toward developing proficiency. If a Spanish major is to serve second language learners, second language acquisition must be considered one of the main components in the redesign of an undergraduate major.

Second Language Acquisition

Although most language practitioners have adopted a sociolinguistic perspective to teaching language, the amount of linguistic content in the curriculum of the first two years of an undergraduate program continues to be quite inflexible. The credit transfer system among universities does not allow much variability with respect to grammar items that must be covered in beginner and intermediate courses, and the latest editions of textbooks—although greatly improved in terms of cultural and communicative activities—perpetuate the list of grammar items. In his study, Cammarata (2009) points out that teachers found it a "struggle … to align content with the traditionally taught structures and functions …" There is a tug-of-war between the goals of teaching for communication and teaching the traditional content of grammatical structures. Instructors are expected to address both goals in the amount of time previously devoted to teaching only a finite number of linguistic rules per semester. As well, students are now confronted with the task of acquiring a great number of grammatical and lexical items in about two years of university courses at the same time as they are expected to have learned how to use them appropriately in a variety of social contexts.

This is a problem because the conception of the developmental processes that students go through to acquire an additional language has not evolved to any great extent in the profession. The notion that language is largely generated by a system of rules is still central to much of second language teaching in university courses. The belief remains that language learning consists of tightly sequenced experiences for the accumulation and automatization of grammatical elements.

A growing body of SLA research provides some understanding of how grammar, as well as language as a whole, is acquired. First, it has been clearly demonstrated that the order of acquisition does not match the order of instruction (Lee and Van Patten 1995). For example, the emergence of verb inflections, noun endings and even syntactic patterns does not necessarily match the order in which they are taught and practised. Bley-Vroman (1983) has

argued convincingly that the categories of a descriptive grammar, from which the items of a structural syllabus are derived, bear no relation to the mental categories that learners construct in the process of learning a language. Learners appear to construct their own rules, many of which are transitional and hence do not correspond to any of the rules found in a reference grammar of the target language. Some rules are syntactic; others are beliefs about the best communicative behaviours to use.

In the case of Spanish grammar, the acquisition of the subjunctive mood is problematic. Collentine (1995, 2003) claims that the subjunctive mood in Spanish is largely limited to subordinate clauses, and learners may not begin to develop knowledge of the subjunctive's meaning or mood-selection abilities until they have reached the syntactic stage of processing (cf Swain 1985). Mood selection is dictated by pragmatics and discourse requirements. Using the subjunctive like a native speaker requires that the interface between the syntactic and discourse-pragmatic module be intact. In Montrul's (2000) view, the syntax and discourse-pragmatic interfaces are the most "vulnerable" in L2 acquisition.

Nevertheless, a large portion of teaching time is devoted to the present subjunctive in second-semester beginner courses, and it constitutes a major component of second-year Spanish syllabi as well. Students are expected to accurately produce several tenses of the subjunctive mood, even though they have not reached the stage of acquisition when these can be internalized or used appropriately for specific pragmatic purposes. This is the case with several other grammar items, such as the prepositions *por* and *para*. It is questionable, therefore, whether the time spent teaching an extensive list of complex descriptive grammar items in the first two years of undergraduate study is an effective pedagogical practice.

As for the acquisition of content, it is closely connected to the acquisition of linguistic items. Cummins's (1983) distinction between basic interactional communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) highlights the relationship between language and content learning. Cummins posits that L2 students learn basic oral communication skills and also need to develop cognitive academic language proficiency to be able to express sophisticated content and

structure. It is a two-way process, whereby a focus on linguistic structure helps the learning of content, and content facilitates the acquisition of more complex structures of language. In a similar way, literary content can be taught in a way that facilitates the acquisition of more complex structures of language.

In order for complex structures to be acquired, however, *exposure to content alone is not sufficient* (my emphasis). Researchers such as Doughty and Varela (1998) and Papai (2000) point out that attention to form is essential in the process of content acquisition, since the greater the meaning component, the greater the complexity of language. There should not be an expectation that the incidental learning of grammatical structures in intermediate and/or advanced levels will directly result in a greater degree of comprehension and expression of the content studied (Master 2000). Learners need to discover and acquire the appropriate syntactic and pragmatic discourse interfaces in order to achieve higher levels of language proficiency. Kasper and Rose (2002) suggest that in their development of L2 pragmatics and grammar, adult learners face different learning tasks at different developmental stages. At a beginner's stage, they use pragmatic universals from their first language and make do with the limited grammar they have; they also learn how to accomplish some actions in L2. As learners progress, they need to figure out the various pragmatic, often secondary, meanings that grammatical forms can have beyond their primary meanings. (pp 189–90).

Finally, several studies carried out at American universities on Spanish undergraduate programs that are similar to those in Canada provide food for thought regarding the level of language acquisition attained by graduates of traditional programs. For example, Oxford (2008) points out that before the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee revamped its program, 25 per cent of Spanish majors were not achieving ACTFL's Intermediate High level in oral and written activities (the level required in oral proficiency for teacher-licensure in world languages in Wisconsin), nor, clearly, the Advanced Low level (required for bilingual education.) According to Klee (2006), University of Minnesota research has shown that most foreign language learners attain only a level of 2+ on the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) scale by the time they graduate. She states that "language learning is a lengthy process that does not

end in the second year of lower division instruction. Rather, it must be part of all the courses taught in language departments, whether in first- or second-year or in the culminating courses for majors" (Klee 2002, 249).

Clearly, teaching a nearly exhaustive set of grammar structures in the first two years of undergraduate study does not allow students to arrive at a true understanding of complex structures, let alone explore their related pragmatic uses and cultural contexts. The result is that when second language learners move into upper-level content courses, they realize they do not have the necessary preparation to tackle the mainly literary texts intended for native speakers.

To sum up, three areas of research point to the need for a major review of the traditional Spanish undergraduate program. First, a pragmatic perspective of language highlights the importance of teaching grammar connected to its use in the negotiation of meaning in context. Second, SLA insights into learning processes clearly show that (a) language structures are not acquired in the sequential order of categories in descriptive grammars and (b) language and content learning develop synchronically. Third, empirical evidence from studies on majors' second language proficiency at graduation confirms the need to pay much greater attention to students' language development. Language proficiency must be addressed in a coherent and efficient way throughout the four years of study. The process involves creating adequate teaching materials and assessment measures, and specifying the minimum level of language proficiency required on exiting the program.

Some Principles and Recommendations for a Curriculum Framework of the Undergraduate Spanish Program in the Canadian Context

Two guiding principles underlie this proposal for a revamped curriculum for a Spanish major. The first is that language teaching should be based on a sociosemantic view of language that is focused on oral and written discourse. The second is that second language acquisition should have a role in upper-level content classes. This integrative approach to language, content and process is better aligned with the new goals of developing translingual and transcultural competence as stated in the MLA reports. It also adheres to the philosophy of the CEFR, which advocates the development of linguistic and sociolinguistic competences through cultural texts. The purpose is to provide second language learners with the skills necessary to operate in two languages and in two cultures beyond the walls of traditional academia. Its horizons are wider, because it addresses the needs of students interested in applying their language and cross-cultural skills in a great variety of jobs and fields. The following section puts forward four recommendations to reframe the undergraduate curriculum.

1. Adopt a sociosemantic view of language

A sociosemantic approach provides a whole new dimension to the teaching of language, communication and culture. Learners can be made aware of the form–function–context mappings they need to make in expressing their intentions when dealing with all kinds of texts, oral or written, including literary ones. The focus of instruction is no longer isolated sentences that reflect grammatical structures, even if the sentences refer in general terms to a certain topic. The unit of analysis is discourse, where meaning is created by the interaction of language, sociocultural context and purpose.

Learners need to become aware and participate in communicative events where semantic meaning leads to a variety of diverse interpretive effects depending on speakers/listeners or writers/readers' intentions and context. Pragmatic misunderstanding is more serious than any lexical or grammatical mistake a student might make, since it affects the whole discourse and can have a negative impact on interlocutors. According to Bardovi-Harlig (2001) and Kasper (2001), empirical evidence seems to indicate that learners need to *notice* pragmatic factors before they can begin to improve their competence. They discuss a number of studies where research demonstrated that explicit metapragmatic teaching was advantageous for learners, and they suggest raising learners' awareness of the pragmalinguistic demands of situations. For example, if students are presented with a conceptual framework based on rules to be memorized, they are incapable of

choosing the appropriate structures to fulfill functions in discourse. When the prepositions *por* and *para* are taught in contrast as equivalent to *for* in English, students are told that if *por* is not appropriate, they should use *para*. This explanation is invalid in many cases. A very common inaccurate use of *por* occurs when learners transfer *verb+for* in English in situations when Spanish uses no preposition, such as *pagar*, *pedir* or *esperar*. On evaluative tests, students apply the rules they have used to fill in blanks, but they do not learn how to use the words for real, pragmatic purposes in context. A more effective approach to teaching a great number of meanings of *por* and *para*, also supported by SLA research (Pinto and Rex 2006), would be to address a few usages, with their distinct functions and appropriate contexts, at appropriate points in the learners' years of study as they progress in their language ability.

2. Integrate the teaching of language and content in upper-level courses

In the upper-level courses of the major, there is a risk of assuming that the student need only develop the intellectual knowledge of the content, as in history or social studies, because it is taken for granted that students have the linguistic competence to assimilate the knowledge and to express it in the L2. The professor is not expected to work on language because he or she assumes that it has been learned in the first two years of undergraduate study. Realistically, it is impossible for students to acquire this kind of communicative competence in two years of classroom studies. SLA research clearly indicates that the complexities of a language and content are learned synchronically and not diachronically. Upper-level literary and other content courses deal with materials for native speakers without offering sufficient language support for second language learners to develop their language proficiency.

An integrated approach would involve upper-division professors developing "language awareness—that is, focusing on the connections between language and meaning and providing students with the language tools they need to express ideas clearly and precisely and to build convincing discourse pieces. Researchers, such as Papai (2000), also support the view that the meaning component that creates communicative pressure requires a greater attention to form.

The integration of language and content learning can be achieved if language teaching specialists and literary/content course professors collaborate in the design of the whole program. Traditionally, modern language departments have hired specialists in literature. But lately, some full-time positions have been filled with faculty specialized in applied linguistics because such departments have come to realize the key role of applied linguistics in the evolution of their programs. Specialists in applied linguistics can scaffold the development of pragmatic discourse ability with a variety of texts and work with content specialists of upper-level courses to build learners' proficiency in addressing the topics at hand. Some content courses can include the teaching of specific discourse tools that students can then apply in other courses. Each professor should be aware of how the language focus of his/her course builds second language skills within the overall program. This approach requires third- and fourth-year content course professors to address and evaluate form–function relationships in their texts. The focus on form is not that of the traditional grammar class, but of helping learners acquire complex language in discourse, which will not only push learners to a higher level of proficiency but will also promote a deeper engagement with the topics of courses. The success of this approach depends on conscious, ongoing collaboration among faculty members to address the language issues involved in content courses.

The aim is to motivate L2 students to produce discourse that is appropriate for intellectually challenging texts as well as to keep the academic expectation high, as in other content courses in the L1. Stoller and Grabe (1997) suggest careful planning of content classes whereby texts, topic, threads, tasks, and transitions between activities and units contribute to a coherence in which both content and the L2 are an active part of teaching and learning. Curricula of content classes should, therefore, consider students' language development to be as fundamental as content goals. In the new major at the University of Wisconsin (Oxford 2008), the statement of learner outcomes and curricular objectives for upper-level content classes reads "Both the oral and written components of the research conducted by the student will be evaluated and rated in the areas of language acquisition/usage as well as research ability/synthesis" (p 157).

3. Open up the "cultural" field to other manifestations besides literature and to other projects besides the essay

Undergraduate students taking Spanish majors in the 21st century intend to use their skills for a wide variety of purposes. Some are interested in participating in international development projects, environmental and human rights issues, business, and many other fields in our globalized and interconnected world. Translation and interpretation have become fields in their own right in response to the ever-increasing specialized needs of all sectors of society. The field of teaching Spanish as an additional language has also changed, with a focus on developing learners' communicative and cultural competences. Thus, the major in Spanish program needs to broaden its horizons to address these new goals. Preparing students to do graduate work in literature and pursue careers in academia is only one of students' possible areas of interest.

Instead of relying solely on the written essay, other forms of demonstrating higher thinking skills and cultural understanding can be explored in class. Pragmatic discourse ability should be developed in a variety of text genres, not only in the traditional format. Digital projects or presentations on particular current topics of significance are one example. Community projects such as those produced in the outside world can also provide learners with the experience of applying their critical thinking and writing skills to activities they will need to be ready to enter the workforce. The key is to hold the work to the same high standards of intellectual quality as the formal essay. Students must demonstrate that they have explored the subject critically and that they can express their arguments correctly. The same rigour of research and originality used for the evaluation of literary essays must be expected of students who complete these projects.

