

Understanding Anxiety: Implications for Teachers of Early French Immersion

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this project is to examine the research literature on Language Anxiety associated with foreign or second language learning and to consider the implications for practice especially in the Early French Immersion classroom. In Chapter 1, I introduce my topic and share how I became interested in this area. I also make clear connections to the BC Curriculum. Chapter 2 overviews the related theories and research which guided me in the creation of a workshop for teachers called: “Understanding Anxiety: Implications for Teachers of Early French Immersion,” which is explained in Chapter 3.

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Chapter 1

My Experience with Language Anxiety

The following research project will focus on Language Anxiety, the situation specific anxiety associated with learning a new language. As a French Immersion teacher with nearly 10 years of experience, I have struggled to understand the specific stumbling blocks and anxieties brought on both by learning, and studying in, a new language. I believe that the development of this understanding will ultimately facilitate the creation of a classroom environment that allows for the optimal learning of all students.

Having been a student of French Immersion myself, I generally believed that I was someone who enjoyed learning new languages. I do not specifically remember learning French; it was simply my language of instruction. Recognizing the benefits of accessing a second language, I have periodically studied other languages, notably German, Japanese and Mandarin. I did not have nearly the same success studying these languages. In spite of the high value that I place on language learning, I found these experiences frustrating. I did not make the progress that I expected to make and found that I could not express myself effectively enough given my expectations of myself. I ultimately abandoned my attempts to learn these languages.

Now, as a French Immersion teacher, I witness students demonstrating similar frustration when attempting to learn French. Based on my experiences, I perceive that these are often not students who are struggling with academics in general rather those who seem to find the process associated with learning a new language to be particularly difficult. Students who are otherwise engaged and happy to participate suddenly become reluctant to speak or write and abandon attempts to speak if they do not have all the right words. At times, they even go so far as to cause disruptions in class as they attempt to avoid their tasks. Given that there are no indications that

these students have learning disabilities, I went in search of other explanations of their language learning challenges.

In my review of the literature, I found a body of work on Language Anxiety (LA) associated with learning a second or a foreign language. It rang very true for me in my own language studies as well as in my observations of my students. As this particular type of anxiety is specific to second and foreign language learning, it is of particular interest in the French Immersion classroom setting which devotes 80% of the day to having students learn and work in a language other than their mother tongue.

Connections to Curriculum Documents

The term *foreign* typically refers to, “coming from or belonging to a different place or country” (Merriam-Webster, 2015). That being said, much of the research on LA has centered around true foreign language learning. That is, students learning a language that is foreign to their country. While French is not a foreign language in Canada, it is an unfamiliar language to French Immersion students and they rarely hear it outside their classroom. In these ways, their conditions of language learning mirror those of foreign language learning.

Looking at the British Columbia (BC) Language Arts curriculum document for French Immersion K-7 (1997), there is a recognition that, as students advance through the program, their need to communicate ideas becomes more sophisticated and, at times surpasses their language skills in French. The document also states that it is important that students maintain their self-confidence and that they be aware of the fact that any difficulties they face in expressing themselves are the result of the complexity and the diversity of what they wish to express and not of any deficit in their language skills and knowledge.

This section of the curriculum document acknowledges that, in a new language, students' ideas are generally more complex than their language competence. How do we therefore address this mismatch between students' ideas and their ability to communicate those ideas? While some students seem able to manage this tension, others find it to be a very anxiety-producing situation; one that, to a certain extent, I find impedes their ability to learn the language. Unfortunately, the curriculum document offers no information regarding suggestions as to how teachers can assist students who are struggling to retain their confidence in their language abilities and in themselves. The LA research has looked at anxiety and its negative impact on student language learning as well as at strategies for assisting students to develop reasonable language learning expectations of themselves in order to reduce anxiety and to facilitate learning.

Guiding Questions

As I approach the topic of LA in students, there are two research questions that will guide my inquiry. These are:

(1) What role does LA play in learning a new language? By addressing this question, I will develop a better understanding of the specific characteristics of LA and how it differs or resembles anxiety associated with other learning.

(2) How may we address LA with students? Answering this question leads me to the development of strategies to be used by teachers when addressing LA with students.

The following literature review provides the theoretical background necessary to examine LA in the classroom and to then apply that knowledge to the French Immersion context.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The process by which people develop language, particularly second language, has long been of interest to researchers and educators. Some people effectively learn multiple languages while others struggle with second language acquisition (SLA). Researchers have identified several variables that affect successful SLA, including motivation (Gardner, 2011), language learning difficulties (Sparks & Patton, 2013) and anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986). The particular focus of this paper is anxiety in the second or foreign language classroom. Anxiety is a relevant issue in today's diverse language classrooms and research indicates that it can affect students' ultimate success and achievement (MacIntyre & Doucette, 2010).

The purpose of this paper is to develop an in-depth understanding of the causes, related issues and implications of anxiety among students learning a new language as well as practical strategies for reducing it. In this chapter, I review and discuss the professional literature regarding theories on the process of acquisition of both first and second languages. Secondly, I look at language anxiety in second or foreign language learning among adults and children in different language learning contexts. Thirdly, I discuss the relevance of language anxiety research to the Early French Immersion classroom. Finally, I identify gaps within the current research.

Theoretical Framework: A Context for Learning

Language Acquisition Theories

In order to understand the nature of anxiety in second language learning, one must first understand the context in which languages are learned. Looking at the work of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky, who developed the sociocultural model (Lantolf & Beckett, 2009;

VanPatten & Benati, 2010), allows for the development of an understanding of this process. Positing that ideas are constructed through interaction with others, he theorized that thought is actually internalized speech and that therefore language precedes thought or knowledge (Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Powell & Kalina, 2009).

Sociocultural theory claims that all learning arises from participation in cultural activities or settings. These settings may include schools, family or friend interactions, work places, etc. Given that these settings and activities are contingent upon the culture in which they occur, learning is accordingly culturally bound. Language is therefore viewed as a cultural tool which is used purposefully by people in order to interact with their environment in a process referred to as mediation (VanPatten & Benati, 2010).

Vygotsky believed that in order for people, particularly children, to learn a language, they require the support or scaffolding of an adult or a more competent peer. When children are being provided the scaffolding they require to achieve a task that would otherwise be too difficult for them, they are said to be working in their personal Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Powell & Kalina, 2009). According to Vygotsky, learning therefore occurs through culturally bound, social interactions while in one's ZPD.

Second Language Learning Theories

It is rare that a person does not develop a first language (L1); that is, the dominant language spoken at home. In spite of successful L1 acquisition, results vary as to the level of success experienced by second language learners. Researchers have therefore sought to explain the process by which second languages are acquired and the variables that ultimately decide to what extent the student succeeds.

Cummins (1980) has done significant research into the skills and knowledge necessary for effective language use in different contexts by those learning a language. In terms of skills and knowledge, he has divided them into two categories. Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) represent the language of everyday life and of lived experiences. It includes high-frequency and common vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar and is cognitively undemanding (Cummins, 1980; Roessingh, 2006). Conversely, Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) refers to the language proficiency needed to understand curriculum-related content and conceptualize and understand abstract concepts. Academic literacy, the ability to speak, read and write in academic genres, cannot be attained without CALP (Cummins, 1980; Roessingh, 2006).

