

An Investigation of Pedagogical Approaches and Methods  
Used in a French University  
French-as-a-Foreign-Language Program:  
Teacher and Student Perspectives

By  
Pam Blackstone  
B.A., University of Victoria, 2016

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of the Requirements for the Degree of

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## **Supervisory Committee**

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## Abstract

This qualitative study has investigated a month-long French-as-a-foreign-language summer program. Its goal was to compare teacher ( $n=4$ ) and student ( $n=6$ ) perspectives regarding learning objectives, challenges, and preferred teaching/learning approaches and methods, and to evaluate results against Whyte (2011), who argued that a schism in French university language teaching leads to the dominance of explicit (traditional teacher-fronted) instruction at the expense of more communicative teaching approaches. Data collection took place via classroom observations, pre-course interviews and surveys, a post-course teacher focus group, and weekly student reflective logs. A total of 2,211 references were coded to 276 thematic nodes. Results suggest that the teachers involved primarily embrace a traditional classroom dynamic but apply strategies associated with multiple methods, providing evidence for use of what has become known as the *Eclectic Method*. Some alignment was found between teachers and students concerning goals, challenges, and teaching approaches, and mixed support was obtained for Whyte's claim regarding a deficit of communicative language teaching, in that both explicit and implicit teaching were observed.

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## **Dedication**

To Dad, who was born in the wrong era. You never envisioned this for me, but I know you would be proud. And to Don, who showed me that it's never too late.

And most of all, to Liam, who is the future. I am not sure what kind of world we will be leaving you by the time you are my age, but I hope your journey there will be rich and fulfilling.

## 1. Introduction

Over the last century, a debate has raged in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) about the best way to teach second or foreign languages. As more has been learned about the relationship of input and output to linguistic competence and metalinguistic awareness, a succession of sometimes conflicting learning theories and teaching methods has arisen, each in response to criticism of a predecessor. At the heart of this evolving pedagogy is a tension between two fundamentally opposed approaches to language teaching: scholars have made a distinction between *explicit* and *implicit* learning and teaching, a concept that refers to the amount of conscious effort put into language learning (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). In a nutshell, these terms reflect a dichotomy between the ideas that language is learned implicitly, or naturally, through exposure, the way a child learns, or explicitly through some kind of formal instruction. Early-to-mid-20th century language teaching methods such as *Grammar Translation* and *Audiolingualism*, for example, were explicit and teacher-fronted and provided no opportunities for learners to use the language they were studying. In contrast, the *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT) method popular from the late 20th century on is implicit and learner-centric. It downplays the role of the teacher and encourages target language use through completion of ordinary daily tasks and functions (Long & Doughty, 2009; Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2012; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Understanding of this distinction is fundamental to the history of language teaching pedagogy, and to my research, and will therefore be discussed further in Chapter 2.

This study focuses on language teaching pedagogy as it relates to L2<sup>1</sup> French instruction. It was inspired by personal experience in France and Canada as both an English-as-an-Additional-Language (EAL) teacher and French-as-a-Second-Language (FSL) learner. Having studied FSL at both private schools and universities in France, I became intrigued by certain apparent pedagogical differences: private school teachers tended to utilize the implicit CLT

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<sup>1</sup> Second language. Used in this thesis to refer to second and/or subsequent languages.

approach, whereas university teachers seemed to prefer the more traditional explicit methods mentioned above.

Whyte (2011) stands out among the little research I could find that explores foreign language teaching specifically in the context of the French university system. She maintains that the existence of a schism in the language teaching curriculum leads to a predominance of explicit teaching methods and the subsequent failure of some students to attain competency in the languages they are studying, which many will go on to teach. Little information exists to substantiate Whyte's claims: she does not identify a specific university, and it is far from clear that her conclusions can be generalized to other French post-secondary institutions. Among the scant evidence in support of her argument is a study by Piquemal and Renaud (2006), which looks at four universities geographically dispersed throughout France. The programs they investigate diverge into streams similar to those described by Whyte, and they found a comparable lack of focus on communication.

On reading these studies, I speculated that the schism Whyte (2011) identifies could well apply to the school where I had studied. Whyte's arguments pertain to French citizens studying a foreign language (typically English or German) at French universities. Might they also encompass international FLS/FLE<sup>2</sup> students who attend L2 French programs at such institutions? Moreover, if her arguments were pertinent to the teaching approaches used at this school, one could expect to see a predominance of explicit teaching there.

To find out, I designed a qualitative research study to investigate the intensive summer L2 French program offered by the university in question. The research utilized an embedded multiple case study to examine the mix of teaching methods in four FSL-integrated courses, allowing me to compare teacher and student perspectives regarding learning objectives, anticipated challenges, and preferred teaching approaches in light of Whyte's (2011) arguments. Data collection took place via videotaped classroom observations for each course, plus audio-

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<sup>2</sup> *Français Langue Seconde* versus *Français Langue Étrangère*. There can be differences in learning objectives, make-up of the class, and extent of first language use in class.

recorded pre-course interviews and surveys for both teachers and students, a post-course teacher focus group, and weekly student reflective logs.