As for building transcultural skills, learners can study literary works in order to make connections and comparisons with contemporary issues. Learners can better develop cultural understanding of both the literature and current events by building bridges between them. Universal themes can be explored, not only within the confines of a particular time and literary genre but also in their recurrent manifestations in the 21st century. Students can become more aware that the skills acquired when reading and interpreting literature can be useful in a variety of contexts.

Etienne and Vanbaelen (2006) provide an example of a culturally loaded field that can be explored. They point out that advertising reflects a culture's imagination and dreams; in many cases it does not follow syntactic, phonetic, semantic and morphological norms; it often refers directly to legends, nursery rhymes, poems, paintings, music and famous characters. Commercials adopt a variety of tones and perspectives, which, explored by the students, can help them understand deeply ingrained cultural threads in popular culture.

Students need to learn to communicate in a multitude of situations and tasks, written or oral, and the classroom can provide strategies for successfully doing so. Such an approach will require students to demonstrate a high degree of knowledge, preparation and adaptability. Students can be presented with examples of and guidance about tasks in the real world and taught how to react to communication problems. Although learning to write a literary essay gives students an excellent means of analyzing topics effectively, it is limited to one genre of discourse. Learners need to familiarize themselves with other types of cultural encounters and other genres of texts.

4. Provide students with an articulated program

The success of a program is highly dependent on students having a structured experience. The *MLA Report to the Teagle Foundation on the Undergraduate Major in Language and Literature* (MLA 2009) states this purpose very precisely:

> The curriculum of a major should present an integrated, progressive course of study with articulated goals for each course. Students should be able to enrol in courses that offer a clear sense of sequence, that move from less to more complex analytic projects, and that build on the knowledge and skill they have already acquired. They should be aware of the goals of each course and the aims of the major … Steady progress toward advanced proficiency of the language of the major is a primary objective.

In the traditional university model, both the incorrect use of the phrase *academic freedom* and the past literary formation of some professors have sometimes given rise to a situation in which each professor works in isolation, jealously guarding the

prerogative to "own" his or her area of specialization. The knowledge and experience of language specialists are generally not considered important when decisions are made about course offerings. Professors need to work together to define outcomes for individual courses and for the program as a whole.

For the program to be successful, the articulation must be sustained by guiding principles that give professors a common sense of purpose. This article discusses two aspects that can drive course design and the adjustments to existing curriculum. First, language should be addressed in its pragmatic dimension, to help learners operate in the target culture in a variety of contexts. Second, course and program outcomes should be conceived considering the language–content developmental synergy, which will facilitate learners' acquisition of both complex language and content. Many other strands will need to be interwoven to redesign undergraduate Spanish programs for the new goals of the 21st century. Valuable components of the traditional model will remain but will need to be refocused so that they are not isolated pegs in the new framework. Outcomes of first- and second-year language courses will also need to provide the transitions to upper-level classes.

The Bachelor's Degree in Spanish at Mount Royal University, Calgary

Mount Royal University (MRU) rolled out its first Bachelor of Arts, Spanish major program in the fall of 2008. The program was built on the two-year university transfer program that Mount Royal College had offered for many years. This college program evolved over time, resulting in well-articulated beginner- and intermediate-level curricula that focused on developing learners' linguistic and cultural competences.

From the beginning, faculty agreed that MRU's Spanish major program should be comparable to other undergraduate programs across Canada, but should, at the same time, place greater emphasis on the interests and goals of the students. Consultation with members of the community, including focus groups, confirmed the need to address a variety of students' interests and not make the preparation of

students to do postgraduate work in literature the only goal. With this in mind, three broad areas of subspecialization were identified: (a) Hispanic literatures and cultures, (b) the teaching of Spanish as a second language and (c) translation/business Spanish. Full-time faculty members included two specialists in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics, and one faculty member with a specialization in peninsular literature. A new position to address Spanish American literature and culture was filled soon after.

The next step was to articulate a teaching philosophy for the program, so that professors would have a common sense of purpose. Writing a list of content courses, based on professors' individual specializations, was not enough to create a sound program. It was clear from the start that the Spanish major had to serve second language learners—to help them acquire the skills to function in a variety of Spanish-speaking contexts. A key component of the program had to be the development of language proficiency and crosscultural skills throughout the four years of study. To map the stages of development, the framework drew from the ACTFL proficiency guidelines (ACTFL 2012) and the CEFR, making second language proficiency outcomes an integral part of all course syllabi. The objective was to articulate courses horizontally at each level of proficiency—beginner, intermediate, high-intermediate and advanced, and also vertically, creating a sequence that could support students' learning at each stage. These proficiency levels are inspired by ACTFL's proficiency descriptors but have been broadly defined for the logistic implementation of the program; therefore, the terminology does not exactly match the ranges described by ACTFL guidelines for intermediate and advanced levels.

The implementation of a new program is, of course, the hardest part; it is what really matters, and what will define its success. With that in mind, full-time faculty review the outcomes of first- and second-year courses on an ongoing basis and have meetings with part-time instructors in order to make adjustments and create successful transitions to third-year courses regarding difficulty of language and content. Course development of third- and fourth-year courses started in 2009 and continues. The first fourth-year courses were offered during the 2011/12 academic year. Implementing the guiding principles into actual learning

tasks is a complex process, no less difficult when considering students' actual performance of the coursework. A sociosemantic approach to language, which focuses on discourse and pragmatic purpose, is slowly being incorporated into course design and activities. There are some initiatives in which professors of content and literature courses work with full-time language specialists to make sure that when courses are taught and students assessed, the stage of second language ability is taken into consideration. In fact, having these courses well articulated in a program of study can result in more students becoming interested in a variety of content areas and literature. Faculty explore how the teaching of their subject matter can advance language skills in tandem with high-order thinking skills and a deep understanding of cultures and literature. Since it is a small program, full-time professors also teach beginner and intermediate courses and can see for themselves how students develop their skills.

Starting in the winter 2011, new courses were introduced into the program, including two levels of translation, teaching Spanish as a second language, business Spanish and Spanish in contact with other languages. These courses have been designed following the guiding principles outlined above. In addition, professors are including other types of projects besides essays as a way of familiarizing students with tasks that they will be required to do when they enter the workforce. Discussion and planning are continuous, as professors make adjustments to their content and teaching approach to facilitate learning.

Curriculum design, careful implementation and assessment are central to the success of a program. Some professors are working on action research projects that are investigating classroom teaching and learning to increase their understanding of learning processes and to examine the effectiveness of assessment practices. The Spanish major builds on the insights gained from discussions among faculty about instruction that meets the best interests of the students and desired outcomes, rather than on retaining the status quo of faculty's desires and research interests.

Conclusion

Spanish undergraduate programs in North America have evolved considerably since they were established. First, the educational goals have changed, because growing numbers of undergraduate students who undertake a Spanish major are increasingly interested in applying their language and cross-cultural skills to a large variety of jobs and fields. These new interests are a great opportunity for undergraduate Spanish majors to broaden their horizons and grow. The number of students who choose to pursue the traditional academic literary route is decreasing, which has led to many universities cancelling their Spanish programs. Language programs are therefore required to be more inclusive in terms of student enrolment as well as course content.

Second, the adoption of a sociosemantic view of language, focused on the development of pragmatic language skills in a variety of oral and written texts, provides a broader comprehensive dimension beyond the merely linguistic and literary model of the status quo. This approach is aligned with the new goals of the undergraduate major—that is, developing translingual *and* transcultural competence "to *operate* between languages and cultures."

Third, whereas traditional undergraduate and graduate programs were mainly populated by heritage language and native speakers, today's Spanish major is designed for North American students who have little or no previous knowledge of the language, especially Canadian students, who have less contact with Latino culture than their peers in the United States. These students are eager to learn both the language and the culture. A successful program must consider the needs of these students, who are true second language learners. It should address their language acquisition development from the initial to the higher levels of language proficiency. The needs of students with a Hispanic background and varied literacy levels should also be taken into account. SLA research can inform curriculum decision making in terms of the synergies of content knowledge and language learning. The traditional model, whereby students are expected to have learned language before they enrol in senior-level courses, is too restrictive in today's world.

This article has attempted to bring to the surface some of the issues in the redesign of the undergraduate Spanish major curriculum to meet the new challenges of the 21st century. Four suggestions were made as to areas that require attention.

Language departments can collaboratively agree on the synergies between language and literary/cultural content, as well as on assessment paradigms.

Undergraduate programs vary across Canada, as do the profiles of students who major in Spanish. It is up to each Spanish department to explore the career goals of its prospective students and design a program that takes into account the new purposes. An updated vision for modern language programs is long overdue. In Alberta, universities should take action by discussing common curriculum issues and agreeing on research directions that can be beneficial to the evolution of their programs.

The bachelor of arts program in Spanish at Mount Royal University is timely and responsive to the new goals of students who pursue Spanish studies for the present and future global village. The program has benefited from the fact that it was conceived as a completely new program that drew from the latest developments in the profession and considered the shortcomings of long-existing programs at other universities. We have seen our first cohort of Spanish major students progress through their four years of study and graduate in June 2012. There is still a great deal of work to be done, but we are confident that a language department with a common sense of purpose and a collaborative approach among professionals in the various fields of expertise will result in a richer and more meaningful learning experience for our students.

Acknowledgements

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Foreign Language Learning on Mobile Devices: Implications for Alberta's Teachers

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Abstract

Reflective of the integration and use of information technology (IT) in the 21st-century classroom, Alberta's second language curricula emphasize the development of communicative tasks using different information and communication technologies. In educational circles, IT is considered to support learning; however, research from IT can offer not only applications and tools, but also insights about learning. Within the IT industry, the learning potential of IT is known as edutainment; *research in this area can inform second language (SL) teachers about student motivation and lesson planning. This article provides a brief history of the concept of edutainment, a review of literature related to edutainment and the use of IT or multimedia in second language education, results of a second language study using mobile technology, and implications for SL teachers in Alberta.*

Introduction

Reflective of the integration and use of information technology (IT) in the 21st-century classroom, Alberta's French as a second language curriculum states that "students will engage in various language activities, based on the context, the communicative task and the different information and communication technologies available" (Alberta Learning 2004, 13). Similar statements are found in the programs of studies for all international languages in the province. In educational circles, IT is seen "to serve the learning process" (Al-Fadhli 2011, 157); however, research from IT can offer not only applications and tools, but also insights about learning. Within the IT industry, the learning potential of IT is known as *edutainment*; research in this area can inform second language (SL) teachers

about student motivation and lesson planning. This paper provides a brief history of the concept of edutainment, a review of literature related to edutainment and use of IT or multimedia in second language education, results of a second language study using technology and implications for SL teachers in Alberta.

Edutainment

Though many compete to claim first use of the term edutainment (White 2003), the history of the word dates back to World War II (Van Riper 2011), when it was used to describe educationally oriented media programming in film (eg, documentaries by National Geographic), television (eg, Walt Disney family movies), radio (eg, CBC and BBC broadcasting), museums (eg, science centres) and computer games (eg, learning about subject content, historical events or concepts, and learning a skill while playing).[1] Edutainment, as the name suggests, emphasizes learning alongside "fun," or entertainment. This paper draws from research on the effect—sustained pleasure, or fun, in computer games.

Game developers have employed multiple techniques to entice people not only to play a game but to continue to play it for an extended period of time. So effective have these developmental strategies been that excessive game play/game addiction (Ivanov 2005) has led gamers to neglect their own personal well-being. What is the power in carefully designed programs, and could this knowledge provide educators with insight into positive ways

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1 The term *edutainment* is now in worldwide use; for example, see www.facebook.com/EdutainmentAfrica/info.

to increase learner motivation and engagement?

Leaders in designing for the aesthetic or affective components of games are Malone (1980), LeBlanc (LeBlanc 2004a, 2004b; Hunicke, LeBlanc and Zubek 2008) and Lazzaro (2011). LeBlanc and Lazzaro are trained in academic skills but do not practise research in the academic community. Rather, they collaborate with others and make their approaches available online through oral and written interviews and short magazine-style articles on websites. All consider game playing to be entertainment for players and consider their successes to be associated with what they call the entertainment factor (EF), or "fun." As early as 1980, Malone identified three heuristics of games: challenge, fantasy and curiosity. LeBlanc's taxonomy of game pleasures expands this to "eight kinds of fun" to maximize and sustain user interest (Hunicke, LeBlanc and Zubek 2008), summarized in Table 1. The taxonomy explains how a game like Charades is designed to develop fellowship, expression, and challenge, while games like Quake are designed to develop sensation, challenge (competition) and fantasy.