Gee (1989, 2005) also looks at the ways in which the same language is used in different contexts. In order to do so, he defines the term *discourse* in two different ways: discourse with a lower case 'd' and Discourse with an upper case 'D'. Gee (1989) uses the term discourse as it has generally been understood in the past, as "connected stretches of language that make sense" (p.6). His concept of Discourse, however, encompasses significantly more than simply what is said. Gee (2005) uses the "term 'Discourse,' with a capital 'D,' for ways of combining and integrating language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools, and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity" (p. 21). As a result one's 'discourse' is a part of one's 'Discourse.'

Gee theorises that in any social interaction, we use our knowledge of the expectations of the group to dictate how we interact or communicate. We use a different set of communication rules, or ways of being, when chatting with friends, writing an academic paper and talking to a customer at work. While all three of these actions may occur in the same language, they require

three separate sets of communication rules or Discourses (Gee, 2005). One could argue that students need to develop the Discourse of second language learning in order to successfully orient themselves to SLA. Cummins' BICS and CALP can also be considered Discourses in a given language; one used in everyday interactions with members of the target community while the other is used to succeed in more formal or academic endeavours in the language.

Vygotsky, Cummins and Gee agree that language learning is culturally-bound in social settings and is best learned when students are working in their ZPD (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Students must achieve both a conversational or everyday set of communication skills as well as a formal, academic use of the language and must understand how and when to use each one (Cummins, 1980; Roessingh, 2006). Given these theories on how languages are learned, the socio-educational model of second language acquisition created by Gardner allows for the recognition of both the cultural and the educational contexts in which a new language is learned (Gardner, 2011).

Gardner's (2011) theory focuses attention on four variables within SLA, which I will describe below. The first is integrativeness, which is a cultural variable that assesses the level to which a student is open to the cultural input of the new language. This includes attitudes toward the target language community and interest in interacting with members of that community.

The second variable is attitudes toward the learning situation which is an educational variable. This includes student reactions to any aspect of the learning environment such as attitudes toward instructors, course focus or course materials. Gardner (2011) assumes that integrativeness and attitudes toward the learning situation will be positively correlated with one another as a student's level of integrativeness will influence his or her attitude and reaction to the classroom environment.

The third variable in this model is motivation. Gardner (2011) defines motivation in terms of “motivational intensity (effort), desire to learn the language, and attitudes toward learning the language” (p. 25). The fourth variable in the model is language anxiety, both language classroom anxiety and language use anxiety outside the classroom context. Gardner (2011) states that “individual differences in language anxiety develop as a consequence of experiences with the language, and that high levels of language anxiety will have a negative influence on the development of skill in the language” (p. 25). The model views the educational and cultural variables described above as laying the foundation for student motivation and also as increasing or decreasing student anxiety levels toward using the target language in both social and educational contexts.

Using the socio-educational model of second language acquisition as the theoretical framework through which to examine language anxiety will allow me to examine the current research through the lens of both the educational and the social or cultural contexts in which second language (SL) instruction is rooted.

Language Anxiety in Second Language Acquisition

How is a second language actually learned? SLA research tends to focus on the more practical aspects of second language learning, rather than the theoretical. It focuses on the learners and not the teachers of a second or a foreign language (VanPatten & Benati, 2010). Rather than studying what and how teachers are teaching, SLA research focuses on how learners learn; what skills and mechanisms they possess that allow them to learn a language and how they go about using them to internalize the linguistic system of a new language.

According to VanPatten and Benati (2010), there are two major approaches that dominate the SLA research. The linguistic approach focuses on the mental processes involved in SLA and

ascribes to the belief that language itself is special as it is uniquely human, and that the human brain is equipped at birth with the mechanisms necessary to acquire language. The psychological approach, on the other hand, focuses largely on behaviour and is more concerned with how learners use language. By this approach, language acquisition is the result of one's general learning mechanisms interacting with the outside world.

While the debate of which school of thought is correct is too broad for the scope of this paper, SLA theories have nonetheless helped to define our understanding of how students learn a second language. One such researcher is Stephen Krashen, whose Monitor Model (as cited in Lightbown and Spada, 2013) has continued to influence second language research. This model consisted of five hypotheses about SLA which I will explain below.

The first hypothesis is the *acquisition/learning hypothesis*. This hypothesis suggests that there is a difference between acquiring a language and learning a language. Acquiring a language is equated with 'picking up' a language; that is to say, it is done without conscious attention to form or rules. Learning a language, however, is done consciously, through the understanding and application of form and rules. This hypothesis and the distinction it suggests between acquisition and learning has had real consequences for program development in the classroom as SL teaching has, in general, transitioned from structured-based approaches with a focus on rules and on memorization, to approaches that focus on communication and meaning.

The second hypothesis is the *monitor hypothesis*. This hypothesis suggests that, given adequate time to reflect and sufficient motivation, language learners will use learned knowledge of rules and forms to monitor their own spontaneous language use, created by drawing on acquired language knowledge.

The third hypothesis is the *natural order* hypothesis. This hypothesis suggests that SLA progresses through predictable stages. Goldschneider and DeKeyser (as cited in Lightbown and Spada, 2013) tested this hypothesis and:

Identified a number of variables that contribute to the order. Saliency (how easy it is to notice the morpheme), linguistic complexity (for example, how many elements you have to keep track of), semantic transparency (how clear the meaning is), similarity to a first language form, and frequency in the input all seem to play a role (p.48).

The *comprehensible input* hypothesis suggests that acquisition happens when the learner is exposed to language that is mostly comprehensible but also includes an aspect (vocabulary, grammatical form, language structure) that is a step beyond the learner's current level. This hypothesis is reminiscent of Vygotsky's ZPD, however the comprehensible input model refers only to input, that is, what the learner understands, and not to output, or what the learner can do or say.

Finally, the *affective filter* hypothesis is Krashen's (as cited in Lightbown and Spada, 2013) in which he attempts to explain why some learners, in spite of being exposed to large quantities of comprehensible input, do not acquire the target language. The affective filter "is a metaphorical barrier that prevents learners from acquiring language even when appropriate input is available. *Affect* refers to feelings of anxiety or negative attitudes that ... may be associated with poor learning outcomes" (p. 106).

Some researchers have challenged Krashen's Monitor Model citing either the difficulty in testing his hypotheses or because they do not agree with the conclusions he drew (Lightbown and Spada, 2013). These hypotheses have, however, laid a foundation for second language research and seem to advocate for a more communicative approach to teaching while

maintaining a certain level of direct instruction to assist learners to monitor and to correct their own output.

Even at this early stage in SLA research, Krashen (as cited in Lightbown and Spada, 2013) identified anxiety as a variable affecting student success in SLA. The remainder of this paper will focus on anxiety in the second language learning context.