This thesis traces the evolution in L2 pedagogy, examines methods that have been particularly influential, and documents their use at the school under investigation. The literature review found in Chapter 2 provides background on the historic transition from explicit to implicit approaches to 21<sup>st</sup>-century re-evaluation of the merits of explicit instruction. The identifying characteristics of the various methods are used to analyze teacher perceptions and behaviour and determine the extent of support for Whyte (2011). Chapter 3 describes the methods used in this research, including the instruments and procedures used for data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 presents the study's findings, and Chapters 5 and 6 contain the discussion and conclusion.

The insights obtained from this research contributes to the small body of literature that exists (in English) on the nature of university foreign language instruction in France and has the potential to inform FSL teaching in Canada as well.

## 2. Literature Review

This literature review surveys changes in thinking about foreign language teaching approaches over the last century with particular relevance to the state of affairs at the university level in France. Section 2.1 introduces the fundamental debate that underlies differing approaches to language teaching; Section 2.2 provides an overview of key 20<sup>th</sup> century language teaching approaches, followed by selected empirical research studies relevant to this research; Section 2.3 explores the reasons and the evidence for the belief held by some that language instruction has transcended methods; Section 2.4 examines new teaching approaches that have emerged in the “post-methods era”; Section 2.5 presents two additional approaches relevant to this study; and Section 2.6 discusses Whyte (2011) together with the few studies available on university foreign language teaching in France. The Literature Review culminates with Section 2.7, which sets out the research questions.

### 2.1. A Key Concept: Explicit Versus Implicit Language Teaching

Chomsky (1959) and Krashen (1977) are alternately credited with laying the groundwork for the CLT revolution. In the 1960s, Chomsky challenged the behaviourist notions that underlay the *Audiolingual* method, instead advancing a cognitive model of language acquisition, at the heart of which resided his ground-breaking *Universal Grammar*<sup>3</sup> theory. Chomsky believed that language could not be acquired through a set of conditioned responses, as Skinner had argued; the learner’s innate mental ability must play a role. Cognitivists believe that learners are active participants in the learning process, using various strategies to construct meaning, not mere receptacles waiting to be filled with knowledge.

Krashen (1977) advanced another influential idea, a five-part hypothesis about the nature of language acquisition. In arguing for the *Input Hypothesis*, he pioneered the notion that learners could acquire a language implicitly through exposure to *comprehensible input*.<sup>4</sup> This assertion

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<sup>3</sup> A set of linguistic rules that Chomsky believes are innate to human beings, and which can be applied to any language.

<sup>4</sup> Exposure to target language words and structures (spoken or written) that the learner may not yet be able to produce but can still understand.

not only obviated the need for formal instruction but spurred insistence on use of the L2 in the classroom, one of the developments that fueled the CLT revolution that exploded globally a few short years later. Others have argued that learners must take note of linguistic forms for the input to be effectively processed, making some form of explicit instruction necessary (Azizifar et al., 2015; Chang, 2011; Liu, 2009; Long & Rothman, 2013; Scott, 1990; Ur, 2011).

The terms *deductive* and *inductive*<sup>5</sup> are also used to describe certain approaches to instruction. They relate to the concepts of implicit and explicit learning and encapsulate the contrast between the *Grammar Translation* and CLT methods. In a deductive approach such as *Grammar Translation*, the teacher explains a rule, after which the learners complete a practice activity. In an inductive approach, typically used within a communicative framework, learners infer the rule themselves, often from a text or a listening activity, alone or with varying degrees of help by the teacher (Vogel et al., 2011). Please see pages 6 and 8 for a more detailed discussion of these teaching approaches.

Numerous definitions have been proposed for these fundamentally contrasting approaches to language teaching. Norris and Ortega (2000), for example, state that L2 instruction can be considered explicit if rule explanation comprises part of the instruction or if learner attention is directed to certain forms, with learners expected to deduce rules on their own. Conversely, when neither of these conditions is present, the instruction can be considered implicit. Scott (1990) maintains that an explicit approach to grammar teaching requires deliberate study of a grammar rule to facilitate an efficient and accurate mental representation; an implicit approach, on the other hand, exposes learners to grammatical structures in a meaningful and comprehensible context so they may acquire the target grammar naturalistically. Long and Rothman (2013) argue that, though it is tempting to “do away with the imprecision of explicit grammatical rules” as per the communicative approach, the teaching of rules “might help learners notice things in the [input]

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<sup>5</sup> Though these two binary word pairs are sometimes used to describe learning (implicit/explicit) versus teaching (deductive/inductive), they are often used interchangeably and their use in this thesis is consistent with how they have been used by the sources cited.

that would otherwise go unnoticed, given the limitations that the classroom imposes on quantity of input and its meaningful contextualization” (p. 75).

## **2.2. Defining Characteristics of Key 20<sup>th</sup> Century Methods**

The last century has seen a succession of language teaching approaches emerge, each in response to criticism of a predecessor, and each just as quickly supplanted by newer thinking. Certain approaches of the 1960s and 1970s—*Suggestopedia* and *The Silent Way*, for example—lasted barely a decade and could more accurately be called “fads.” Others have endured, playing a key role—even co-existing—for much of the last century, despite being characterized by profoundly incompatible theoretical frameworks and goals (Long & Doughty, 2009; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

The early-to-mid-20<sup>th</sup> century approaches such as *Grammar Translation* and *Audiolingualism*, for example, were regarded as residing at the opposite end of a continuum from the CLT approach that grew to dominate the 1980s and 1990s. Behaviouristic and teacher-fronted, with a shared focus on drill and practice, the two earlier approaches emphasized accuracy and error elimination, and provided few opportunities for authentic language use. By contrast, CLT was learner-centric. It downplayed errors, focusing instead on fluency and communicative competence, and employed daily tasks and functions to encourage target language use in real-world contexts (Long & Doughty, 2009; Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2012; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

All three of these legacy approaches endure today, often subsumed in newer methods or specific classroom activities. By the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, however, the immensely popular CLT method had begun to fall out of favour as people started to identify certain pedagogical issues with it. Some theorists were beginning to argue that we were, in fact, entering a new “post-CLT” or “post-methods” era, whereby teachers could mix approaches in a lesson to best meet given circumstances.