Nicole Lazzaro, founder and CEO of XEO, a major game development company, describes four types of fun: (1) The *hard fun* of challenge and mastery; (2) the *easy fun* of exploration, role play, and storytelling; (3) the *serious fun* that emerges from feelings such as frustration or relief associated with experiencing real-world issues and contexts (eg, firefighter simulations or eco games); and (4) *people fun* that renders amusement, laughter, social mechanics and bonding while playing. Lazzaro (2010) claims that the most successful games on the market, such as World of Warcraft, The Simms and Myst, have at least three of these four factors. Although educators avoid terms like *fun*, "learning something worthwhile should always be at least a little bit fun" (Jack 2010). The IT industry fully acknowledges the fun, or entertainment factor (EF), and has taken the lead on discerning types of fun or engagement:

A critical consideration in the development of any video game, serious or otherwise, is whether the finished game is fun, or at the very least, compelling. This factor is what makes a serious game a game rather than a simulation or an interactive lesson. It is the "fun" factor that

Table 1: LeBlanc's Taxonomy of Game Pleasures

Type of Fun	Also Known As	Purpose
Sensation	Game as sense-pleasure	Anything involving the joy of experiencing with the senses
Fantasy	Game as make-believe	The pleasure of imaginary worlds, and imagining yourself as part of it
Narrative	Game as unfolding story	The pleasure of experiencing the unfolding of events
Challenge	Game as obstacle course	The pleasure of solving problems in a game
Fellowship	Game as social framework	Developing friendship, cooperation, community
Discovery	Game as uncharted territory	Seeking and finding something new
Expression	Game as soap box	Expressing yourself and creating things (games that let you design characters, etc)
Submission	Game as mindless pastime	Allowing yourself to be swept up in the rules and experiences of the game.

distinguishes serious games from other pedagogical approaches in that the learner is compelled to learn not necessarily due to the subject matter's intrinsic appeal, but rather due to the entertainment value of the gaming activity with which the subject matter is associated. The player of a serious game is motivated to play the game, and in so doing continues the lesson, much longer and with greater attention than he or she would using traditional learning techniques. (Adamo-Vilani et al 2012)

Multimedia in Second Language Education

Approaches to second language education have evolved concurrently with technological development. For example, the audiolingual method (ALM) used for SL training in military operations in World War II relied on a certain level of audio recording and had a significant impact on SL learning for decades following the war (Stern 1983). At the same time that ALM was being critiqued (Rivers 1964), personalized computer applications for language learning were being tested in emerging fields such as computer-assisted language instruction (CALI), computer-assisted instruction (CAI) and computer-mediated communication (CMC). The term now most widely accepted in the field is *computer-assisted language learning* (CALL).

During the last half of the 20th century, CALL evolved from a behaviouristic and structural orientation to language (that focuses on pronunciation and lexical and grammar practice) to a communicative one (Warschauer and Healey 1998); in the last two decades, integrative CALL has explored applications of multimedia and Internet in language learning (Warschauer and Healey 1998; Bax 2003). Synchronous interaction has expanded learners' ability to communicate worldwide and discuss matters of personal relevance. Since the 1980s, continued innovation of new technology such as mobile phones, MP3 players, tablet PCs and tablet computers (such as iPads) have led to explorations of mobile assisted language learning (MALL) (Shield and Kukulska-Hulme 2008). As inexpensive applications for lightweight portable touch-screen devices became available, various forms of fun or engagement for FL learning have emerged. For

example, the Japanese application Hiragana helps learners practise hiragana characters to an audio beat along with visuals of words containing the character. The three levels in this scaffolded application allow users to progress or venture between levels as desired. The time to completion of each part of each level is also posted for learners who wish to monitor and compete with themselves.

In education, the concept most closely related to the EF of the IT computer game design world is *engagement*: "students' willingness, need, desire and compulsion to participate in, and be successful in, the learning process promoting higher level thinking for enduring understanding" (Bomia et al 1997, 297) McLaughlin (2005) further distinguishes learners' cognitive engagement as *procedural* (following the rules) or *substantive* (following the rules and being able to apply them within new contexts). For example, a learner who attends to the rules or patterns for conjugation is procedurally engaged, while one who not only attends to the rules but can also apply them to new verbs is substantively engaged. Sociocultural theories tend to also emphasize cognitive engagement, although the acknowledgement of the role of relationship and identity building in the learning process implies attention to affect. However, even in task-based language teaching (TBLT), the most recent approach to SL learning, the affective dimension of learning is not made explicit:

> Learning is no longer seen simply as a process of habit formation. Learners and the cognitive processes they engage in as they learn are seen as fundamentally important to the learning process. Additionally, in recent years, learning as a social process is increasingly emphasized, and sociocultural theories are beginning to be drawn on, in addition to (or in preference to) cognitive theories. (Nunan 2004, 6–7)

Hence, this paper may be of value to contemporary SL educators interested in engagement and motivation or who may wonder how their students might become as motivated to learn a SL as they are to play videogames.

Second Language Study

This section of the article reports on an exploration of the edutainment potential of using handheld devices (for example, iPhones) for learning a foreign language (FL). The term FL assumes that

the target learner has minimal to no contact with the new language outside of the classroom. Although this project created and tested an English FL program, the factors considered are closely related to teaching the many languages taught in Alberta in an FL milieu. Research funding was provided to the Department of Secondary Education and the Department of Computing Science (CS) at the University of Alberta for this collaborative project, and the study took place at the University of Alberta where all phases were approved by the university's research ethics board.

The study had two phases: (1) developing a pilot program and software and (2) user testing. The education team drew upon the EF literature to develop and create content while the CS team was primarily responsible for technical implementation, programming and software development. The target audience for the language program included English learners ranging from 10 to 14 years of age in FL milieus at the beginner level, or A1 in the Council of Europe's Framework of Reference (Council of Europe 2001). In addition, the study contemplated a global audience, so cultural norms, subjectivity and references needed to be carefully considered before creating any content within the program. Since results of the software development have been reported elsewhere (Cheng et al 2012), this article deals with the educational components of the project and suggests implications that may be useful to teachers of all second languages in Alberta.

Methodology and Findings

This mixed-methods study (Cresswell 2009) drew upon detailed notes, meeting minutes, written correspondence between team members, observations of users, timed information about users and focus group feedback from users (see Appendix A). "[T]he use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone." (Cresswell and Plano Clark 2007, 6) The education team was involved in two phases of the project reported here. The steps of development may be of interest to teachers wishing to expand on factors they consider when planning lessons and units for SL students. Results of the user study are presented in phase two, with an emphasis on the

qualitative data. The final section of this article will discuss implications for language teachers in Alberta.

Phase One: Program Design and Development

Developing computer games is a multimillion-dollar business. Presented with only a tiny fraction of these multimillions, the education team faced considerable constraints in the development of the SL game: only drag-and-drop and multiple-choice questions could be included; there were no graphic designers; no audio could be included (limiting the sensation potential); the screen size restricted the use of EFs such as fantasy, narrative, expression and submission. Therefore, design and strategies focused on discovery, challenge and, potentially, fellowship or people fun during game play.

Considering Discovery When Designing

In light of the many constraints facing development, the education team considered the following discovery strategies to motivate users: choice, familiar contexts and content, graphics, and game mechanics.

Within the basic architecture of the content and game play, user choice was maximized. After opening and logging into the game, the user selects from a set of questions on an introductory screen. The user touches whichever theme is desired, and the screen shifts to a level selector for that theme; for example, users could pick the theme "School" (Figure 1a), which brings them to a level section for the theme "School" (Figure 1b). The user then touches the level of play desired; however, when the user first starts the game, only level 1 is unlocked. Once the desired level is selected, the first question of that level appears (Figure 1c).

Only one set was developed and tested; however, in a complete program, the number of sets is limited only by the depth and breadth of content desired. Each set consisted of four different topics or themes. Figure 2 summarizes the basic architecture of the set developed as well as its progression.

The four themes—school, numbers, home and body parts—were developed for the experimental set because they are familiar content for beginners and are also related to the applications and experiences in Alberta's program of studies. Although we developed content for English learners only, the

Figure 1: Basic program architecture, design, and mechanics of game play

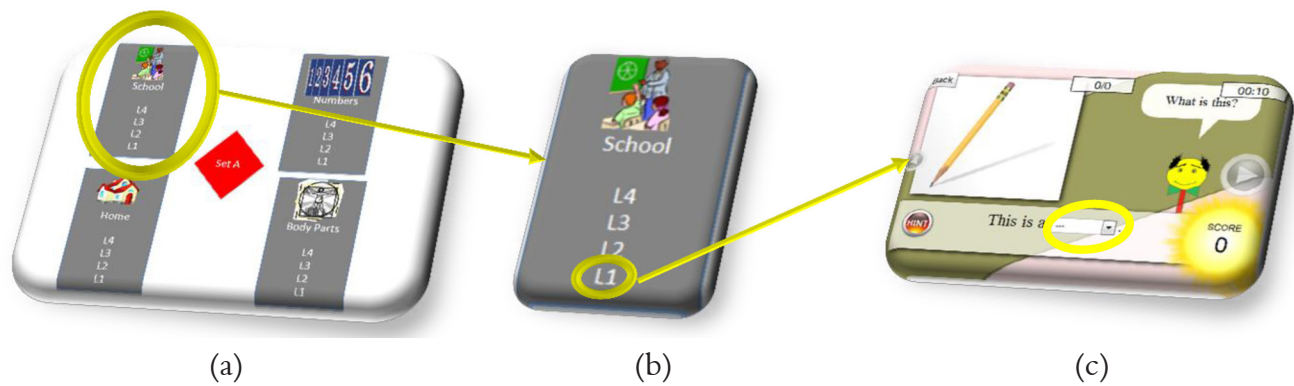(a)   (b)   (c)
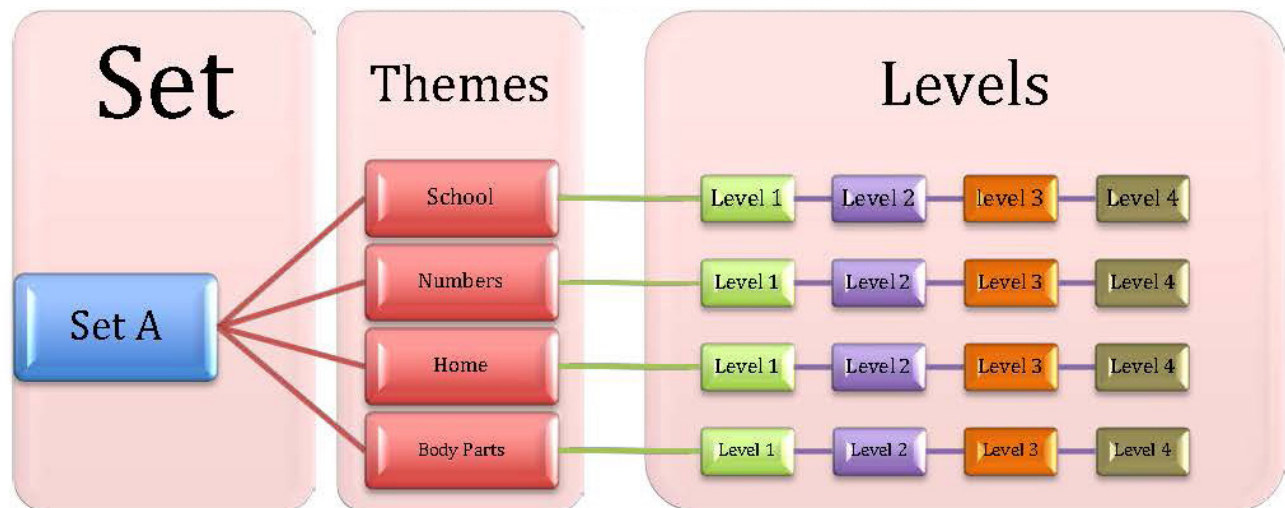
Figure 2: Basic architecture of game: set, themes and levels

basic architecture was modelled for use in learning any second language in a nonimmersion milieu (eg, like learners of English in Japan or learners of French, Italian, Japanese, Spanish or Ukrainian in western Canada; not like learners of English in western Canada).

In the absence of a graphics budget and being constrained by copyright on graphics from the Internet, one team member (Victor Wong) developed a series of characters to be appealing and interesting to a junior high audience (see Appendix B). Lengthy conversations took place among the multilingual, multiracial team about the appearance of the characters, including their colour, general shape,

hair style, eye shape, facial features, anatomical proportions, gender, apparent age and relative relationship status to other characters. The education team also agreed to observe and inquire about character appeal during the user testing phase.