Language Anxiety Research

Understanding Anxiety

Anxiety is generally grouped into three categories (MacIntyre, 2007; Ay, 2010). In his review of previous literature on language anxiety and language learning motivation, MacIntyre (2007) described these three types of anxiety. *Trait anxiety* is characterized as a pattern of anxiety felt by an individual, regardless of context. That is, anxiety is part of a person's character. *State anxiety*, however, is a reaction to a perceived threat. There is little thought to whether the anxiety provoking situation has occurred before or may occur again. Over time, repeated anxiety in a given context may lead to *situation-specific anxiety*, a typical pattern of behaviour arising every time one encounters the perceived threat (MacIntyre, 2007). Language anxiety falls into the category of situation-specific anxiety as students' anxiety levels increase repeatedly in the face of learning a new language.

Often referred to as Foreign Language Anxiety or FLA, I will use the general term Language Anxiety (LA) as this can refer to anxiety experience when learning either a foreign or a second or even third language. Researchers have been focusing on LA for nearly thirty years. The growing body of research surrounding LA indicates that, left unaddressed, it can affect students' own sense of language competency which can affect their ultimate success and achievement (MacIntyre & Doucette, 2010).

Given these findings, the importance of this research becomes clear for foreign and second language educators. In order to address LA, we must be able to define it, to identify those students who are affected by it, and to develop strategies both for decreasing anxiety-causing classroom practices as well as for empowering students to overcome the negative effects of anxiety.

Anxiety in the L2 Context

The origins of recent LA research stem from the work of Horwitz et al. (1986) who developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which provided a reliable measuring tool by which to identify students with LA (see Appendix B). The researchers tested the FLCAS with seventy-five male and female students aged eighteen to twenty-seven who were taking introductory Spanish classes at the University of Texas. Student responses to two particular questions, “I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language (34%),” and, “I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes (38%),” (p. 130) supported the researchers’ belief in the existence of LA. Horwitz et al. noted that because of the nature of foreign language learning, parallels can be drawn between LA and three performance anxieties: communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation.

Communication apprehension can be characterized by fear or anxiety about communicating with people. This includes speaking in groups or in public, as well as listening to or learning a spoken message. Due to the focus on oral language that is prevalent in many foreign language classes, people who commonly experience anxiety speaking in front of others are likely to experience even greater difficulty speaking in a foreign language class where they do not have a solid grasp of the language and where their performance is constantly monitored

(Horwitz et al., 1986; Awan, Azher, Anwar & Naz, 2010). Communication apprehension particularly affects foreign language learners (FLL) as they recognize that they will almost certainly have difficulty understanding others and making themselves understood (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Test-anxiety and fear of negative evaluation are similar in that they both refer to the process of being judged or evaluated by others. Test-anxiety may result from students' fears that they will fail or that they are not progressing as they should. Fear of negative evaluation may result from formal evaluation such as test-taking, as well as informal, or even imagined, evaluations by teachers and other students (Horwitz et al., 1986; Khattak, Jamshed, Ahmad & Baig, 2011).

Horwitz et al. (1986) cautioned that it is not enough to simply view LA as these three fears interacting in a language learning context. Instead, LA is a distinct set of, "self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process." (p. 128)

Horwitz et al. (1986) also stated that foreign language learning differed from other types of learning and that therefore, LA was separate from other forms of anxiety associated with learning because foreign language learning affects one's ability to understand and, particularly, to make oneself understood. This can affect students' perceptions that they are reasonably intelligent individuals able to navigate social situations due to an understanding of social and cultural mores. When studying a foreign language, these perceptions may be challenged as "individual communication attempts will be evaluated according to uncertain or even unknown linguistic and socio-cultural standards" (p.128). This means that attempts to communicate in the target language may challenge students' self-concepts as intelligent and competent

communicators, which in turn may lead to reluctance to communicate and anxiety toward foreign language learning. Horwitz et al. argued that the impact of foreign language learning on students' self-concept and self-expression is what sets LA apart from anxiety associated with learning in other academic fields.

In the years since Horwitz et al. made these claims, researchers have continued to find that challenges to a student's self-concept are a cause of LA. Ay (2010) surveyed fifth, sixth and seventh grade Turkish students who were studying English as a foreign language and found that students who communicated fluently with others in their native language had difficulty doing so in a foreign language. This is true of anyone learning a new language, however, some students perceived the activities undertaken in foreign language classroom as a threat to their self-perception.

Anxiety among Foreign-Language Learners

To date, most research on language anxiety has focussed on high school and university FLL. These students do not tend to hear the target language outside the classroom. While this research does not parallel the language learning experience of children in language immersion programs, it does bear some similarities. In both cases, the language being studied is not spoken in the larger community outside the classroom. This means that the students do not necessarily have an available target community with whom to interact. Also, students in both cases are required to learn and communicate in a language in which they are not fluent. Also, this research has allowed for the development of an understanding of language anxiety in general as it has been conducted with students of various cultures and learning contexts.

Much of the research done on anxiety with FLL has used Horwitz et al.'s FLCAS to identify students with LA. Research on anxiety using the FLCAS with FLL has yielded varying

results. Sparks and Patton (2013) studied a group of students in the United States over a period of ten years. They began their study when the students were in the first grade, well before students began any foreign language instruction. Students' L1 skills were monitored over the years and the students completed the FLCAS in secondary school, once foreign language instruction had begun. Sparks and Patton found that there was a correlation between students with lower L1 skills prior to second language instruction and higher levels of anxiety on the FLCAS. They therefore surmised that the FLCAS was identifying students whose LA may have stemmed from L1 language learning difficulties. They stated that it may not be possible to separate anxiety from language skill, particularly self-perceptions of language skill during the language learning process. Therefore, questionnaires used to identify anxious students may actually be assessing students' self-knowledge or self-perception of their language learning skills.

Also, Jee's study (2014) of university students in the United States who were studying Korean as a foreign language, found that students with high achievement in first term tended to have higher levels of LA according to the FLCAS in both first and second terms than students with lower achievement. In this case, the anxiety may have arisen from students' motivation to perform well which affected the effort applied to their language course.

One may argue therefore, that the FLCAS is not necessarily a measurement of the causes of LA, nor does it judge whether the anxiety is positively or negatively affecting learning, it is simply a tool for identifying students with high levels of LA in the classroom. As I am using the socio-educational model to identify and address LA that is the result of the sociocultural and the educational variables that ultimately affect student motivation and therefore effort, anxiety as a result of language learning difficulties and anxiety that motivates learners are not the focus of

this paper. It is important, however, to acknowledge these variables as possibly affecting FLCAS scores.

In an attempt to uncover the underlying causes of anxiety as well as its effects on language learning, researchers often follow up the FLCAS with interviews, questionnaires and analyses of student marks. In one such study, Yan and Horwitz (2008) interviewed 21 English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) students at a university in China. These students were selected from an initial sample of 532 students and represented students of various English language proficiency levels and anxiety levels as determined by the FLCAS. It is important to keep in mind that cultural and educational differences exist between Canadian and Chinese learners and that there is always the inherent possibility of bias and subjectivity when interpreting verbal data. However, several patterns identified by Yan and Horwitz (2008) have also been identified by other researchers in other contexts.