### **2.2.1 Grammar Translation Method**

Originating in Germany in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and dominating foreign language teaching for easily a century, the *Grammar Translation* method evolved from earlier approaches

to the study of classical Latin. Using the foreign language was not the goal, and oral practice was limited to reading aloud the sentences one had translated (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Textbooks consisted of abstract grammar rules, vocabulary lists, and sentences for translation. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, this approach had become standardized, and become known as the *Grammar Translation* method.

According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), classes taught using this method use a deductive approach whereby presentation of a grammar rule is followed by practice via sentence translation. Such classes are strongly teacher-fronted, behaviouristic, and highly authoritarian. They focus on rote learning of grammar rules with vocabulary selection based on readings and teachers display low tolerance for errors.

By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, *Grammar Translation* had declined in popularity, supplanted by *Audiolingualism* and, later, by CLT. The deductive teaching of grammar was rejected by scholars, and by the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, it had become virtually forbidden. In recent years, however, a number of authors (Chang, 2011; Liu, 2009; Scott, 1990) have begun calling for a return to a more balanced approach, arguing that grammar teaching remains important despite the prevalence of CLT, and that it is time to re-integrate it.

Richards and Rodgers (2014) state that *Grammar Translation* never really disappeared entirely. It can still be encountered in situations where strong historical precedent exists; where language teachers face large classes; when a sense of control and authority are needed; or when teachers have limited command of spoken English (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 7). They state that not only do many contemporary college-level foreign language textbooks continue to reflect the principles outlined above, but that these texts have, in many cases, been created by people trained in literature rather than language teaching or applied linguistics.

### **2.2.2 *Audiolingualism Method and Its Predecessors***

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, two new language teaching methods emerged in response to the alleged shortcomings of *Grammar Translation*. The *Direct Method* shifted the focus from reading and writing to spontaneous use of the target language in the classroom and to the

inductive, rather than deductive, teaching of grammar. The *Reform Movement* appeared around the same time, coinciding with the advent of the *International Phonetic Alphabet* (IPA). Proponents of this approach placed high priority on phonetics, pronunciation, and speaking, which they felt had been lacking in *Grammar Translation*.

The *Audiolingualism* method followed in the 1940s, borrowing heavily from the preceding two methods. This method was the response to an urgent need. When World War II broke out, the U.S. military needed a rapid way to teach members of the armed forces to communicate with speakers of languages they might encounter overseas. They turned to structural linguists to teach and develop materials, and also borrowed ideas from behavioural psychology.<sup>6</sup> Together, these two inputs defined the *Audiolingualism* approach.

Classes taught using this method are teacher-fronted, with a strongly authoritarian role for teachers. Such classes emphasize carefully constructed pattern practice based on simple, familiar words. They focus on listening and speaking; place strong stress on accurate, error-free pronunciation; and make frequent use of teacher modelling, mimicry, rote drills, choral repetition; and memorization (Celce-Murcia, 2014; Long & Doughty, 2009; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Zimmerman, 2014).

Although it was superseded by several “designer” methods that surfaced during the 1960s and 1970s,<sup>7</sup> remnants of the *Audiolingualism* method can still be seen in foreign language classrooms whenever teachers use “repeat after me” style oral drills.

### **2.2.3 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**

As with each prior method, the CLT approach was a reaction to criticism of the teaching methods that preceded it. Born in the 1970s, the CLT language teaching revolution had—by the late 20<sup>th</sup> century—swept around the world, leaving an influence that endures today. This method was revolutionary in that, for the first time in language teaching history, focus shifted from

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<sup>6</sup> Structural linguistics organizes language hierarchically into units, from the smallest (phonemes) to the largest (sentences). A behaviourist approach to language learning relies on repetition and habit formation.

<sup>7</sup> These include *Suggestopedia*, *Total Physical Response*, and *The Silent Way*, among others (Long & Doughty, 2009; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

teacher to learners. The key priority of CLT was to get learners using the L2 and thus lessons were designed to provide abundant opportunities for communication in real-world contexts. The teacher was expected to take a back seat and function more as a facilitator than a teacher.

Classes that use a communicative approach can be recognized quite easily by the presence of certain defining characteristics. They are learner-centric; integrate all four skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking); and give high priority to L2 use. They strive for fluency over accuracy; downplay the importance of errors; and provide grammar instruction inductively, if at all. Real-world context is provided through use of genuine objects and artifacts; and group work, role plays, and other communicative activities are used to promote authentic language use (Celce-Murcia, 2014; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

In the last ten to fifteen years, however, some theorists have begun to identify certain problems with rigid adherence to a CLT approach. These are examined in Section 2.2.6d.