In addition to the basic content organization described above, other game mechanics were considered in order to create a motivating environment that would entice users to continue playing the game while learning/improving their English proficiency. With no instructions being offered, the game mechanics built in the EF of discovery. The game included a timer, point scales, the use of bonus questions, visual confirmations for correct answers,

hints (when hints were used, however, only 70 per cent of points were awarded) and, as discussed, the graphical characters. Figure 3 illustrates some of these game mechanics.

Considering Challenge When Designing.

In addition to the EF of discovery features described above, the education team integrated a number of features to build the EF of challenge: difficulty levels, item types, content levels and user interface.

Four difficulty levels were developed for each theme; each one built upon the previous level—not only within a single theme, but across all four themes of the set (see Figure 4 for details of the progressions). The 10 questions in each level of the theme always offered 10 points for a correct answer without assistance and 7 points for a correct answer with a request for a prompt. At the end of the level for each theme a bonus question worth 10 points was provided. Users were required to earn 80 points to go to the bonus question and exit a theme. This meant that they had to earn a correct response without assistance for at least one question. This sequencing of learning and playing the lower levels

first before continuing to more challenging levels was designed to encourage the user to experience success at every step and to want to continue playing the game (and learning or engaging with English). It also allowed the vocabulary presented in all themes of level 1 to be used in all themes of level 2, and so forth, thus providing strong reinforcement and application for the user. Such repetition that takes place on a regular basis is known as *distributed practice* (Underwood 1961): "distributed practice and increased student involvement can considerably expand the amount of remembered material" (Sildus 2006, 67). Without this scaffolding, a beginner SL learner game player could easily become frustrated, which in turn might lead him or her to abandon the game altogether or to a diminished learning experience. Attention to repetition and scaffolding might help users experience Lazzaro's "easy fun."

Each item type was organized, arranged and developed sequentially so that users would develop prerequisite skills and knowledge to be successful throughout the game. Strategies to increase engagement or EF included difficulty level (as de-

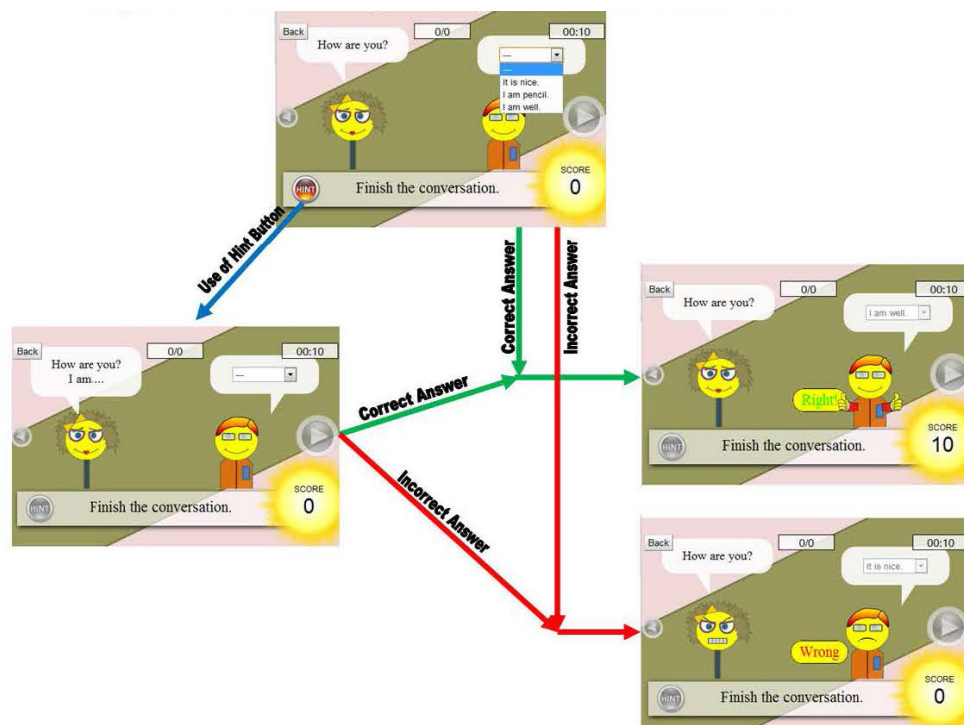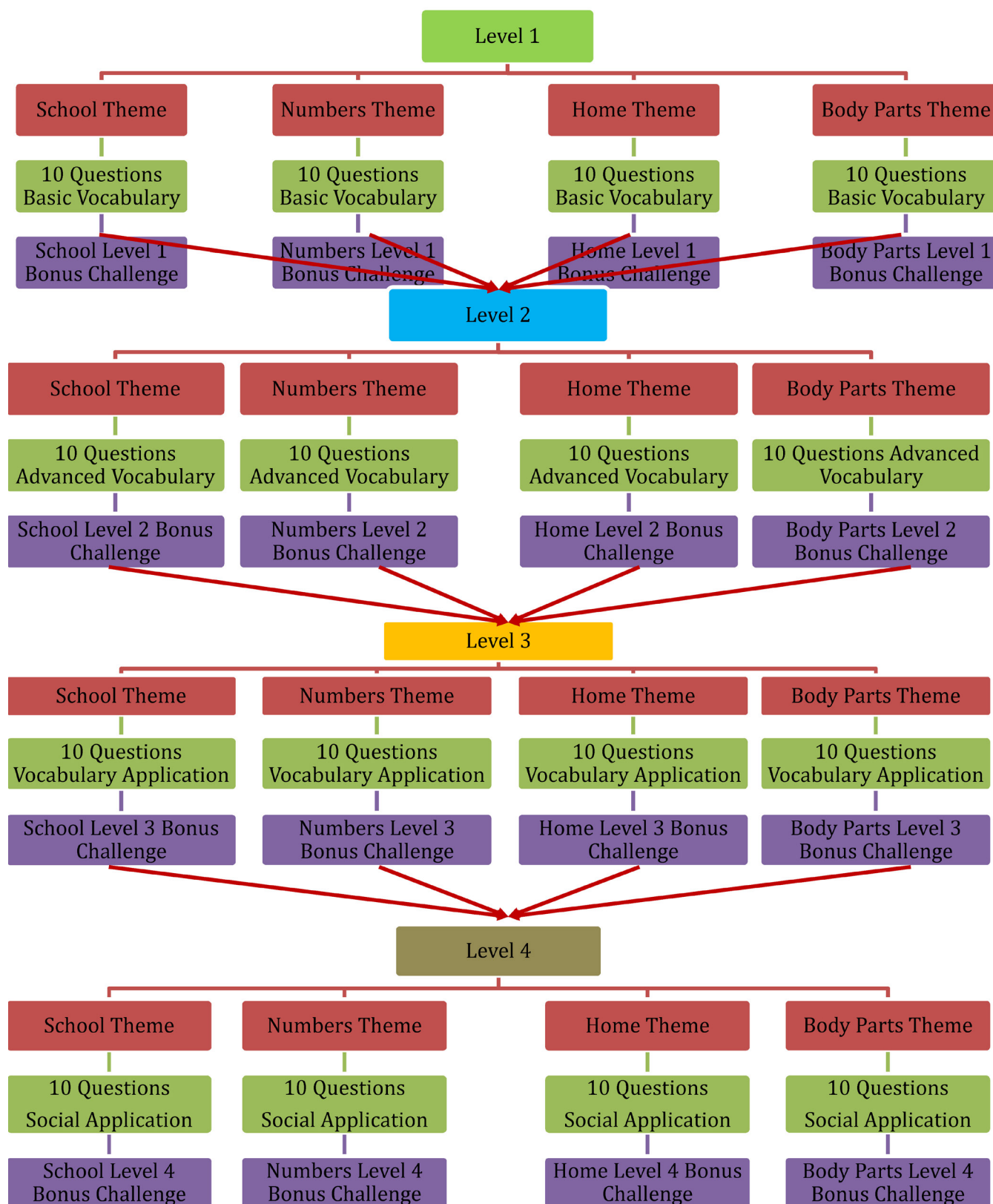**Figure 3: Basic item type game mechanics multimedia**
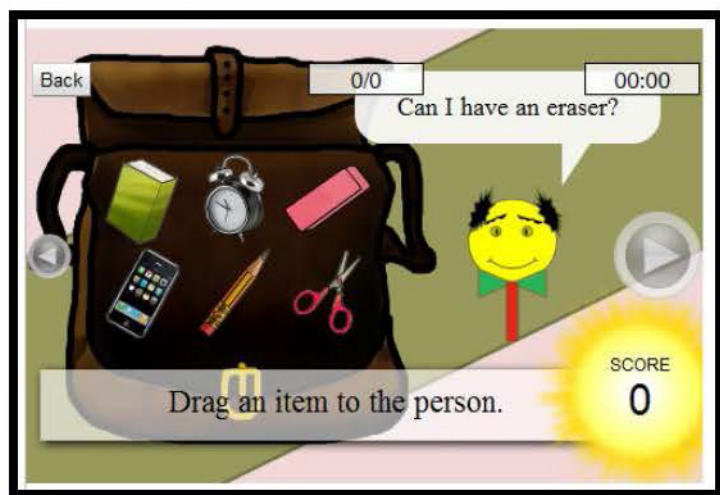
Figure 4: Level progressions

scribed earlier), novelty, graphics and the joy of learning for learning's sake[2] (see Appendix B for examples of the programming templates and Appendix C for sample drag-and-drop item types).

In the four distinct levels of content, the first level focused on basic vocabulary for each theme and was framed as questions at lower levels of Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom 1956). The bonus question was a little more challenging (see the example in Figure 5).

The second level of content scaffolded upon the first and used higher-application-type questions that used content from all themes of the first level. At the third level, users applied content covered in the previous two levels. Finally, the top level

Figure 5: Sample bonus question

introduced sociocultural norms and contexts and required higher-level thinking. The program tried to address social etiquette and mannerisms, because they are often the most difficult and intimidating factors to master when learning a new language.

Although the program was capable of running on any mobile device that had an Internet connection, the iPod touch platform was used—it was deemed to be most familiar to the target audience, and it would be easy to use with the touch-based drag-and-drop questions. Further, as previously stated, there were no explicit instructions as to how to use the devices; rather, assumptions were made that the intuitive nature of the user interface might act as a motivator and contribute to the EF of discovery.[3]

Phase Two: User Testing

The program was designed to be played individually or with others (Lazzaro 2010), and members of the two user groups all knew one another, thus enabling the assessment of the EF of social factors, or people fun. The first user group participated during the game development phase and revealed that the game play and basic game mechanics were properly developed and organized. They were all Canadian teachers who were fluent in English and also provided additional insights and perspectives. The second user study was conducted with a group of Japanese teachers of English who were pursuing a summer course at the University of Alberta. English was not their primary language; however, their English proficiency was well beyond that of the target audience and they were able to give insight into the potential global usability of the game, especially with their students.

After ethics approval, data was collected from both user groups and included (1) the time it took for each user to complete each question (recorded via the program); (2) researcher observations while users were playing the game; (3) focus group interviews conducted immediately after users had finished playing the game (Appendix A); and (4) online surveys. Data was thematically coded and triangulated within each user group so that, even with small numbers of participants, comparisons could be made. Four themes emerged: technical

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2 Due to financial and space constraints, the CS team provided parameters for the development of item types. Not only could item types be based only upon a drag-and-drop or multiple-choice selection user interface, but the screen could feature only 14 items at any one time. The question, each multiple choice answer, the score icon, the hint button and the characters each count as one. Given the granular and time-laden nature of programming, the CS team further requested that we develop programming templates. This further restricted use of variety as a motivator.

3 Through the planning and development of these item types, the idea of including a tutorial video or guide was considered; however, because of limited resources and program development time, this was not a viable option. Nevertheless, technical support was provided during the user-testing component of the study, as required.

feedback, social interaction, user value and linguistic content.

Technical Feedback

Although the programs ran as designed during the user tests, a common theme raised during the focus group interviews with the Canadian teachers was best summarized by one participant: "It was fun, but some parts were frustrating. There were technical limitations, like not being able to go back." In addition, participants in both user groups mentioned that the game would have been more engaging if "there had been sound and animation in the game," which they all believed would both improve the efficacy of the program and also meet the likely expectations of digital-native student users. The sensation of music and sound is an important aspect in motivating and capturing a user's interest in playing any game (Schell 2008).