For example, students in this study (Yan & Horwitz, 2008) who were identified as high-anxiety students rated themselves as lower in ability than did students with moderate or low anxiety levels. The researchers do not include information about the actual ability levels of students in the study, therefore it is impossible to know whether or not the students' perceptions of their abilities are accurate. However, several other researchers in different countries have also had similar findings (Gregersen, 2003). In fact, language anxiety has consistently been found to be more closely linked with perceived language ability than with actual ability (Liu, 2013).

In a study of EFL students in Chile, Gregersen (2003) found that many highly anxious students tended to overestimate the number of errors that they made and did not see making errors as a necessary and positive step in language learning. They were afraid of making errors, were uncomfortable with teacher correction, felt they were constantly being evaluated and

viewed corrective feedback as a failure. These highly anxious students also tended to self-correct much more often (87% more often) than their classmates. Rather than focusing on the message they were conveying, they became distracted by the vocabulary and grammatical structure of their message. As a result, they also tended to limit the topics they discussed to a superficial level and avoided intellectual or emotional ideas in order to reduce the risk of making errors.

Researchers studying foreign language learners in other countries and contexts have had similar findings about LA and error correction

Gkonou (2013) administered the FLCAS to 128 adults who were intermediate to advanced EFL students at three private language schools in Greece. Based on their results on the FLCAS, 19 students were invited to take part in a diary study of which eight students ultimately took part. Studying the eight weeks of diary entries, Gkonou found that, among these learners, LA was not necessarily linked to a fear of negative evaluation by teachers and peers. Anxious students felt that making mistakes affected their own language progress and resulted in a fear of failure and a personal feeling of low-efficacy. Gkonou (2013) did find however, that overt or harsh correction of student errors contributed to LA when speaking.

Anxiety among Second-Language Learners

Studies with second-language learners also indicate that students with LA tend to underestimate their abilities. Using questionnaires, MacIntyre and Doucette (2010) studied 238 French-as-a-second-language (FSL) students in grades ten to twelve in Nova Scotia. The questionnaires included questions that measured such learning variables as preoccupation, hesitation, perceived communication competence, anxiety and willingness to communicate. The researchers found that “those who are more anxious about speaking the L2 are likely to have an overly negative, biased view of their competence” (p. 167) and tend to underestimate their

language ability. The researchers, however, were surprised to find out that preoccupation with past failures was *not* a cause of anxiety; in fact it was a predictor of high perceived competence. MacIntyre and Doucette (2010) hypothesize that a focus on unpleasant past events may actually be a motivating factor for students as they learn from past mistakes and perceive that they will do better in the future. A case can therefore be made for the value of repetition in reducing LA in second language learning.

Confirming the results from the preceding study, MacIntyre and Blackie (2012) surveyed FSL students at a Cape Breton high school and found once again that students with LA experienced lower perceived competence. The researchers also found that students' perceived competence correlated significantly with a tendency to hesitate before communicating in the L2. When communicating, response time is fundamental. MacIntyre and Blackie (2012) noted that those who respond quickly tend to be viewed as successful by teachers and peers. Learners who hesitate to speak or require extra time to prepare are at risk of being misunderstood, perceived by teachers and other students as less competent, disinterested, unwilling to learn and even lacking in effort. Teacher and peer perceptions of these students therefore affect student marks and students' own perceptions of their abilities. Over time, hesitation and feelings of anxiety may form a stable pattern, resulting in an unwillingness to communicate in the target language (MacIntyre & Blackie, 2012; MacIntyre & Doucette, 2010).

From the research noted above, we see that in foreign and second language programs, students with LA tend to underestimate their abilities, resulting in a tendency to hesitate before speaking or even being unwilling to communicate. When they do choose to or have to speak in class, they tend to overestimate the number of errors that they make and find error correction by teachers to be anxiety producing. Allowing for more wait time to convey to students that it is

acceptable and even expected that they may need time to formulate their responses, repeating activities to allow students to learn from past mistakes and celebrating errors as a positive step in language learning may assist in increasing student willingness to communicate and decreasing LA.

Anxiety among Immersion Students

There are only a few researchers who have studied anxiety in immersion students in Canada and they have had very different results. In the studies noted here, the students were the same age, however, in one case they were Early Immersion Students, that is, they had been enrolled in Immersion education since kindergarten or grade one; and in the other, they were Late Immersion Students, that is, students who studied in their L1 in primary school and then enrolled in the Immersion program in Grade 7. Keeping in mind the differences in the amount of exposure to the language that the students had experienced, allows for an interesting perspective on the effects of time on LA.

Wesely (2013) surveyed sixth and seventh grade graduates of Early Immersion French and Spanish programs in the United States to understand the nature of language anxiety among immersion students, as well as to determine the role of anxiety in student choices to continue or not with the immersion program. Wesely's results indicated that, in general, students did not feel anxious about communicating in their target language. Students indicated that they had experienced LA, however, during moments when they had to perform in the classroom or to answer a direct question. Also, students indicated that they became anxious about making mistakes and how it would look. These anxiety causing situations mirror Horwitz et al's (1986) fear of negative evaluation and communication apprehension. Wesely also found that, when students were not motivated to answer a question but were required to, some students became

anxious. Looking at this finding through the lens of the socio-educational model, among these students, anxiety increased as motivation decreased.

In general, Wesely found that this group of students did not indicate that LA affected their decision whether or not to continue in the immersion program. Wesely posits that “although experiencing anxiety, [these immersion students] were familiar enough with anxiety-producing situations related to language learning that it did not affect their decision to continue in the program” (p. 240). It is important to consider that Wesely only surveyed students who had successfully completed elementary immersion programs. Several students remembered feelings of language anxiety in earlier grades, when they were less familiar with the target language, but seemed to have overcome that anxiety as time passed and their exposure to the language increased. Wesely did not seek out students who had left the program at an earlier age to see if they had experienced LA or if it had been a factor in them leaving the program.

MacIntyre, Baker, Clément and Donovan (2002) had very different results when they surveyed students in grades seven to nine enrolled in a late French Immersion program in a Canadian junior high school. Measuring the language anxiety of students in both their L1 and in French, their L2, MacIntyre et al. (2002) found that anxiety was significantly higher in the students’ L2 than in their L1. They also found a significant correlation between language anxiety, L2 perceived competence and, ultimately, L2 willingness to communicate in both grades eight and nine. While language anxiety was present in grade seven, it did not significantly affect students’ perceived competence. MacIntyre et al. hypothesize that among these students new to second language immersion, language anxiety might not *yet* have been associated with lower perceived competence.

Conclusions

Over the course of my research, one of the key research findings for me has been that students with LA underestimate their language abilities. This can lead to hesitation or even an unwillingness to communicate as well as a tendency to limit themselves to familiar, surface level ideas when communicating. It is therefore important that teachers discuss the process of language acquisition and develop clear and reasonable expectations with students. This will allow students to adjust any preconceived notions that they may have about the process of and time frame for learning a new language. (Atasheneh & Izadi, 2012; Dewaele & Ip, 2013; Horwitz, 1988).