#### ***2.2.4 Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)***

Almost from the outset, short, real-world tasks that learners could complete in pairs or groups were a key component of the CLT approach. As recognition of the pedagogical significance of task completion grew, this form of instruction quickly morphed into a full-blown method of its own, TBLT, which became “the dominant approach to teaching in many contexts” (Erlam, 2016, p. 280).

From the start, there has been debate about exactly what constitutes a task. Long (2016) defines tasks as “the real-world communicative uses to which learners will put the L2 beyond the classroom—the things they will do in and through the L2” (p. 6) and sets out ten methodological principles (e.g., learning by doing, richness of input, collaborative learning) to guide TBLT syllabus design and classroom implementation. Ellis and Shintani (2014) list four key criteria that distinguish a “task” from the types of situational grammar exercises typically found in traditional language classrooms:

1. The primary focus [of a task] should be on meaning (i.e., learners should be mainly concerned with encoding and decoding messages, not with focusing on linguistic form).

2. There should be some kind of gap (i.e., a need to convey information, to express an opinion, or to infer meaning).
3. Learners should rely largely on their own resources (linguistic and non-linguistic) to complete the activity. [...]
4. There is a clearly defined outcome other than the use of language (i.e., the language serves as the means for achieving the outcome, not as an end in its own right). Thus, [...] learners are not primarily concerned with using language correctly but rather with achieving the goal stipulated by the task. (Ellis & Shintani, 2014, p. 135)

Tasks may be one of two types: real-world tasks are intended to practice skills identified in a needs analysis and useful in the real world; pedagogical tasks are based in SLA theory and do not necessarily reflect real-world priorities. Making an appointment is an example of the former, and an information gap activity (where learners must cooperate to share information that only one of them possesses, such as the game *20 Questions*), an example of the latter (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 185). Tasks may be sufficiently complex to require *sub-tasks*, and lesson planning must identify these clearly.

According to the grammar teacher who took part in this research, the European equivalent of TBLT is *La Méthode Actionnelle*. Jacquin (2012) provides a description:

[It is] a question of designing a task as ‘authentic’ as possible to encourage learners to simulate an action as it would take place in real life, thus transforming the classroom into a sort of test lab that immerses students in an exercise that prepares them to become ‘social actors.’ Tasks should be directed towards a concrete result and designed so that students can implement a set of skills, including language skills. (¶3, translated from French)

### **2.2.5 Content-Based Instruction (CBI)**

Another offshoot of CLT, the CBI approach focuses on specific subject matter. Taught in the target language, it is learned naturalistically rather than through direct instruction. Its goal is to

facilitate learning of both the L2 and of the specific subject matter, with each supporting the development of the other. This approach has been used in Canadian French Immersion programs and *English for Specific Purposes* (ESP) courses.

Richards and Rodgers (2014) attribute the growth of CBI in recent years to several factors, including the growth of bilingualism and immersion programs and the explosion in migration from troubled global hotspots to Europe and North America. CBI programs provide the language skills that immigrants need in preparing for life in their new host country. The syllabus for a CBI course can be organized around virtually any topic. Richards and Rodgers (2014) note that geography is often a popular initial choice because it is highly visual and the language is very descriptive.

According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), a class taught using the CBI approach is based on several assumptions: language is text- and discourse-based and grammar is both a component of other skills and a resource for communicating content; language use that involves “dialogic talk” (p. 122) encourages skills integration and promotes learning of both content and language; corrective feedback and negotiation of meaning both play key roles in helping students comprehend content; and scaffolding<sup>8</sup> is critically important in CBI, possibly more so than in other teaching approaches, as is prior knowledge possessed by the learner.

### **2.2.6 Empirical Studies**

#### **a. Comparisons of Explicit and Implicit Approaches**

Debate on the best approach to L2 teaching has intensified in the wake of CLT, particularly as it concerns grammar instruction, an area that many felt had been neglected. This polemic has spurred a great deal of empirical research in the last two decades. Hundreds of studies that explore the tension between explicit and implicit instruction have been published in prominent SLA journals.

Among the numerous empirical studies that have compared these diametrically opposed approaches are several recent meta-analyses (Kang et al., 2019; Mackey & Goo, 2007; Norris &

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<sup>8</sup> Providing just enough contextual support to help students comprehend meaning or master a concept.

Ortega, 2000; Spada & Tomita, 2010) the findings of which have provided support both for explicit grammar teaching and, more recently, for implicit instruction.

The seminal work on this theme, Norris and Ortega (2000), established a baseline that has since been re-visited and expanded upon by more recent studies. Norris and Ortega conducted a meta-analysis to summarize 49 experimental and quasi-experimental studies that compared explicit and implicit L2 instruction and were published between 1980 and 1998. To standardize the data, they calculated average *effect sizes*<sup>9</sup> for each study then ran comparisons. Data analyzed included type of instruction, type of outcome measure (metalinguistic judgment, selected response, constrained constructed response, or free constructed responses), and several moderator variables. Results not only showed that explicit instruction is more effective than implicit instruction, but that type of outcome measure was important, with controlled use of the L2 (e.g., multiple choice and cloze) yielding higher effect sizes than spontaneous L2 use (e.g., free production).