> Audio effects such as sound and music are as important as visual effects to keep the players motivated and engaged. Unfortunately, the current iPhone web-browser platform supports only simple single tone, and in the current implementation we are not able to include dialog and audio without initiating another browser, which will cause disruption to the learning session. (Cheng et al 2012)

The Japanese teachers provided similar observations and suggestions relating to technical difficulties and suggestions. Foremost among them was the need for audio stimulation: "Students can read English in many places; they need and want to *hear* English." "The program would be better if students could listen to English and not just read."

They also mentioned that their students are used to playing highly refined games with professional-grade production values. One participant noted that the games his youngest daughter played contained "beautiful pictures" and music, and therefore he was not convinced that young people in Japan would want to play this game on their own. It was difficult for these teachers to separate the assessment of the potential of an EFL game using the given architecture from assessing the given visuals, item types and point structure (rules). Future trials with teachers might request feedback about specific features of the game architecture as well as its potential (eg, if graphics were changed, if audio was added, and so forth).

The Japanese users also found the screen too small and the touch user interface cumbersome and difficult, although they thought that their students would find it easier because they are more familiar with using such devices.

From a cultural perspective the characters were considered "cute" by the Canadian users and received no comments or noticeable facial recognition responses by the Japanese users. Although Alberta Education successfully used near identical visuals for *¡Hola amigos!* in Spanish, and *Bonjour les amis*, in French (see www.learnalberta.ca), finding visuals to cross European and Asian cultures may be challenging. As intercultural specialist Shaules (2007) states, "to say that all humans are similar despite the color of their skin, or despite different beliefs or cultural practices, ignores the reality that cultural difference is real and needs to be understood" (p 164).

Social Interaction

Without any direction or queries, the Canadian teachers and the students from the University of Alberta immediately began sharing, laughing and collaborating while playing the game. In contrast, the teachers from Japan worked independently. Future trials might specify using social interaction, because it is an EF identified by both LeBlanc (LeBlanc 2004a, 2994 b; Hunicke, LeBlanc and Zubek 2008) and Lazzaro (2010, 2011).

User Value

T-tests to determine statistical significance between item types and content themes were performed on data from the Japanese user study. The time taken to answer multiple-choice questions vs drag-and-drop item types for each theme revealed no statistically significant differences (P value = 0.22), as expected, given the users' language proficiency. However, in the focus group discussions, the lower-level questions for the numbers theme were considered "a little too simple" for users aged 13–14. The Japanese teachers also suggested that they were "slowed down" in answering the questions due to user interface input issues, although this was not evident in their recorded times to complete questions. Although the statistical analysis displayed in Tables 2 and 3 does not suggest differences of mathematical significance, the perceptual impact described verbally should be taken into consideration. Game play and motivation are

affected when users perceive a task to take longer or be more difficult (Chen 2008) or break the pace of play (Franciosi 2011).

Although the Japanese users perceived a smooth progression in level of difficulty in all themes except numbers and an occasional deceleration in interface input, there was no statistically significant difference between the time it took them to answer questions about numbers or any other theme at any content level (see Table 1). Because the language proficiencies of the users were well beyond the teenage target audience, these results were expected and could be different from those of users in the target group.

Focus group interviews revealed that higher-level content questions were perceived as more difficult, especially within the "School theme" (levels 3 and 4), in which interpersonal relationship interpretation/application was required. Furthermore, the Japanese teachers took much longer to play than their Canadian counterparts. This could be due to gaming experiences or the desire to spend more time on each item in order to provide high-quality feedback.

Linguistic Content

The Japanese teachers found the linguistic content "culturally interesting" and thought that it could offer students the message that all languages

Table 2 – Results of comparative t-test of themes time completion

Average time required to complete theme compared to another theme	P value ($\alpha = 0.05$)
Theme 1: School vs. Theme 2: Numbers	0.22
Theme 1: School vs. Theme 3: Home	0.19
Theme 1: School vs. Theme 4: Body Parts	0.16
Theme 2: Number vs. Theme 3: Home	0.71
Theme 2: Numbers vs. Theme 4: Body Parts	0.36
Theme 3: Home vs. Theme 4: Body Parts	0.65

Table 3 – Results of comparative t-test of level time completion

Average time required to complete levels compared to another level	P value ($\alpha = 0.05$)
Level 1 vs. Level 2 0.45	0.22
Level 1 vs. Level 3 0.25	0.19
Level 1 vs. Level 4 0.24	0.16
Level 2 vs. Level 3 0.09	0.71
Level 2 vs. Level 4 0.10	0.36
Level 3 vs. Level 4 0.87	0.65

have "regional uses." For example, North Americans use the term *raincoat*, while the British and Australians say *slicker*. Canadian users, also experienced in teaching foreign languages, recognized how language content had been "woven into each level to maximize use." They also "imagined the potential of adapting the program to French, Spanish, German and other languages."

# Closing Comments and Implications

After a brief history of the concept of edutainment, EF, applications of IT in CALL and MALL, an explanation of how EF was applied in the design of a SL game and its user test results, we now suggest implications for SL teachers in Alberta.

1. Development in the IT industry is expensive and, since more funds for research exist in IT than in education, educators could benefit from following this body of research, especially in EF. Though literacy researchers like Gee (2003) have followed gaming for literacy development among first language speakers, and SL researchers like Chappelle (2001) are broadly cited in the SL learning research related to using digital communication for SL learning, neither address the EF findings from edutainment game research.

2. According to study participants, audio stimulation is desired in FL learning. Learners who are unable to access mobile devices for practice in or out of their classroom may benefit from other forms of carefully selected audio stimulation such as songs, video clips and appropriately paced pronunciation practice in the new language.

3. Encourage students to work together on projects to increase the EF, or people fun, of SL learning.

4. Though teachers may not have the resources to program a computer game, they can apply their creativity to adapt the narrative of a game when constructing a lesson or unit plan. Schell (2008) provides ideas for this in many subject areas, but not SL. Teachers could direct students to progress through curriculum content by adapting the game design in this paper to a self-paced game board (see Figure 6) as follows:

a) Select an application or field of experience as a set from the program of studies.

b) Create a goal that fits with the set (for example, earn your dream job as a travel agent).

c) Choose four themes for the set (for example, modes of transportation; countries/cities where language X is spoken and key phrases used when asking for travel information; things to see and do in some of the places—cultural points; writing a post card about a place).

d) Identify the focus of the four levels of difficulty for the themes (for example, learning and remembering vocabulary; learning formulaic expressions; learning grammar; learning culture).

e) Create a storyline that gives a goal for the game and obstacles to overcome in order to reach that goal. Students could be challenged to overcome an obstacle by completing a level. For example, a famous person from the culture (pop star, athlete, historical figure) needs to reach a goal; help him/her overcome X obstacles to reach that goal.

f) Compose four to eight questions for level 1 of each theme and bonus question and follow Bloom's taxonomy to increase the difficulty of questions (all questions have to be answered before students can progress to the next level); provide another obstacle in the storyline that can be overcome by completing level 2.

g) Compose four to eight questions for level 2 of each theme and bonus question and follow Bloom's taxonomy to increase the difficulty of questions (all questions have to be answered before students can progress to the next level); use all vocabulary and grammar from level 1 (all four themes) in this level; provide another obstacle in the storyline that can be overcome by completing level 3.

h) Compose four to eight questions for level 3 of each theme and bonus question and follow Bloom's taxonomy to increase the difficulty of questions (all have to be answered before students can progress to the next level); use all vocabulary and grammar from levels 1 and 2 (all four themes) in this level; provide another obstacle in the storyline that can be overcome by completing level 4.

i) Compose four to eight questions for level 4 of each theme and bonus question and follow Bloom's taxonomy to increase the difficulty of questions (all have to be answered before students can progress to the next level); use all vocabulary and grammar from levels 1, 2 and 3 (all four themes) in this level; provide another obstacle in the storyline that can be overcome by completing the bonus tasks.

j) Prepare four bonus questions (tasks) based on content from all four themes and levels to reach the end goal; incorporate the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (for example, listen to a YouTube clip of places to see in a city/country and answer three to six comprehension questions or write a summary; prepare a skit with a friend about a travel agent and a client; read a website for information about a place or tourist attraction and answer a series of questions; write a postcard about another country that could be sent home).

k) Use PowerPoint slides to compose each question so that visuals can be easily added and

then accessed in a computer lab or printed into a booklet (students can proceed through the questions at their own pace, self-correct and discuss results; they can repeat the game as many times as they like; striving for higher scores yields SL learning); with increased technological knowledge and skill the game can be played online with a visible point card, sound effects, hyperlinks, etc.

5. Students could be asked to develop games to review content and practice using it. With their online gaming experience, they might integrate fantasy, narrative and discovery as well as elements of sensation.

6. After trying a new approach to lesson or unit design, ask students for their opinions about its strengths and how to improve it.

Game designers like LeBlanc and Lazzaro understand engagement and sustained fun. Game developers have employed multiple techniques to entice people not only to play their games, but to continue to play the game for an extended period of time. Their strategies can be beneficial to educators who confront varied levels of student engagement on a

Figure 6: Sample game board
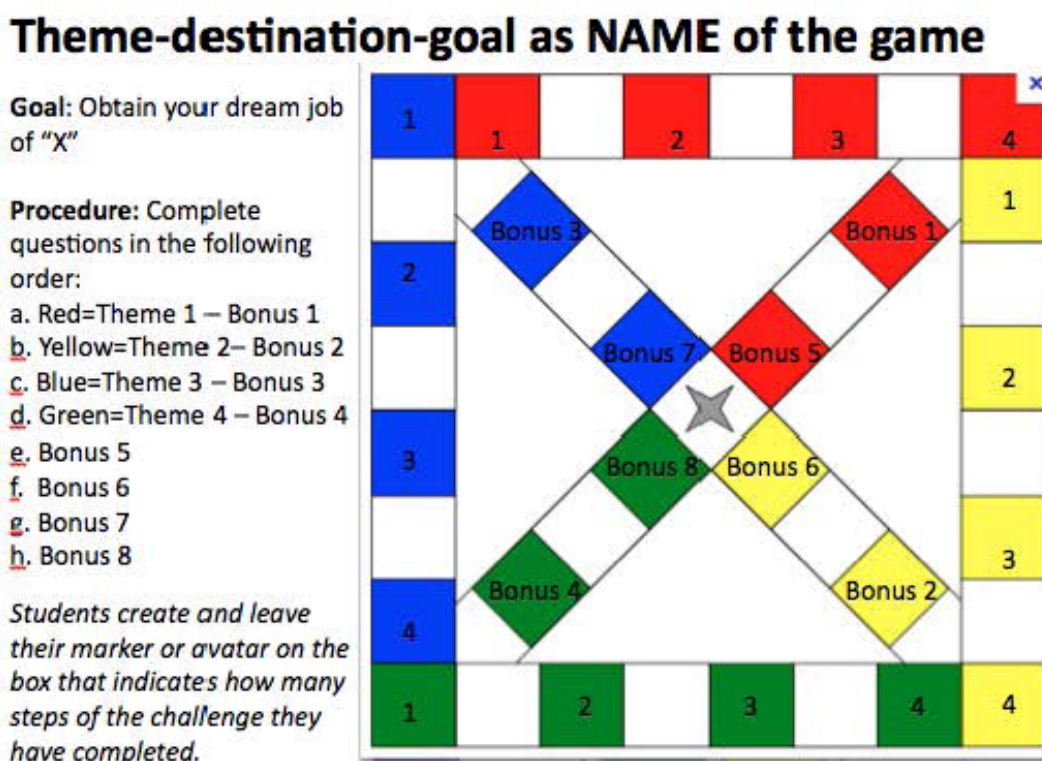
daily basis. Though it is educators' responsibility to question the motives and values associated with the manipulation of such information in our neoliberal age, some of that information or knowledge may be of value to all teachers who work with youth, particularly students who are less interested in learning in traditional school settings. Applying the motivational strategies of edutainment in educational settings might create new powerful and effective learning tools and shift the way we view, develop and implement many future educational practices for more fruitful experiences for students. Continued research in this area would be beneficial.

With up to 91 per cent of Americans and Canadians owning or having access to a mobile phone (Foresman 2010; Industry Canada 2008) and similar statistics on cellular telephone ownership in most developed countries (Rich 2008), edutainment programs can reach a large, available and expanding audience worldwide. Educators and second language teachers can benefit from understanding how to harness this technology for the benefit of language learners. Further, they might re-examine the way they plan lessons and units to better integrate a number of EFs.