Through this process of discussion, teachers can establish an understanding among students that they will not be ridiculed or judged for making errors, that mistakes are a necessary part of the learning process, that the other students and even the teacher have suffered similar fears and that attempts to try something new will be met with appreciation from both the teacher and peers. In doing so, teachers can reduce uncertainty and establish themselves in the role of helper rather than that of judge. (Atasheneh & Izadi, 2012; Dewaele & Ip, 2013; Gkonou, 2013).

From an immersion perspective, the limited research available indicates that students eventually may overcome LA but that it is present at the beginning of their SLA. Even from a young age, we can help students to understand what reasonable expectations are in terms of both their comprehension and their communication abilities. Through this process we may increase student motivation to meet reasonable goals or expectations while reducing anxiety.

Future Research

As already noted, most of the research thus far has focused on high school and university students who are taking language courses as part of their educational program. Little research has

addressed anxiety in children nor has it tracked anxiety levels over time to see how increased exposure to the target language affects LA.

In addition, more research is needed when looking at students enrolled in immersion programs such as the French Immersion program in Canada. These students often begin their language learning at a young age and study all of their school subjects in their target language, rather than simply taking a language course. Research is needed to see how anxiety affects students who are not necessarily studying the target language but who are, instead, using the language in an authentic way as a means of studying their school subjects.

The suggestions and strategies put forward in the research for addressing LA were generally the result of suggestions put forth by students or conclusions drawn by researchers regarding what could be done, based on their findings. I found no research that studied students before and after having changes implemented in their classrooms targeting LA. More research is needed to uncover how explicitly addressing LA in the classroom affects student anxiety levels.

Finally, when looking through the lens of socio-educational and sociocultural theories, one interesting point made by Wesely (2009) is that the concept of “target culture” becomes problematic with immersion students. Students are not learning the target language by learning about the language and the culture; they are learning it through content-based instruction (math, science, etc). They are simply having their L1 content delivered in an L2. They may, in fact, have no access whatsoever to members of or information about the target culture. Research is needed to determine how this affects their motivation to acquire the language of study and ultimately their levels of anxiety.

Chapter 3

Professional Development Presentation

Workshop Design

In order to introduce French Immersion teachers to the concept of Language Anxiety, I created the PowerPoint presentation “Understanding Anxiety: Implications for Teachers of Early French Immersion.” Through this presentation, my goal is to convey to teachers the importance of addressing LA in their classrooms as well as to offer them practical strategies for addressing it with their students.

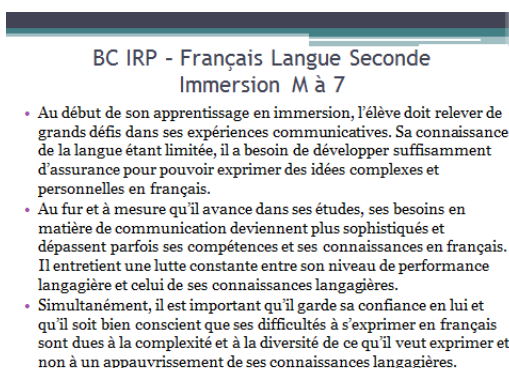
As a practising teacher, I recognize that time is of the utmost importance. That includes both a teacher’s time outside the classroom and time with students in the classroom. Teachers need to feel that the Pro-D being offered is relevant and offers them information or strategies that are new to them. They also want Pro-D to be delivered in the most effective but time efficient means possible; they do not wish to spend two hours to achieve what could have been achieved in one hour. In terms of classroom time, teachers already find that they have too much to cover and not enough time in which to cover it. There are many programs available for teaching a myriad of topics in the classroom, from anti-bullying programs to virtues education to self-confidence building; there simply is not time to do it all.

My presentation is therefore aimed at presenting some of the background theory that has led to current SLA and LA research as I believe that having this framework is important in order to understand how LA fits into the larger context of language learning. Following that, I present how LA negatively affects both students’ perceptions of themselves and of their performance and finally I provide strategies for addressing LA that teachers can implement into what they are already doing. The purpose of this is to show teachers that with a few changes to the way they

present information to students and the way they talk about expectations and student errors, they can reduce uncertainty and LA among students; it does not require a large time investment. My main goal is to have teachers walk away from this presentation with new ideas they can implement easily and immediately and to have a better understanding of LA

Appendix A features the PowerPoint presentation, “*Understanding Anxiety: Implications for Teachers of Early French Immersion,*” while, in this chapter, the PowerPoint slides are grouped into sections. Following each grouping I describe how the content of the slides reflects the theory and research discussed in Chapter 2 as well as how the information provided and the discussion that it elicits will be relevant and beneficial to classroom teachers.

Curriculum Links: Slide 2



BC IRP - Français Langue Seconde
Immersion M à 7

- Au début de son apprentissage en immersion, l'élève doit relever de grands défis dans ses expériences communicatives. Sa connaissance de la langue étant limitée, il a besoin de développer suffisamment d'assurance pour pouvoir exprimer des idées complexes et personnelles en français.
- Au fur et à mesure qu'il avance dans ses études, ses besoins en matière de communication deviennent plus sophistiqués et dépassent parfois ses compétences et ses connaissances en français. Il entretient une lutte constante entre son niveau de performance langagière et celui de ses connaissances langagières.
- Simultanément, il est important qu'il garde sa confiance en lui et qu'il soit bien conscient que ses difficultés à s'exprimer en français sont dues à la complexité et à la diversité de ce qu'il veut exprimer et non à un appauvrissement de ses connaissances langagières.

I start my presentation by looking at the quote from the BC IRP regarding the struggles faced by French Immersion students. Their understanding of and need to communicate certain ideas often surpasses their ability to communicate those ideas in French. The document indicates that students need to find a balance between their ability to comprehend and their ability to produce language as well as to maintain confidence in themselves by understanding that communication difficulties are not the result of language or intellectual deficiencies on their part, but are caused but the complexity and diversity of their immersing communication needs.

In spite of the fact that this is in our curriculum document and that teachers in general would agree that, in their experience, this struggle is true for their students, there is very little information available for teachers regarding how exactly to assist students in their need to maintain their confidence and to understand how they are expected to be academically successful in a language in which they cannot always express their complex ideas.

Language Theory: Slides 3-7

What do we know about language learning?

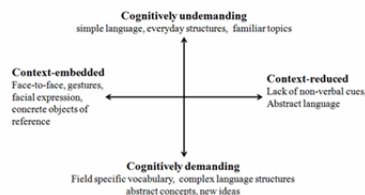
- Sociocultural theory : children learn language with the support (scaffolding) of adults or more competent peers through social interaction.
- With the necessary scaffolding, children can achieve more than they could independently.
- This zone in which students can be successful with scaffolding is called the Zone of Proximal Development.
- As children learn, their ZPD expands to encompass more difficult and complex ideas.



Cummins - BICS and CALP

- Language skills can be divided into two categories:
- Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) – the language of everyday life and lived experiences.
- Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) – the language proficiency needed to attain academic literacy; to understand abstract concepts.

Cummins - BICS and CALP



Gee - Discourses

- discourse is "connected stretches of language that make sense." (Gee, 1989, p. 6)
- Discourse (with a capital 'D') is "a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network', or to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful 'role'." (Gee, 1990, p.143)

Discussion

- What are some of the underlying beliefs and values of students and teachers of French Immersion?
- Which beliefs and values might need to be made more explicit?
- How might the theories of Vygotsky, Cummins and Gee relate to language anxiety?