Soon after, several other scholars attempted to build upon the results obtained by Norris and Ortega (2000). Spada and Tomita (2010), for example, reported on the results of a meta-analysis of 41 experimental or quasi-experimental studies published between 1990 and 2006 that investigated the effects of these two types of instruction on acquisition of L2 English grammatical forms. They determined that explicit instruction produced stronger effect sizes than implicit instruction for both simple and complex features, and that such instruction positively contributed both to learners' "controlled knowledge"<sup>10</sup> and spontaneous production of grammatical forms. Their finding that learners performed better on both types of outcome measures following explicit instruction contradicted not only Norris and Ortega but their own expectations as well. Criticism has been raised (Whong et al., 2014) since publication of this study about the problematic nature of attempting to define "complex" features, something the authors themselves acknowledged.

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<sup>9</sup> Defined as "the magnitude of an observed relationship or effect," usually calculated as the "standardized mean difference," or difference between treatment and control groups in standard deviation units (p. 426).

<sup>10</sup> The authors do not define "controlled knowledge," but they designate a "controlled tasks" outcome measure based on Norris and Ortega (2000). It consists of metalinguistic judgments, selected responses, and constrained constructed responses.

Kang et al. (2019) sought to substantiate earlier findings with a meta-analysis of 54 empirical studies spanning the years 1980 to 2015, using the screening criteria developed by Norris and Ortega. Of these, 15 studies overlapped Norris and Ortega's sample; the remaining 39 were new. Type of treatment and outcome measures were coded following the conventions established by Norris and Ortega, and these authors added seven additional moderator variables. To compare outcome measures, they analyzed the data using a different procedure than Norris and Ortega had used, which they argued would mitigate upward bias produced by small sample sizes. Results showed that, although both explicit and implicit instruction produced positive effects on L2 learning, implicit instruction had a significantly longer lasting impact, as indicated by delayed outcome measures, a finding that was the reverse of Norris and Ortega (2000).

Several individual investigations that compared the two types of language teaching approaches are pertinent to this research. Scott (1990), for example, investigated the effectiveness of explicit versus implicit grammar teaching approaches by exposing two groups of advanced French university students to both approaches for certain French grammatical structures (relative pronouns and the subjunctive). Her 1990 findings corroborate an earlier result: learners under the explicit teaching condition performed significantly better than learners under the implicit condition, on both grammatical structures. In my view, there are two issues with this research. First, the two French grammatical structures to which she exposed learners—relative pronouns and the subjunctive—are not equivalent in complexity, and are likely to require different teaching approaches, instructional durations, and amounts of practice. This does not appear to have been factored in, as both topics were allotted the same amount of time. Second, there appears to have been considerable priming for the implicit condition, which was presented in a listening activity. For example, learners were forewarned that the text contained relative pronouns, all six of which were identified prior to the listening, during which they were specifically directed to focus on the relative pronouns. Likewise with the subjunctive: not only were learners forewarned to be alert to the presence of this structure, they were taught regular and irregular subjunctive verb formation and alerted to the varying contexts and constructions

that mandate its use. In both these cases, while the target language does appear to have been presented in a meaningful context in the implicit condition, it seems doubtful that this was done “as naturally as possible” (p. 779). It appears, from Scott’s description of the lesson format, that considerable teacher intervention was involved and opportunities for noticing and analyzing the grammar without help were minimal.

Vogel, Herron, Cole, and York (2011) investigated the effects of deductive and “guided inductive”<sup>11</sup> approaches to grammar teaching on intermediate-level American L2 French students. The goal of the research was not only to measure performance, but to ascertain students’ preferred approach and to determine how well preference and performance aligned. The authors investigated ten grammatical structures, using a combination of the four-stage presentation → attention → co-construction → extension (PACE) model developed by Adair-Hauck, Donato, and Cumo-Johanssen (2005) and Herron and Tomasello’s (1992) guided inductive techniques. The target structures were taught to the groups on an alternating basis; pre- and post-tests were used to measure performance; a survey was used to assess student preferences; and relationships between preferences and performance were examined.

Contrary to Scott (1990), their findings confirmed that the “guided inductive” teaching strategies had a more positive effect on short-term learning outcomes than the deductive approach. A significantly greater effect for this approach was found on short-term learning; the long-term findings and the relationship between preferences and performance, however, proved insignificant. In an apparent contradiction, the qualitative data analysis showed that a majority of learners preferred the deductive approach despite the fact that they actually performed better under a guided inductive approach.

Azizifar, Gowhary, and Fatahi (2015) explored the relationship between explicit grammar teaching and reading comprehension. Working with a group of 64 Iranian high school students, they exposed the students to two different treatments, one involving conventional reading with

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<sup>11</sup> Defined as “an approach that requires student–teacher collaboration in the elaboration of the grammar rule” (Vogel et al., 2011, p. 356).

no input enhancement of the target structures (adjective clauses, gerunds, and infinitives), and the other with explicit instruction and awareness of the target structure. The results showed that awareness of sentence structure and explicit grammar teaching effected a significant improvement in student reading comprehension performance and led the researchers to theorize that students may use sentence structure to improve thinking and reading comprehension processes.

In addition to the large body of research comparing explicit and implicit approaches to language teaching, many studies have investigated the teaching methods described in Sections 2.2.1 through 2.2.5, and no consensus exists about which is best. Rather, each appears to have distinct strengths and weaknesses. These are examined in the empirical studies described in the sub-sections below.