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Appendix A: Focus Group Interview Protocol

1. How much did you enjoy playing the computer games or educational items?
2. How did you find the language level of the games or educational items? Too easy? Too difficult? Just right?
3. How would you describe the content or interest level of the games?
4. Which themes or question types did you find the easiest? Most difficult? Most engaging? Why?
5. How much do you think your students would enjoy playing the computer games or educational items?
6. Do you think these games or educational items would interest boys more than girls? Girls more than boys? Be of equal interest to boys and girls? Why?
7. Do you think these games or educational items would be of interest to all students? Better for students in commercial or technical schools or programs? Why?
8. For which age level of your students do you think the language level would be appropriate?
9. For which age level of your students do you think the content would be appropriate?
10. Which themes or question types do you think your students would find the easiest? Most difficult? Most engaging? Why?
11. Do you think that these games or educational items would encourage your students to use English outside of the classroom?

12. Please name additional themes or types of questions that you think would interest your students.
13. Please provide suggestions for how these games or educational items could be more appropriate for your students.
14. Would you recommend that your students play these games or educational items in your school (eg, in an English club)? Why or why not?
15. Would you recommend that your students play these games or educational items outside of school time (eg, in free time)? Why or why not?
16. Would you tell your colleagues about these games and educational items and encourage them to try them? Why or why not?
17. Do you think that these games and educational items would improve your student's critical thinking and learning performance in English? Why or why not?

Appendix B: Sample Templates and Examples of the Characters Designed by Victor Wong

The CS team required a template for each item type developed. It consisted of the question type; score value of the question with and without a hint; the character who is talking or providing the cue, his/her attire (outfit), emotional appearance (facial expression) and feedback potential (thumbs up, thumbs down); and the speech text, hint text and prompt text. Figures X, Y and Z are examples.
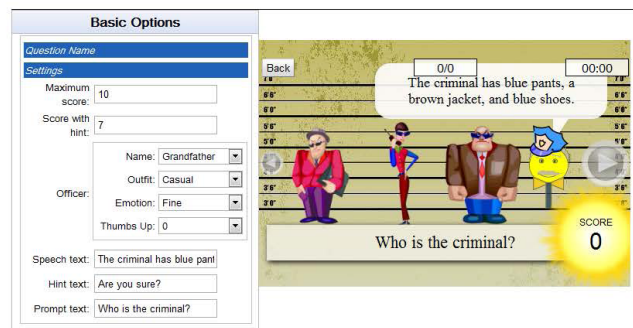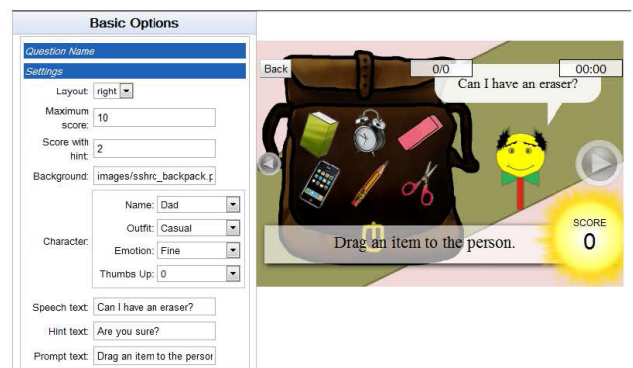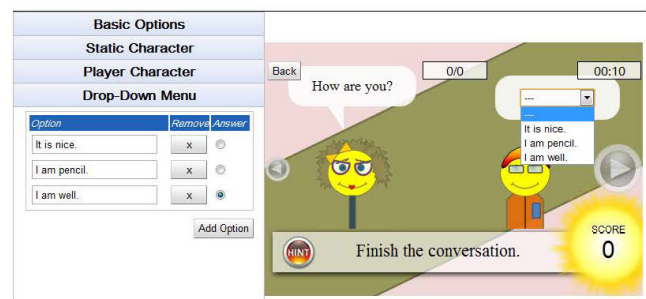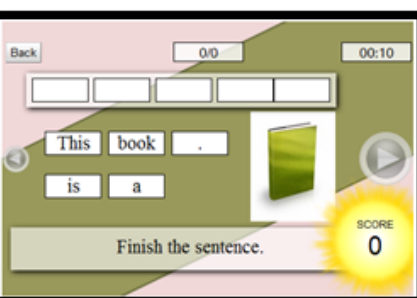
Figure X

Figure Y

Figure Z

Appendix C – Sample Question Item Types

The criminal has blue pants, a brown jacket, and blue shoes.

Who is the criminal?

Do you have a white t-shirt?

Yes, I do.
No, I don't.

How are you?

It is nice.
I am pencil.
I am well.

Finish the conversation.

It is three o'clock.

Set the clock.

happy   sad   surprised
tired   sick   fine

Move the words.

nose eyes ears
mouth hair

I need hair.

To: ---.

I have three hundred sixty two dollars and fifty four cents. What can I buy?

$326.46

$62.54

$36.08

This is a blouse. Who wears a blouse?

T A T S E
R E U C H

Finish the word.

I like ____.

play   game   games

Finish the sentence.

This is my ---.

What is this called in the United States?
_ _ _ _ _ s

slicker   rainslicker   raincoat

This   book   .
is   a

Finish the sentence.

Développements sociolinguistiques des compétences langagières orales dans un milieu minoritaire francophone universitaire

Samira ElAtia and Suzie Beaulieu

Résumé

Le but de cette recherche est de déterminer si les étudiants ayant choisi de continuer leurs études universitaires en français en situation minoritaire et de vivre dans une résidence francophone, profitant ainsi d'un contact quotidien avec la langue, ont font des gains linguistiques en français parlé en situations sociales. Deux groupes d'étudiants de première année ont participé à cette étude : ceux qui habitaient la résidence universitaire francophone, et ceux qui habitaient hors campus. Les résultats ont démontré un usage fréquent du français chez ceux qui résidaient sur le campus avec une appropriation de son usage social quotidien. De plus, l'étude a démontré que ces étudiants avaient développé un usage du français qui était influencé par les différentes variétés de français présentes dans ce milieu francophone minoritaire.

Abstract

The goal of this research is to find out if students who opted to continue their postsecondary education in French in a linguistic minority context and who chose to live in a francophone residence with daily language contact gain significantly with regard to spoken French in social occasions. Two groups of first-year students took part in this study: those living in the francophone residence and those living independently outside campus. Results show that there is a frequent use of French with a sense of appropriation in social occasions for the first group. In addition, the study demonstrates that students living in the residence developed a unique variety of French among themselves that combined the various dialectical varieties of French spoken by students in this francophone minority context.

Développements sociolinguistiques des compétences langagières orales dans un milieu minoritaire francophone universitaire

Bien que le français et l'anglais soient les deux langues officielles du Canada, et bien que plusieurs parents, même ceux qui sont anglophones unilingues, choisissent d'inscrire leurs enfants dans un programme d'immersion française, le contact quotidien avec le français dans l'Ouest canadien demeure une rareté qui se limite souvent à la maison dans les foyers francophones. Si on regarde la situation de l'Alberta, on constate que la population de langue maternelle (L1) française est de 61 225, ce qui représente 2% of de la population albertaine (Statistiques Canada, 2006). De ce nombre, 68% affirment qu'ils utilisent principalement l'anglais comme langue de communication à la maison et 89% affirment que l'anglais est leur langue de communication privilégiée au travail (ibid, 2006). On remarque de plus, que l'anglais domine aussi dans les interactions sociales entre élèves d'écoles francophones en situation minoritaire au Canada (Heller, 1999).

Le français dans ce contexte perd alors son rôle de langue de communication sociale. Il devient une langue à rôle instrumental : on l'utilise dans des interactions à caractère non social au travail ou à l'école. Rares sont les instances où le français est utilisé

pour communication informelle. L'anglais comble alors le rôle social, communicatif de tous les jours.

Cette situation sociolinguistique particulière engendre certains questionnements quant à l'enseignement et l'apprentissage du français langue seconde (L2) dans ce contexte. Premièrement, comment offrir aux finissants d'un programme d'immersion française qui ont choisi de poursuivre des études postsecondaires en français la possibilité d'utiliser la langue cible à l'extérieur de la classe? Et deuxièmement, comment aider ces mêmes étudiants à acquérir un français social, en plus du français académique formel?

En effet, les futurs enseignants en formation universitaire et les enseignants du français L2 au secondaire bénéficieraient grandement d'une occasion de parfaire leur français oral. D'abord, en maitrisant le français social, ils sauront mieux encourager leurs élèves à utiliser le français à l'extérieur de la salle de classe: le français deviendrait ainsi une langue avec laquelle ils pourraient communiquer socialement et cesserait d'être uniquement un code réservé à la salle de classe. En effet, de nombreuses recherches ont démontré qu'il existe un lien entre l'utilisation de la langue cible à l'extérieur de la salle de classe et les habiletés langagières des apprenants. Des effets positifs sont remarqués sur les compétences orales d'apprenants lors de participation à des séjours linguistiques dans la langue cible (Cohen & Shively, 2007 ; Howard, Lemee, & Regan, 2006; Isabelli, 2007), mais aussi lorsque l'apprenant ne quitte pas son pays et qu'il participe par exemple à des cours d'immersion qui comportent des « contact assignements[1] » (Freed et al. 2004) ou qu'il décide de vivre dans une résidence de type « foreign language housing »[2] (Martinsen et al., 2011)

Cette idée de résidence francophone comme outil pédagogique semble être une solution

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[1] La notion de « contact assignments » implique que l'enseignant demande à ses étudiants de parler à des locuteurs natifs de la langue cible dans des tâches a compléter en devoir.

[2] Les « foreign language houses » existent depuis le début du 20e siècle. Il s'agit de résidence universitaire, l'apprenant de langue cohabite avec d'autres apprenants et un locuteurs natifs de la langue cible qui agit en tant que médiateur. La plupart des « foreign language houses » demandent aux participants de signer un contrat stipulant qu'ils feront usage de la langue cible en tout temps dans l'appartement (Martisen et al., 2011).

potentielle pour adresser cette situation. Une résidence francophone dans un milieu minoritaire fait la promotion de l'utilisation du français entre étudiants dans leurs interactions quotidiennes. Le but ultime étant d'offrir aux étudiants la possibilité de vivre dans la langue pour ajouter à leur parcours universitaire. En vivant dans la langue, on souhaite ainsi que les attitudes des étudiants vis-à-vis l'usage du français iront au-delà du domaine académique, vers le domaine social, et de l'apprentissage d'une langue vers l'appartenance à un groupe cible. Peu d'études se sont jusqu'à ce jour penchées sur les effets de ce type de programme sur l'apprentissage de la L2. Martinsen et al. (2011) ont cependant récemment démontré que des « languages houses »française, russe, japonaise et allemande sur un campus universitaire aux États-Unis avaient permis aux apprenants de faire des gains substantiels à l'oral tel que mesuré par leur participation à l'entrevue orale du American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

Vivre dans la langue et parler la langue

Depuis la création des programmes d'immersion française de nombreuses recherches ont évalué l'efficacité de ce type d'instruction pour promouvoir l'acquisition du français (Lyster, 2007). Cependant, peu d'études se sont intéressées à la fréquence à laquelle les élèves de l'immersion française utilisent leur langue seconde (L2) à l'extérieur de la salle de classe. Les quelques recherches qui se sont penchées sur la question démontrent que ces élèves ne cherchent pas à utiliser leur L2 d'une manière sociale et n'interagissent donc que très rarement avec des francophones, qu'ils se trouvent en milieux majoritairement anglophones (Lapkin et al, 1983; Husum & Bryce, 1991) ou en milieux bilingues (DeVries, 1985; Genesee, 1987; Van der Keilen, 1995; Wesche et al, 1990). De plus, ces études démontrent qu'une fois les études secondaires terminées, le français ne prend plus qu'une place marginale dans la vie des finissants d'un programme d'immersion française (Husum & Bryce, 1991; Wesche et al, 1990).

Cependant, lorsque des contacts entre élèves de l'immersion et des francophones ont lieu (souvent

par l'entremise d'échanges d'étudiants) les interactions entre ces deux groupes provoquent initialement des réactions négatives chez les élèves de l'immersion. En effet, ces derniers ressentent souvent de l'anxiété langagière et de la frustration (Warden et al, 1995) et préfère donc la compagnie d'anglophones (MacFarlane, 2001). Néanmoins, lorsque les liens entre les deux groupes se resserrent au fil du temps, ces sentiments se dissipent et l'utilisation de la langue cible devient une expérience plaisante (MacFarlane, 2001). Pavlenko (2005) explique que lorsque l'attitude des apprenants de L2 envers l'utilisation de la langue cible est positive, plus ils deviennent à l'aise dans l'usage quotidien de cette langue, moins ils sont anxieux de la parler à l'extérieur de la salle de classe; ils s'identifient plus avec le groupe cible et utilisent la langue dans un contexte social de tous les jours. Elle ajoute que ces expériences positives ont un impact sur les gains linguistiques que les apprenants peuvent retirer.