Once I have established the curricular link to this presentation, I introduce the language theories that have influenced language acquisition research. Starting with Vygotsky, I summarize sociocultural theory along with scaffolding and the ZPD. This allows for a general understanding of learning as a social process that takes place in cultural settings and requires the scaffolding of others who are more competent to allow students to reach beyond their own independent competencies and to be successful in their ZPD (Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Powell & Kalina, 2009).

Keeping Vygotsky's theories in mind, I then move onto the work of Cummins. Through the explanation of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), I present the notion that, in order for successful SLA to occur, students require different skill sets to use in different situations. Immersion students require a familiar everyday grasp of the language in order to communicate with each other, with the teacher and with members of the target community. These students also need to develop academic literacy in the target language (in this case, in French) in order to succeed at school as it is their language of instruction (Cummins, 1980; Roessingh, 2006).

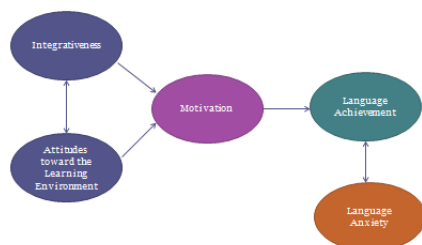
Finally, keeping in mind Vygotsky's theories on learning being culturally bound, social interactions and Cummins' theories on BICS and CALP, essentially two different language skill sets within one language, I present Gee's theory of D/discourse (Gee, 2005). Using the example of students' home or Primary Discourse, I introduce the notion that teachers and students in an Immersion context have their own Discourse or set of behaviours, beliefs and values. Students who have not learned the Discourse of the Immersion student may struggle in class. Reviewing the theories of these three researchers, I provide time for teachers to discuss the following questions in small groups.

- What are some of the underlying beliefs and values of students and teachers of French Immersion?
- Which beliefs and values might need to be made more explicit?
- How might the theories of Vygotsky, Cummins and Gee relate to language anxiety?

The discussion prompted by these questions allows me to link the theories discussed thus far back to the topic of anxiety and to therefore transition to more specific SLA theories that consider anxiety.

Second Language Acquisition Theories: Slides 8-12

Gardner - Socio-Educational Theory cont.



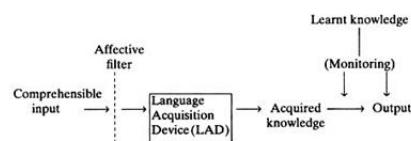
Gardner - Socio-Educational Theory cont.

- As a result of experiences with the language, Gardner posits that individual differences in language anxiety will develop and that high levels of language anxiety will have a negative impact on skill development.

Krashen - Monitor Model / Input Hypothesis

- The acquisition/learning hypothesis
- The monitor hypothesis
- The natural order hypothesis
- The comprehensible input hypothesis
- The affective filter hypothesis

Krashen - Monitor Model / Input Hypothesis



The Input Hypothesis Model of L2 learning and production (adapted from Krashen, 1982, pp. 16 and 32; and Gregg, 1984)



Discussion

- In your experience, which aspects of Gardner's or Krashen's theories are relevant in the Immersion classroom?
- Which aspects of these theories contradict or challenge your understanding of Second Language Acquisition in the French Immersion classroom?

The first two slides above introduce Gardner's socio-educational theory. As stated in Chapter 2, Gardner theorizes that students' motivation is affected both by their integrativeness, their openness to the cultural input of the new language and by their attitudes toward the learning situation (Gardner, 2011). Student motivation then affects overall language achievement which affects, and is affected by, language anxiety.

The next two slides introduce Krashen's Monitor Model, also known as the Input Hypothesis. I briefly explain the five hypotheses and use the diagram in order to understand how Krashen views the five hypotheses each playing a role in SLA. Recognizing that this model has been challenged by researchers, as noted in Chapter 2, this model has nonetheless helped to lay the foundation for SLA research and provides teachers a visual representation of the processes involved in SLA.

Linking these theories back to teachers' own experiences in the classroom, I use two questions to encourage discussion about whether or not teachers find these models helpful, relevant or accurate:

- In your experience, which aspects of Gardner's or Krashen's theories are relevant in the Immersion classroom?
- Which aspects of these theories contradict or challenge your understanding of Second Language Acquisition in the French Immersion classroom?

Understanding Language Anxiety: Slides 13-16

Understanding Anxiety

- Trait anxiety : anxiety that is part of a person's character; that is felt by an individual, regardless of context.
- State anxiety : a reaction to a perceived threat.
- Situation-specific anxiety : a pattern of anxiety arising every time one encounters a specific situation.

Language Anxiety



Language Anxiety

- Horwitz draws parallels between language anxiety and 3 performance anxieties:

- communication apprehension
- test anxiety
- fear of negative evaluation.



Language Anxiety

- Second language learning differs from other types of learning because:

- it affects one's ability to understand and to be understood.
- attempts to communicate may challenge students' self-concepts as intelligent and competent communicators.
- a new language involves new and unknown linguistic and socio-cultural standards.



These slides introduce Language Anxiety as defined by Horwitz et al. (1986). This section of the presentation focuses on establishing an understanding of LA as relating to but remaining separate and distinct from other types of anxiety. Referring back to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, I create a connection to the idea that speaking a new language is not simply a matter of translation; it involves involving oneself in a culture, or at the very least, a linguistic code, that is unfamiliar.

The Effects of Language Anxiety: Slides 17-19

Students with Language Anxiety tend to:

- Underestimate their communication competence and overestimate the number of errors they make.
- View errors and corrective feedback as failures. They do not see making errors as a necessary and positive step in language learning.

Students with Language Anxiety tend to:

- Limit the topics they discuss to a superficial level and avoid intellectual or emotional ideas to keep from making errors.
- Hesitate before speaking. Over time, hesitation and anxiety may form a stable pattern, resulting in an unwillingness to communicate in the target language.

Discussion

- What is your personal experience with Language Anxiety?
- What observations have you made in your classroom regarding Language Anxiety?
- What strategies have you tried in the past to address Language Anxiety? Were they successful? If not, why not? Elaborate on one successful strategy.

These slides present the effects of Language Anxiety on students. The first slide provides information about how students' perceptions of themselves and of their learning are affected by LA. The second slide relates to student behaviours that arise as a result of the student perceptions noted on the previous slide. After these slides have been presented, I allow time for discussion about teachers' experience with LA using the following questions:

- What is your personal experience with Language Anxiety?
- What observations have you made in your classroom regarding Language Anxiety?
- What strategies have you tried in the past to address Language Anxiety? Were they successful? If not, why not? Elaborate on one successful strategy.

Addressing Language Anxiety: Slides 20-25

Addressing Language Anxiety

- Teachers can:
 - allow students more wait time to convey that it is acceptable and even expected to take time to formulate responses.
 - repeat activities to allow students to learn from past mistakes.