### **b. Grammar Translation**

Wang (2013) compares *Grammar Translation* and CLT for teaching the Chinese Ba-construction, which he states is the most complex grammatical structure in Chinese (p. 6). He states that his study is the first to do so in the context of Chinese as a foreign language. Wang exposed two groups of 30 students to instruction using each of the two approaches and conducted post-tests for translation, oral production, and metalinguistic awareness.<sup>12</sup> Results confirmed *Grammar Translation* to be more effective than CLT at developing translation skills but produced no evidence concerning oral production or metalinguistic awareness. He concluded that *Grammar Translation* remains a good method for individuals who aspire to translation careers and are not overly concerned with speaking.

### **c. Audiolingualism**

Because *Audiolingualism* is a strongly teacher-fronted and behaviouristic method, many scholars and practitioners today consider it obsolete. Chunsuvimol and Charoenpanit (2017) are among the very few people to evaluate this teaching method in recent years. In a study designed to synthesize recent research on language teaching using the *Audiolingual Method*, the authors

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<sup>12</sup> The conscious knowledge that learners have about language and their ability to articulate it (Truscott, 1998).

analyzed sixteen studies published up to 2015. Almost all the research reviewed concerned the teaching of English in Indonesia or Thailand, to learners ranging in age from elementary school to adulthood. Surprisingly, given the widespread criticism of this approach, these authors report that *Audiolingualism* was found to be an effective teaching approach in every study that they reviewed, particularly for beginners, leading them to conclude that *Audiolingualism* remains a viable teaching method for listening and speaking.

The strong endorsement of *Audiolingualism* seen here is striking, particularly in that one of the goals of my study was to identify use of this method in the courses observed. The fact that the results reported are confined to non-Western countries and English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) teaching contexts is perhaps related to some of the criticisms of CLT raised by Chang (2011) and others (see page 17). It is possible that learners in such contexts are more comfortable with a behaviouristic method.

#### **d. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**

Harjanne, Reunamo, and Tella (2015) conducted an online survey to investigate CLT-based teaching and study practices in Finnish L2 classrooms. The study surveyed 147 foreign language teachers, 25 at the university level. The authors found a distinction between what they called “context-dependent” and “context-independent” activities. The former, according to the authors, involves situating language in a cultural context in which learners learn by producing context/content together with peers and the teacher. The other approach involves viewing language learning as an individual activity, a view more closely related to traditional approaches.

This study identified certain contradictions: Finnish L2 teachers claimed to use real-life, communicative oral tasks and to encourage target language use, when survey results showed much less student use of the L2 than claimed and limited use of authentic materials and technology. The authors note that the teachers following the context-dependent approach tended to favour communicative, real-life tasks, and those favouring a context-independent approach placed higher priority on non-communicative vocabulary and grammar tasks.

Although this study is not specific to university language learning, its overall goal, its focus on CLT, and the categories included in the survey instrument are all germane. As well, the distinction they discovered in the data between context-dependent and context-independent instruction hints at the same kind of polarizing trend that Whyte (2011) describes. In this case, the split is due to differences in teaching method; in Whyte, curriculum design is the key factor, although teaching method is implicated as well.

Zuniga and Simard (2016) report on a classroom observation study involving deployment of a tool to assess degree of classroom interactivity. The objective of the study was to develop a practical scale to measure the degree of interaction-friendly instructional practices in Canadian English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) and FSL classrooms. Provision of opportunities for learners to interact is, of course, considered a hallmark of CLT. The authors observed and videotaped eight Montreal secondary school classes—four FSL and four ESL—over 60 hours. To collect data, they used a modified observation scheme that examined teacher instructional activities according to five “empirically tested factors shown to influence the generation of interactionally modified input and output” (Zuniga & Simard, 2016, p. 153): general focus of attention; interactivity; information flow; goals; and participant organization. Results indicated that neither FSL nor ESL classes were very interactive, though both were less teacher-fronted than in the past. There were also clear differences between the two groups: ESL classes were more student-centered and more favourable to interactivity than FSL classes, although they were still rated as “not very interactive” (Zuniga & Simard, 2016, p. 153). The authors observe that such lack of interactivity suggests the need for further research into practitioner awareness of task characteristics related to interaction.

**Cross-cultural Aspects of CLT:** The importance of cultural dimensions cannot be underestimated in discussions of implicit approaches. In the last ten to fifteen years, several scholars have begun to identify concerns about rigid adherence to the CLT method, particularly in expanding-circle<sup>13</sup> cultures. Many of the challenges encountered have occurred in China and

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<sup>13</sup> In EAL terminology, a reference to countries where English “has not had a central role in the past but where it is currently largely used for purposes of business and technology (e.g., China, Russia)” (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 285).

other Asian countries (Chang, 2011; Didenko & Pichugova, 2016; Hu, 2002, 2005; Littlewood, 2006; Natsir & Sanjaya, 2014; Wang, 2013) and in countries with localized varieties of English, such as South Africa, Pakistan, and India (Kumaravadivelu, 2001).