En effet, MacFarlane (2001) et Warden et al (1995) ont démontré que la participation à un échange étudiants au Québec a permis aux participants de développer certains aspects de leur compétence langagière orale, dont notamment l'utilisation adéquate de stratégies de communication, un débit plus rapide, une connaissance plus pointue des expressions courantes, la compréhension d'un lexique appartenant à différents registres de langue et l'habileté à comprendre plus d'un locuteur natif à la fois. Ces résultats sont aussi présents chez une variété d'apprenants de L2 qui ont participé à un échange étudiants à l'étranger (voir DeKeyser, 2007 et Freed, 2008).

Le but principal de cette recherche est de déterminer si, dans une institution universitaire francophone où le français, malgré son statut de langue officielle, est une langue minoritaire, les étudiants qui profitent d'un contact quotidien avec la langue cible font des gains linguistiques plus importants que les étudiants qui ne bénéficient uniquement que d'un contact limité avec la langue en salle de classe. Notre étude se démarque des recherches précédentes sur le sujet sur trois points. Premièrement, elle se concentre sur une population d'apprenants dont on traite peu souvent dans la littérature sur l'acquisition des langues : des finissants de programmes d'immersion française qui continuent leurs études postsecondaires en

français. Deuxièmement, notre étude se situe dans un contexte où l'anglais est la langue dominante, et non dans un contexte où le français est la langue de la majorité. Troisièmement, les étudiants suivent des cours en français, mais ont le choix de vivre ou non dans la résidence francophone de l'université.

Ainsi, nous avons analysé la performance de participants dont le contact quotidien avec la langue cible ne se déroule pas dans un milieu où la langue dominante est le français, mais bien dans une résidence universitaire dans laquelle 75% des résidents ne parlent pas le français comme langue (L1) ou dominante[3]. Malgré que l'anglais soit la langue la mieux maîtrisée par la majorité, tous les échanges entre résidents qui ont lieu dans les aires communes et publiques se font en français afin de se conformer aux règlements linguistiques de la résidence. Notre recherche vise à déterminer si les compétences langagières orales de nos participants sont affectées de façon positive par ce contact 'gouverné' par l'usage exclusif de la langue cible. La vie dans la résidence n'est pas imposée à tous les étudiants, mais ces derniers choisissent de vivre en français dans la résidence, sachant qu'ils ont la possibilité de s'installer ailleurs.

Questions de recherche

Dans un milieu minoritaire où l'usage du français est maintenu, est-ce qu'un contact quotidien à l'extérieur de la salle de classe permet de faire des gains linguistiques? Si c'est le cas, à quel niveau ces gains linguistiques se font-ils? Au niveau du message- la précision grammaticale des énoncés émis par l'étudiant, au niveau de l'interaction -compréhension des questions et le développement et l'élaboration des idées et maintien de la discussion, et au niveau de l'usage social -utilisation d'expressions idiomatiques et d'un français de tous les jours. Les descripteurs de performance ont été adaptés de la grille utilisée pour l'entrevue orale de l'ACTFL et ceux des grilles du IBO, groupe 2 languages)

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3 Ces renseignements ont été rendus disponibles par le gestionnaire de la résidence étudiée.

Contexte de l'étude

Profil de l'institution postsecondaire

Cette étude a été menée sur un campus universitaire francophone de l'Ouest canadien : un environnement linguistique francophone minoritaire au sein d'un milieu anglophone dominant. Dans cette institution, le français est officiellement la langue de l'enseignement, du travail, et de la communication entre les différentes parties impliquées. Parmi le personnel enseignant et non enseignant, le français demeure la langue d'usage exclusif. Par contre, l'anglais domine les interactions entre étudiants. Ceci s'explique par la nature complexe du groupe estudiantin de ce campus universitaire. La majorité des étudiants, plus de 60 %, sont des finissants d'un programme d'immersion française[4]. Le contexte de l'immersion au Canada fait que le français est utilisé de façon diglossique : il est considéré comme la langue de la salle de classe et de la communication formelle entre enseignant et étudiants, mais il n'est cependant pas utilisé pour la communication informelle et quotidienne entre les élèves eux-mêmes (Tarone & Swain, 1995).

Ainsi, nous nous intéressons à évaluer la compétence orale de finissants de programmes d'immersion française dans ce contexte universitaire minoritaire et à déterminer si l'influence de certains facteurs (dont notamment le fait d'habiter une résidence universitaire francophone) ont une influence sur leur habileté à s'exprimer en français.

Description de la résidence

La résidence francophone située au sein d'une université anglophone de l'Ouest canadien où notre cueillette de données a eu lieu existe depuis 1973. En l'an 2000, un nouveau bâtiment a été construit et on y a à ce moment instauré une politique linguistique qui stipulait que seul le français serait la langue de communication au sein de cette résidence. Cette politique a été mise en place due au changement marqué dans le profil langagier des étudiants habitant ce lieu : à sa construction, la majorité des étudiants étaient des francophones, l'usage du français dominait, et donc la problématique

de maintenir un usage quotidien avec la langue ne se posait pas. Depuis un peu plus d'une décennie, par contre, le nombre de francophones de langue maternelle ou dominante a chuté faisant place à une majorité d'étudiants provenant de programmes d'immersion française, plus à l'aise à interagir en anglais (Levasseur-Ouiment & MacMahon, 2007)

Ainsi, lorsqu'un étudiant veut habiter la résidence, il doit signer un contrat "langagier" dictant qu'il respectera la politique gérant l'usage exclusif du français dans les lieux communs et publics. L'étudiant s'engage donc à être responsable d'encourager l'usage du français et de décourager l'utilisation de toute autre langue à la résidence.

Profil des étudiants à la résidence

Le profil des étudiants habitant la résidence représente un échantillon représentatif de la population générale du campus universitaire où l'étude a été menée. Bien que la composition du corps estudiantin change d'année en année, les proportions des dix dernières demeurent sensiblement les mêmes. Les étudiants, pour qui l'anglais est la L1, sont majoritaires, ils représentent 70% à 75% des résidents. Seulement 1 à 2% de ce groupe ont appris le français dans des programmes de base, la majorité dominante vient de programmes d'immersion française. Les francophones représentent 20% à 25% des résidents, dont 5% à 7% viennent de milieux majoritairement francophones. De plus, on retrouve de 5% à 10% d'étudiants internationaux pour qui ni le français ni l'anglais ne sont des langues dominantes.

Méthodologie

Description de la recherche

Pour déterminer l'influence de la résidence sur la compétence langagière des étudiants quatre étapes ont été suivies. D'abord, la participation volontaire et indépendante de résidents et de non-résidents durant leur premier semestre d'études postsecondaires a été sollicitée. Ensuite, les participants ont complété un questionnaire pour aider à identifier les caractéristiques similaires et divergentes chez les répondants, et aussi pour en apprendre davantage sur leurs habitudes langagières à l'extérieur des cours. Puis, la compétence orale des participants a été évaluée par le biais d'un pré-test en septembre

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4 Ces renseignements ont été rendus disponibles par le Doyen adjoint aux affaires étudiantes.

et d'un post-test conçue par une des auteures de cet article en décembre. On a opté pour un test développé spécialement pour cette étude parce que ce test nous a permis de bien cibler les éléments qu'on cherche dans cette étude. Les tests normalisés de compétence ne ciblent pas exactement ce qu'on voulait évaluer ; et même si on voulait utiliser de tel tests, on aurait un minimum de deux tests à administrer ce qui aurait été intimidant pour les étudiants et aurait pris plus de temps. Donc, le test conçu pour cette étude était bien utile et répondait à plusieurs de nos critères de recherches.

Les participants

Cette étude pilote ciblait les étudiants de première année puisque le but était d'évaluer leur niveau langagier à leur arrivée sans l'influence des cours. Ainsi, deux groupes représentant chacun un échantillon d'une population naturelle ont fait partie de l'étude. Le premier groupe représentait les étudiants qui suivaient les études à temps plein et qui habitaient la résidence (ER). Le deuxième groupe était constitué d'étudiants qui suivaient des études à temps plein dans la même institution, mais qui n'habitaient pas la résidence (ENR)

Initialement, les deux groupes étaient égaux comptant chacun 20 participants. Cependant, au post-test le nombre de participants de chaque groupe a diminué : 17 pour le groupe ER et 7 pour le groupe ENR. Ainsi, seuls les participants qui ont subi les deux tests ont été retenus pour l'analyse des données.

Dans le groupe ENR, à l'exception d'un participant francophone qui avait fait ses études élémentaires et secondaires dans une école francophone en Alberta, et qui parlait français et anglais à la maison (mais parlait anglais à l'extérieur de la maison), tous les autres participants étaient anglophones et pour eux l'usage du français se limitait à la salle de classe. Ces participants venaient tous d'un programme d'immersion précoce ou tardive. Aucun participant ENR ne parlait d'autres langues, et aucun ne participait à des activités parascolaires en français. Deux des participants ENR avaient déjà fait des visites ou des voyages dans un milieu francophone dominant, mais ces séjours étaient d'une durée d'une à deux semaines seulement.

Le groupe ER comprenait un participant francophone. Il avait suivi ses études élémentaires et secondaires dans une école francophone en Colombie-Britannique, et parlait exclusivement le français à la maison, mais il parlait anglais à l'extérieur de la maison. Ce groupe était aussi composé d'un étudiant international qui parlait une langue autre que le français et l'anglais. Le reste des participants étaient des anglophones qui venaient de compléter un programme d'immersion française : les deux tiers venaient d'un programme d'immersion précoce, et un tiers avait participé à un programme d'immersion tardive. Les deux tiers des participants ER avaient effectué des séjours linguistiques d'une durée moyenne de 3 mois. Un tiers des participants ER participaient à des activités parascolaires en français. L'anglais est la langue qu'ils utilisaient pour les activités quotidiennes hors campus. De ces participants ER, seulement deux parlent aussi d'autres langues en plus de l'anglais et le français.

Description de l'outil d'évaluation

Deux types d'outil d'évaluation ont été utilisés pendant cette étude. Au pré-test, une description d'une image qui rappelle des scènes de la vie dans l'Ouest canadien (ex. au camping, dans les montagnes en ski) a été montré aux participants pour engager les participants dans un sujet qui serait susceptible de leur être familier. Cette tâche a ensuite été suivie d'un entretien oral sur le même thème. Ces deux outils ont été utilisés conjointement pour assurer que l'atmosphère demeurait assez informelle. Au post-test un entretien détaillé a eu lieu. L'évaluation a duré de 10 à 15 minutes.

Dans la première partie et au pré-test seulement, une image a été donnée au participant. Du temps lui était d'abord donné pour étudier l'image. Puis, après ce temps de réflexion, le participant devait offrir une description de l'image. De même, il avait la possibilité d'ajouter des informations sur le thème de l'image. Ensuite, dans la deuxième phase de l'entretien, les évaluateurs ont posé des questions à propos de l'image, son thème général, son lien avec le participant, etc. Enfin, une conversation générale a suivi où la discussion était moins formelle. Cette partie a été conçue pour vérifier l'usage social de la langue.

Le réviseur aimerait voir un exemple ici…

Il y avait une différence dans les procédures de l'entretien du pré-test au post-test. Afin d'évaluer le niveau de français en général au pré-test, les participants ont d'abord fait une description orale d'une image. À la fin de cette description, et pour

entamer l'étude empirique, une évaluation sous forme d'entretien pour identifier les aptitudes et compétences des étudiants en ce qui concerne le français oral social a été faite. Puisque le besoin de vérifier les compétences langagières de base n'était plus nécessaire au post-test, seule la deuxième partie de l'entretien a eu lieu.

L'évaluation de l'entretien a été faite selon trois critères : le message (la qualité de la langue), l'interaction (compréhension et développement), et finalement usage social (expression idiomatique, français de tous les jours). Les trois critères suivaient des descripteurs de compétence sur des bandes descriptives de 0 à 5 points.