Addressing Language Anxiety

- Through class discussions, teachers can ensure that:
 - students have an accurate understanding of the process of language acquisition as well as clear and reasonable expectations of what is expected of them, why it is expected and when they will be expected to master a given concept.

Addressing Language Anxiety

- Students need to understand that:
 - mistakes are a necessary part of the learning process.
 - the other students and even the teacher have suffered similar fears.
 - they will not be ridiculed or judged for making errors.
 - attempts to try something new will be met with appreciation from both teachers and peers.



Addressing Language Anxiety

- Initiating discussion with students about anxiety and about reasonable expectations for language learning will reduce uncertainty and will allow teachers to establish themselves in the role of helper rather than that of judge.



Discussion

- What is one idea that you are taking away from this presentation?
- What is already working in your classroom to help address anxiety?
- What questions or doubts do you have?
- What further support or information might be helpful to you?

One last thought...

- “Language acquisition proceeds best when the acquirer is ‘open’ to the input, not ‘on the defensive’; not anxious about performance.”

- Dr. Stephen Krashen

These final slides provide practical strategies for teachers regarding ways in which to address LA in their classrooms. Once slides 17-23 have been presented, teachers have the opportunity to discuss, in small groups, using the following questions as a guide:

- What is one idea that you are taking away from this presentation?
- What is already working in your classroom to help address anxiety?

- What questions or doubts do you have?
- What further support or information might be helpful to you?

After teachers have had the opportunity to discuss these questions in small groups, the larger group reconvenes and the opportunity is provided for any teachers to share parts of their discussions that they feel are important. Finally, I present slide 21 and close the presentation, providing my contact information should anyone wish more information.

Reflection

In order to create of the PowerPoint presentation, I found myself torn at times between my own learning and the ideas I wished to express and share with my colleagues and the realities of what teachers would find relevant and useful in their practice, without the time to do the extensive research that I have done.

As I began to create my presentation, I decided that I would prefer to take the role of facilitator rather than presenter. While this idea certainly fits with the message of my presentation, my decision was actually more based on my own experiences with Pro-D. When considering a Pro-D presentation, there are a few considerations that I wanted to ensure I kept in mind, in order to ensure that teachers attending my presentation found in as helpful and engaging as possible.

My first consideration was getting right to the point. If teachers have chosen to attend my presentation, then I have to assume that they are interested in my topic and generally believe in the existence of LA. I therefore do not want to spend too much time explaining the rationale for and research behind the creation of the FLCAS and Horwitz et al's. (1986) work in establishing LA as a distinct learning anxiety. Should teachers want this background information, I am happy to provide it, however, I do not believe that possessing this information is necessary in order to

understand and address LA. For this reason, I have therefore chosen to start my presentation from the position that LA exists and to continue from there rather than spending a lot of time discussing the theories behind the existence of LA.

My second consideration was to treat teachers as colleagues and as professionals. Pro-D for primary teachers often involves demonstrating for teachers the techniques and strategies that can be used with students. While it is certainly commendable to practise what we preach in terms of effective teaching practices, I believe that we must also be considerate of our audience and of the topic. While modelling AB partner talk or the carousel strategy are effective when discussing strategies for increasing student accountability during student discussions, I feel that the topic of LA lends itself better to a conversation and discussion, with me acting as facilitator.

My third consideration was to ensure that teachers left my presentation with ideas that they could implement immediately. I have found that the most effective Pro-D for me has always been when I am presented with ideas that I can incorporate into what I am already doing and then little by little, build the new idea or strategy into my program. I have found that when there seems to be no way to implement changes without a complete overhaul of my program, I am generally unlikely to do so, particularly in the short-term. My goal therefore was to create a presentation that provided teachers different ways of phrasing instructions and presenting ideas in order to make expectations clearer to students without adding extra time.

Overall, the process of researching and of creating this presentation has been a difficult but extremely rewarding experience for me. The research that I have done has allowed me to uncover strategies that assist my students in achieving the comfort level needed in order to overcome LA and to develop a presentation to assist other teachers in their struggles to assist their students as well.

During the 2014-2015 school year, I began to adjust the way in which I spoke to students about the expectations held for them and what the learning process entailed. I was very purposeful in the language that I used when discussing expectations and achievement with students and found that students began to mirror the same language when speaking about themselves and their classmates. Students were also better able to explain what was expected of them to their parents which allowed for some insightful conversations with parents. This allowed me to understand that it is not only students who underestimate their abilities or are unclear about how they should be progressing but parents as well. I found that once we were all speaking the same language about expectations, errors and progress, a definite shift began to occur around students' willingness to communicate and willingness to attempt more difficult language tasks.

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Sources of Images

Slide 1 - <http://schoolweb.tdsb.on.ca/williamtredway/EarlyFrenchImmersion.aspx>

Slide 3 - <https://blogs.ubc.ca/etec51264bvygotskyonlinelearningconference/vygotsky-theory/>

Slide 5 - <http://ahmedalshlowiy.blogspot.ca/2012/07/books-blog-5.html>

Slide 11 - <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/vivian.c/SLA/Krashen.htm>

Slide 14 – created using: <http://www.storyboardthat.com/>

Slide 15 - <http://ilekaviciute.blogspot.ca/2011/04/psychology-of-language-anxiety.html>

Slide 16 - <http://www.anylatitude.com/2013/06/24/culture-shock-experiences-from-expats/>

Slide 22 - <http://cliparts.co/clipart/2464854>

Slide 23 - <http://cliparts.co/clipart/2502296>; <http://cliparts.co/clipart/17052>

Appendix A

Understanding Anxiety: Implications for Teachers of Early French Immersion



By Lauren Jong

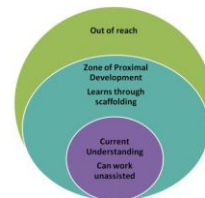
BC IRP - Français Langue Seconde Immersion M à 7

- Au début de son apprentissage en immersion, l'élève doit relever de grands défis dans ses expériences communicatives. Sa connaissance de la langue étant limitée, il a besoin de développer suffisamment d'assurance pour pouvoir exprimer des idées complexes et personnelles en français.
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What do we know about language learning?

- Sociocultural theory : children learn language with the support (scaffolding) of adults or more competent peers through social interaction.
- With the necessary scaffolding, children can achieve more than they could independently.
- This zone in which students can be successful with scaffolding is called the Zone of Proximal Development.
- As children learn, their ZPD expands to encompass more difficult and complex ideas.

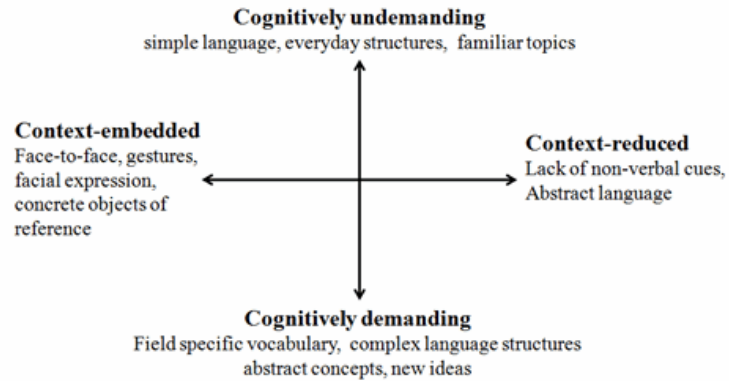
Zone of Proximal Development



Cummins - BICS and CALP

- Language skills can be divided into two categories:
- Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) – the language of everyday life and lived experiences.
- Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) – the language proficiency needed to attain academic literacy; to understand abstract concepts.