Hu (2002, 2005), who has researched this subject intensively, has contributed some important insights regarding the differences between eastern and western education perspectives and practice. He maintains that, in traditional Chinese learning culture, “education is conceived more as a process of knowledge accumulation than as a process of using knowledge for immediate purposes,” and that “the preferred model of teaching is a mimetic or epistemic one that emphasizes knowledge transmission” (p. 653). He states that this culture creates conditions that often conflict with learner-centric methods like CLT but tend to be highly compatible with teacher-centered methods such as *Grammar Translation* and *Audiolingualism* (Hu, 2005). Littlewood (2006) concurs with Hu (2005) and attributes the problem to several factors: confusion about what these teaching approaches entail, classroom management challenges, learner avoidance of English, teacher lack of confidence or English proficiency, minimal demands on language competence, and conflict with longstanding educational values and traditions.

**Empirical CLT studies with cross-cultural implications:** Chang (2011) and Natsir and Sanjaya (2014) are among many studies that discuss the drawbacks of CLT in Asian contexts. Chang (2011) compared *Grammar Translation* and CLT with respect to English grammar teaching in Taiwan. Two college classes were instructed, each using one of these two methods. Admission exams and a pre-test indicated similar L2 English proficiency at the outset. The post-test, however, showed a significant difference after the two types of intervention. Chang’s results confirmed that the *Grammar Translation* approach produced both better test scores and greater confidence and motivation than the communicative approach. Noting that both fluency and accuracy are important for language learning, she observes that many Taiwanese scholars have confirmed the possibility of combining the two approaches and that there is a growing revival of grammar instruction. She also examines arguments against CLT—including a perceived pro-Western bias, tendency to plateau, and

increased cognitive demands and work for teachers—and posits reasons why this approach is particularly ineffective in a Taiwanese and Asian context.

Natsir and Sanjaya (2014) conducted a literature review to compare *Grammar Translation* and CLT, by examining several defining principles, including pedagogical strategies and learning objectives, learner/teacher interaction, space for feelings and emotions, role of the learner's L1, language skills emphasized, and teacher response to learner errors. Contrary to Chang (2011), they argue in favour of CLT, concluding that it offers stronger benefits to learners although *Grammar Translation* may still have certain advantages. They observe that CLT is more cooperative than *Grammar Translation*, and more likely to increase student comfort level, interest, and ability to use language. Consistent with Chang, however, they acknowledge that there may be country-specific criteria and that instructional, social, and cultural contexts must be considered in choosing an approach.

#### **e. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)**

Erlam (2016) states that successful implementation of TBLT is contingent on adequate understanding of the construct of the *task*, which can be difficult to distinguish from a conventional grammar exercise. She designed a study to investigate how tasks designed by teachers fulfill the four distinguishing criteria<sup>14</sup> that Ellis and Shintani (2014) had identified. Hoping to determine which criteria teachers found the easiest and the most difficult to satisfy, she focused on written task descriptions rather than actual learning outcomes. All of the 43 participants were New Zealand L2 teachers. Participants' tasks were coded against the four criteria, which were presented in the form of yes/no questions. Results showed that, of the 43 tasks in the data set, 20 fulfilled all four criteria. An additional 15 tasks met three criteria. Only one failed to meet any criterion. The third criterion (learners need to rely on their own resources) proved to be the most difficult to satisfy, and the last (there is a clearly defined outcome other than the use of language), the easiest. Erlam's findings clearly pinpoint which aspects of task design are most difficult for teachers, and this study has important implications for teacher professional development.

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<sup>14</sup> See Section 2.2.4 for details of these criteria.

In 2018, Erlam teamed with Ellis to once again investigate TBLT, this time in the context of the acquisition of vocabulary and grammar by beginner L2 French high school students. Over two lessons, students in an experimental group ( $n=19$ ) were exposed to a series of “focused input tasks” containing multiple instances of the target language—in this case French determiner plurality markers. They received no explicit instruction; rather, the tasks chosen were intended to “facilitate incidental acquisition” (p. 7). Three tests were administered (pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test), for purposes of comparison with another class that functioned as a control group ( $n=15$ ). This group received no instruction at all; students merely took the tests. Results showed that the students in the experimental group successfully acquired the target structures, with a larger gain from pre-to post-test than the control group; however, statistical significance was not reached due to small sample size and the gain was not maintained to delayed post-test.

Another study that looked at TBLT was Bryfonski and McKay (2017). These authors state that no study prior to theirs had investigated the effects of long-term implementation of TBLT. They conducted a meta-analysis that involved 52 studies done between 1998 and 2016, including several that compared TBLT with other approaches. Selected studies were constrained to quantitative findings of studies that “documented the implementation or evaluation” of TBLT “program-level components” such as task selection and sequencing, materials and instructional development, assessment, and so on (p. 6). Foreign language contexts dominated, at 94% of the selected studies, and 85% involved L2 English teaching, both factors that the authors acknowledged as limitations. Results confirmed, however, that TBLT is more effective than “traditional or non-task-based pedagogies” (p. 19) for promoting L2 learning in a wide range of geographical locations, institutional settings, and contexts. Effect sizes were the highest for research conducted in the Middle East, followed by East Asia—a finding the authors found encouraging, given previous socio-cultural concerns about the applicability of implicit language teaching in Asia.