Les résultats

D'abord, une analyse globale des résultats obtenus au pré-test et au post-test a été faite (Tableau 1) en utilisant SPSS (2001). Cette première analyse indiquait que la moyenne obtenue, tous groupes confondus, était de 45,14% au pré-test et de 71,39%

Tableau # 1 : Analyse descriptive des résultats du pré et post tests

Groupe		Pré-test	Post-test
ER	Mean	45.2941%	77.4510%
	N	17	17
	Std. Deviation	12.36364%	12.83060%
	Minimum	26.67%	46.67%
	Maximum	73.33%	93.33%
	Range	46.67%	46.67%
	Variance	152.859	164.624
ENR	Mean	44.7619%	56.6667%
	N	7	7
	Std. Deviation	6.62687%	12.17161%
	Minimum	36.67%	46.67%
	Maximum	56.67%	80.00%
	Range	20.00%	33.33%
	Variance	43.915	148.148%
ENR et ER	Mean	45.1389%	71.3889%
	N	24	24
	Std. Deviation	10.85607%	15.69383%
	Minimum	26.67%	46.67%
	Maximum	73.33%	93.33%
	Range	46.67%	46.67%
	Variance	117.854	246.296

Tableau #2 : Test-t sur échantillons à deux de la différence des moyennes

Mean	Std. Deviation	Std Error Mean	95% Confidence interval of the difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Lower	Upper			
-26.25%	13.20%	2.69%	-31.82%	-20.67%	-9.743	23	.000

n= 24

au post-test. Une série de test-t sur échantillons à deux a démontré une forte signifiance statistique (voir tableau #2) entre la moyenne du pré-test et du post-test. Les résultats obtenus démontrent que la compétence orale des étudiants a évolué de façon exponentielle entre leur arrivée en septembre et la fin du semestre d'automne en novembre.

Les résultats par groupe

Une analyse ANOVA a permis d'identifier que la différence entre les moyennes obtenues par chacun des groupes au pré-test n'étaient pas statistiquement significative et qu'ainsi les participants étaient au même niveau de compétence langagière au début de la recherche. L'analyse des résultats par groupe démontre que les résultats généraux ont été principalement générés par la performance du groupe ER : alors que leur moyenne est passée de 45,20% à 77,45% au post-test (forte signifiance statistique) celle du groupe ENR était de 44,75% au pré-test et de 56,66% au post-test. La différence entre les moyennes obtenus par les deux groupes était fortement statistiquement significative au $\alpha=0.01$. Ainsi, les participants du groupe ER ont substantivement amélioré leur compétence en français oral social tel qu'établit par les critères d'évaluation.

Corrélations entre les critères d'évaluations

Nous avons aussi effectué des études de corrélation entre les trois barèmes utilisés au pré-test et au post-test pour deux raisons. Premièrement, il fallait vérifier la validité et la fiabilité des barèmes. Deuxièmement, nous tenions à savoir s'il y avait de liens entre les trois critères: si un étudiant est faible dans un critère, l'est-il dans les deux autres?

Le tableau 4 résume les résultats de la corrélation entre les trois critères au pré-test. On trouve une corrélation linéaire positive forte entre les trois critères. La relation de corrélation est plus forte entre le critère message et le critère usage avec un coefficient de corrélation : r=.84, alors que la relation entre le critère usage et interaction est moins linéaire, r=.69. Toutes les corrélations démontrent une forte signifiance statistique.

Le tableau 5 démontre la corrélation entre les trois critères du barème de correction au post-test. Il est possible de constater que la corrélation positive est statistiquement significative au niveau alpha =0,01. Les coefficients de corrélations sont plus forts et indiquent une relation positive linéaire très forte. On constate aussi que les coefficients entre l'interaction et le message, et entre le message et l'usage ont augmenté modestement. Cependant, le coefficient entre l'usage et l'interaction a beaucoup augmenté par rapport au pré-test et par rapport aux autres relations. Ces résultats indiquent que la vie dans la résidence francophone a permis aux participants de faire des gains par rapport à l'usage social de la langue et le confort avec lequel ils s'expriment dans la langue.

Discussion

L'analyse des résultats obtenus par les participants au pré-test et au post-test a permis d'identifier, qu'en général, après avoir passé un semestre dans un campus universitaire francophone en milieu

Tableau # 3 : Résultats de l'analyse ANOVA entre les résultats du pré et post tests des deux groupes.

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Pre-test	Between groups	(Combined) (Within groups) (Total)	1.404 2709.244 2710.648	1 22 23	1.404 123.147	0.11	.916
Post-test	Between groups	(Combined) (Within groups) (Total)	2141.939 3522.876 5664.815	1 22 23	2141.939 160.131	13.376	0.001

N=24

Tableau#4 : Corrélation entre les trois critères des résultats du pré-test

		Message	Interaction	Usage
Message	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1.000 24.000	.744★★ .000 24	.839★★ .000 24
Interaction	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.744★★ .000 24	1.000 24.000	.694★★ .000 24
Usage	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.839★★ .000 24	.694★★ .000 24	1.000 24.000

★★. Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Tableau#5 : Corrélation entre les trois critères des résultats du post-test

		Message	Interaction	Usage
Message	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1.000 24.000	.776★★ .000 24	.862★★ .000 24
Interaction	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	. 776★★ .000 24	1.000 24.000	.837★★ .000 24
Usage	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.862★★ .000 24	.837★★ .000 24	1.000 24.000

★★. Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

minoritaire, les étudiants ont amélioré leur compétence langagière à l'oral, et ce plus particulièrement chez les étudiants habitant la résidence. L'analyse des résultats a révélé que c'est le critère usage social qui a vu les plus grands gains. La corrélation démontre que les trois critères se corrèlent fortement (un rapport positif fort entre les trois critères).

Les gains chez les ER sont plus évidents que chez les ENR. Les ER étaient plus à l'aise avec la langue, ils ont fait des gains par rapport à l'usage familier, à l'interaction, à la pragmatique de la langue, et au français social. Alors qu'au pré-test, ils ne faisaient que répondre timidement aux questions, ils nous sont apparus plus confiants au post-test et élaboraient leurs réponses, posaient des questions et parlaient avec facilité et aisance : ils participaient à la conversation et ils élaboraient leurs réponses et participaient activement audialogue.

Nous avons aussi constaté qu'ils autocorrigeaient, dans le sens où ils commençaient à dire quelque chose et se rattrapaient : ils n'avaient plus 'honte' de leurs fautes, ils les rectifiaient. Les ER prenaient souvent l'initiative dans le déroulement de la discussion et étaient à l'aise de participer à une conversation libre. Par contre, ils ne portaient pas attention à la précision grammaticale de leurs énoncés, ce qui était aussi le cas au pré-test.

De leur côté, les ENR étaient quant à eux beaucoup plus passifs, ils ne s'engageaient pas beaucoup dans la conversation, et ne répondaient qu'uniquement aux questions tel qu'au pré-test. Ils ne répondaient que le plus brièvement possible. Leurs énoncés

étaient directs, sans élaboration, ni pause, ni interjection. Il n'y avait rien qui indiquait une conversation sociale, c'était comme un examen oral : répondre aux questions. Ces résultats sont comparables à ceux de Levasseur-Ouiment, F., & McMahon, F. (2007) qui ont également trouvé que les locuteurs L2 de l'anglais qui habitaient dans une résidence de type " foreign language housing » aux États-Unis avaient fait de plus grands gains à l'oral , démontraient plus de confiance dans le leur L2 et prenaient part à plus d'activités extra curriculaires que des locuteurs de l'anglais L2 inscrits à la même université qui n'avaient pas fait ce genre d'arrangement hospitalier

L'analyse du questionnaire, a également révélé que contrairement aux étudiants du groupe ENR, Les étudiants ER avaient plus d'intérêts pour le campus universitaire et les activités parascolaires. Ils participaient aux évènements, aux sorties, aux fêtes organisées à la résidence. Les étudiants du groupe ER venaient au campus simplement pour assister à leur cours. Pour les ENR, les endroits communs tels que le salon des étudiants étaient seulement pour manger et se reposer entre les cours, et non pas pour se rassembler et participer aux activités sociales et extrascolaires du campus.

Les résultats de cette étude suggère donc que les étudiants ER ont acquis un sentiment d'appartenance à la langue et à leur milieu (ils ont tous exprimé le désir de vouloir continuer de vivre à la résidence). Il semble que pour eux le français est devenu plus qu'un outil d'instruction, mais bien une langue de communication et d'expression du quotidien. En effet, le français dans la résidence devient « socially meaningful » (Myers-Scotten, 2006, p.110). Au lieu d'être uniquement la langue d'instruction, le français devient la langue que l'apprenant identifie comme la langue de la communication sociale, qui est « socially diagnostic» pour employer une autre de ses expressions. L'usage de la langue mène à identifier les étudiants comme appartenant à un groupe social particulier et à des activités précises.

D'après Myers-Scotten (2006), lorsque l'apprenant se trouve dans un groupe et s'identifie à ce groupe langagier, il ou elle acquiert une certaine estime de soi qui est principalement établie quand l'apprenant se compare aux autres membres du groupe, et sent une certaine aisance à parler la langue cible. Les étudiants, qui habitaient la résidence semblaient avoir développé ce sentiment d'appartenance ce qui pourrait expliquer comment,

en quelques mois, ils ont fait des gains marqués au niveau de l'usage de la langue sociale.

Les attitudes envers la langue sont importantes dans cette étude parce que c'est l'attitude de l'apprenant envers la langue qui « tied them to language learning outcomes (Pavlenko, 2005, p.31). La motivation est très importante pour le développement soutenu de la langue, mais l'attitude envers la langue et son usage est la clé pour ouvrir ce trésor de langage appris : je m'identifie avec la langue, donc je parle la langue.

Conclusion

Cette étude préliminaire démontre le rôle important de la résidence universitaire pour promouvoir l'acquisition de la langue. La littérature sur l'acquisition des langues abonde d'études qui supportent les bienfaits pédagogiques pour les apprenants de vivre dans la langue cible: l'apprenant acquiert la langue lorsqu'il est en contact avec cette dernière, ce qui facilite l'acquisition de l'usage social et de la pragmatique de la langue.

Lorsqu'on se trouve dans un milieu minoritaire où la langue a un statut officiel dans le pays mais où une autre langue domine, la situation devient plus complexe. Grâce à la résidence, les étudiants qui suivent leurs études postsecondaires dans la langue minoritaire - le français dans ce cas - acquièrent un autre aspect de la langue qui leur permet d'adopter le français comme langue de communication générale et d'expression personnelle dans des interactions diverses quotidiennes à l'extérieur de la salle de classe. La résidence a donné la chance aux étudiants de s'approprier la langue et d'établir un lien personnel avec le français au-delà de son rôle instrumental.

Cette étude constitue la première étape dans une série d'études que nous désirons entreprendre. D'abord, nous voulons faire une reproduction de cette étude avec deux groupes ER et ENR égaux d'au moins 20 participants chacun dans laquelle les entretiens avec les participants seraient enregistrés et évalués par deux correcteurs indépendants. Ce changement répondrait à une lacune dans notre étude: l'objectivité des correcteurs de même que fiabilité inter-évaluateurs. De façon qualitative, il serait intéressant de suivre le progrès des étudiants en leur demandant d'écrire un journal individuel dans lequel ils reflèteraient sur leur vécu à la

résidence. Une analyse qualitative des thèmes récurrents abordés par les participants permettrait de mettre en lumière certains facteurs qui sembleraient affectés l'expérience en résidence et par conséquent l'apprentissage du français. De plus, il serait intéressant de faire des études de cas longitudinales dans lesquelles le progrès langagier des participants serait étudié tout au long de leur parcours universitaire.

En plus de l'amélioration des compétences orales dans l'usage social du français, l'étude nous a révélé une situation linguistique fortement intéressante. Dans cette institution, plusieurs variétés du français sont parlées et sont en contact constant quotidiennement : français canadien, français européen, plusieurs variétés de français de pays africains de l'Afrique du Nord et l'Afrique de l'Ouest, français albertain, et bien sûr, une variété distincte de français des étudiants de l'immersion (tel que décrit par Lyster (1987). Toutes ces variétés, subissent l'influence de l'anglais dans ce contexte. Lors des entretiens oraux, on a constaté que les participants partageaient des traits distincts d'une variété de français qui est devenu la leur, une sorte de code ou de lingua-franca qu'ils ont développée pour communiquer socialement entre eux. Cette diversité linguistique fera ultérieurement l'objet de recherches dans ce contexte de minorité francophone.

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Purpose and Goals of SLIC

The Second Languages and Intercultural Council aims to fulfill the following objectives:

- To enable Alberta teachers to become more aware of the issues of culture and second languages

- To enhance the knowledge, skills and understanding of teachers in the areas of second languages and culture studies through both inservice and preservice education

- To disseminate information about existing practices, programs and resources in second languages and intercultural education

- To encourage research that will result in the development and dissemination of innovative practices, programs and resources in second languages and intercultural education

- To provide advice and expertise to the Alberta Teachers' Association on learning and working conditions, curricula and teacher preparation as related to second languages and intercultural education

- To act through the Alberta Teachers' Association as an advocate for the enhancement and promotion of second languages and intercultural education