Cummins - BICS and CALP



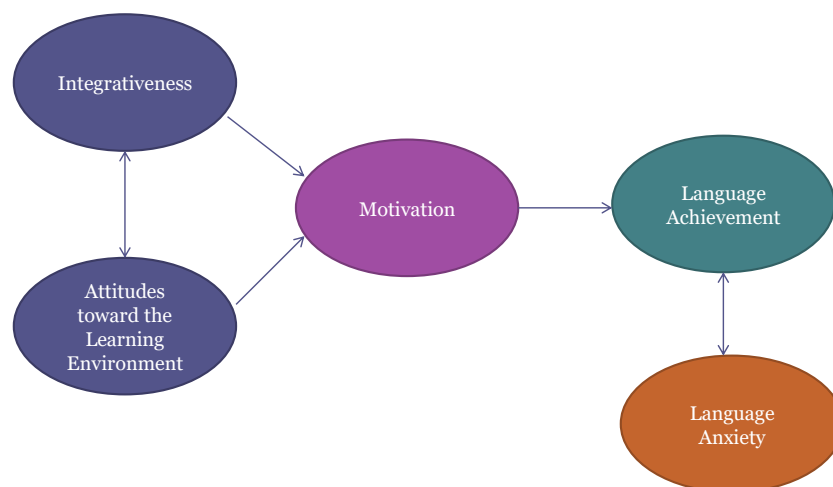
Gee - Discourses

- discourse is “connected stretches of language that make sense.” (Gee, 1989, p. 6)
- Discourse (with a capital ‘D’) is “a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or ‘social network’, or to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful ‘role’.” (Gee, 1990, p.143)

Discussion

- What are some of the underlying beliefs and values of students and teachers of French Immersion?
- Which beliefs and values might need to be made more explicit?
- How might the theories of Vygotsky, Cummins and Gee relate to Language Anxiety?

Gardner - Socio-Educational Theory



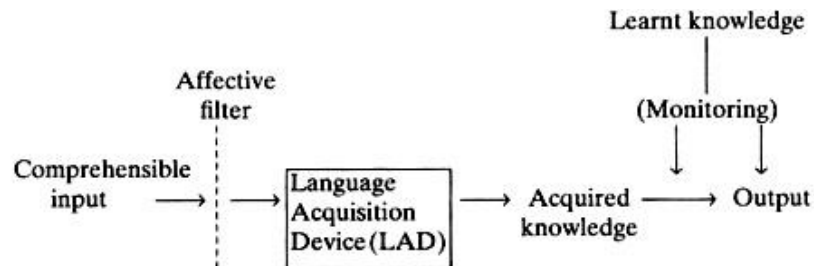
Gardner - Socio-Educational Theory

- As a result of experiences with the language, Gardner posits that individual differences in language anxiety will develop and that high levels of language anxiety will have a negative impact on skill development.

Krashen - Monitor Model / Input Hypothesis

- The acquisition/learning hypothesis
- The monitor hypothesis
- The natural order hypothesis
- The comprehensible input hypothesis
- The affective filter hypothesis

Krashen - Monitor Model / Input Hypothesis



The Input Hypothesis Model of L2 learning and production (adapted from Krashen, 1982, pp. 16 and 32; and Gregg, 1984)

Discussion

- In your experience, which aspects of Gardner's or Krashen's theories are relevant in the Immersion classroom?
- Which aspects of these theories contradict or challenge your understanding of Second Language Acquisition in the French Immersion classroom?

Understanding Anxiety

- Trait anxiety : anxiety that is part of a person's character; that is felt by an individual, regardless of context.
- State anxiety : a reaction to a perceived threat.
- Situation-specific anxiety : a pattern of anxiety arising every time one encounters a specific situation.

Language Anxiety



Create your own at [Storyboard That](https://www.storyboardthat.com/)

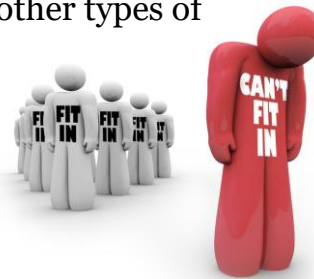
Language Anxiety

- Horwitz draws parallels between language anxiety and 3 performance anxieties:
 - communication apprehension
 - test anxiety
 - fear of negative evaluation.



Language Anxiety

- Second language learning differs from other types of learning because:
 - it affects one's ability to understand and to be understood.
 - attempts to communicate may challenge students' self-concepts as intelligent and competent communicators.
 - a new language involves new and unknown linguistic and socio-cultural standards.



Students with Language Anxiety tend to:

- Underestimate their communication competence and overestimate the number of errors they make.
- View errors and corrective feedback as failures. They do not see making errors as a necessary and positive step in language learning.

Students with Language Anxiety tend to:

- Limit the topics they discuss to a superficial level and avoid intellectual or emotional ideas to keep from making errors.
- Hesitate before speaking. Over time, hesitation and anxiety may form a stable pattern, resulting in an unwillingness to communicate in the target language.

Discussion

- What is your personal experience with Language Anxiety?
- What observations have you made in your classroom regarding Language Anxiety?
- What strategies have you tried in the past to address Language Anxiety? Were they successful? If not, why not? Elaborate on one successful strategy.

Addressing Language Anxiety

- Teachers can:
 - allow students more wait time to convey that it is acceptable and even expected to take time to formulate responses.
 - repeat activities to allow students to learn from past mistakes.

Addressing Language Anxiety

- Through class discussions, teachers can ensure that:
 - students have an accurate understanding of the process of language acquisition as well as clear and reasonable expectations of what is expected of them, why it is expected and when they will be expected to master a given concept.

Addressing Language Anxiety

- Students need to understand that:
 - mistakes are a necessary part of the learning process.
 - the other students and even the teacher have suffered similar fears.
 - they will not be ridiculed or judged for making errors.
 - attempts to try something new will be met with appreciation from both teachers and peers.



Addressing Language Anxiety

- Initiating discussion with students about anxiety and about reasonable expectations for language learning will reduce uncertainty and will allow teachers to establish themselves in the role of helper rather than that of judge.



Discussion

- What is one idea that you are taking away from this presentation?
- What is already working in your classroom to help address anxiety?
- What questions or doubts do you have?
- What further support or information might be helpful to you?

One last thought...

- “Language acquisition proceeds best when the acquirer is ‘open’ to the input, not ‘on the defensive’; not anxious about performance.”

- Dr. Stephen Krashen

Appendix B

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125-132.

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

2. I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

6. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

8. I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

10. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

12. In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

14. I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

16. Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

17. I often feel like not going to my language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

18. I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

19. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

21. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

23. I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

25. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

26. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

28. When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree

33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree Disagree Strongly disagree
nor disagree