Finally, though it is not an empirical study, Long (2016) merits inclusion here. In this thoughtful review article, the author—long a proponent of TBLT—responds to critics of the method, including Widdowson, Ellis, Willis, Wilkins, Seedhouse, Klapper, Bruton, and Swan (as

cited in Long, 2016, p. 8). His rebuttal encompasses critiques of TBLT based on both psycholinguistic rationale and pedagogical implementation, including arguments for traditional grammar instruction and against incidental *focus on form*, the *Noticing Hypothesis*,<sup>15</sup> and long-term retention of incidental learning. He cites recent research studies to clearly and compellingly refute earlier charges that TBLT neglects grammar and vocabulary; that it foregrounds output at the expense of input; that peer-to-peer interaction is restrictive, ungrammatical, and likely to spur the emergence of classroom pidgins; and that the teacher's role is rendered unimportant. He addresses alleged problems with TBLT implementation in specific circumstances such as K-12 and foreign language courses and concludes with discussion of the need for establishment of in-service teacher education and reliable criteria by which to measure task complexity and task-based assessment.

#### **f. Content-Based Instruction (CBI)**

Song (2006) reports on the results of a longitudinal study into the effects of content-based ESL instruction on future academic performance of two groups of students at a New York community college. She compared the academic data of 770 participants who were split evenly between content-linked and regular ESL courses. Data collected included performance in a first semester ESL course, in subsequent English courses, and on English proficiency tests, as well as overall GPA and graduation and retention rates.

The results showed that learners in content-linked ESL courses “consistently outperformed their counterparts, except in credit-bearing English courses” (Song, 2006, p. 432). She also confirmed better long-term academic success for the content-linked ESL learners than for those in non-content-linked ESL courses, concluding that content-linked ESL programs can indeed help facilitate ultimate academic success.

Rahmani and Alavi (2017) are among a number of scholars who have compared CBI to TBLT in recent years. These authors set out to examine the effect of these two approaches on the intermediate L2 English speaking ability of forty Iranian university students. Twenty students

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<sup>15</sup> These two terms reference, respectively, a popular approach for directing learner attention to specific elements within written or oral discourse, and Schmidt's (1990) theory regarding the first step in the conversion of input to intake. Refer to Section 2.4.1 for detailed discussion of both concepts.

from an accounting program were assigned to an experimental group and taught using TBLT, and twenty students from an architecture program were placed in a control group where CBI was the teaching method. A pre-test based on the TOEFL speaking test was followed by seven sessions of instruction that utilized one of the two approaches and focused on “cultural-laden” (*sic*) topics, after which a post-test was conducted. Analysis of the results showed progress in both groups, but the authors report that the TBLT method produced superior results.

Li and Chen (2019) compared the two approaches in the context of teaching reading to learners of military English, with a research design similar to Rahmani and Alavi (country is not specified, but both authors are associated with Chinese universities). They assigned 120 students evenly to four classes, two of which received reading instruction using TBLT and the other two, CBI, at a frequency of two sessions per week over ten weeks. The texts used covered a range of military topics, such as military figures, notable campaigns, hi-tech and information warfare, and future war. The authors state that all of the tasks for the TBLT group were designed according to the eight TBLT lesson planning principles set out by Ellis (2006). Pre- and post-tests produced findings congruent with Rahmani and Alavi (2017), providing confirmation that—although reading ability improved significantly for both groups—the people taught using the TBLT method saw greater gains.

### **2.3. The “Post-Methods” Era**

By the late 20th century, teaching methods had started to come full circle. The highly popular CLT method had begun to fall out of favour as a growing number of practitioners and theorists (Chen, 2014; Didenko & Pichugova, 2016; Kumaravadivelu, 1994, 2001; Littlewood, 2006; Liu, 2009; Prabhu, 1990, Puren, 1994) examined its failures and identified critical pedagogical issues, arguing that L2 teaching was entering a new “post-methods” or “post-CLT” era, whereby teachers must be able to devise their own “eclectic” approach, based on understanding of the many choices available together with deep insight into their own teaching.

Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2001) is often cited as the originator of the term “post-methods.” In an influential 1994 paper, he explains the limitations of rigid adherence to methods and discusses the importance of teacher and learner autonomy and teacher understanding of their own teaching

practice. He also sets out a strategic framework consisting of a three-part set of parameters and related macro-strategies that designate language education that respects local linguistic, socio-cultural, and political contexts; the empowerment of teachers to theorize from their own practice; and policies that address socio-cultural realities that influence learner identity formation and needs. He is also one of the first to emphasize the importance of a *focus on form* approach.

Didenko and Pichugova (2016) question whether post-CLT and post-methods are the same thing. They acknowledge the important contribution that CLT has made to second language teaching, but also identify several of its shortcomings. These include emphasis on fluency over accuracy, lack of authentic communication, and the pro-Western bias, tendency to plateau, and teacher challenges mentioned by Chang (2011). They note that recent pedagogical innovations have been influenced by general disappointment with CLT, and they recommend that, since no method or approach can meet every need in every context, “the wisest solution seems (*sic*) for a teacher to give up searching for the best method, and to adapt existing methodologies to specific teaching and learning environment[s]” (p. 3), a recommendation consistent with Kumaravadivelu.<sup>16</sup>

### ***2.3.1 Post-methods Empirical Studies***

Liu (2009) investigated the use, familiarity, and preference of methods among language teachers to better inform decision-making in the context of 21<sup>st</sup>-century “post-methods” pedagogy. He surveyed 448 language teachers world-wide, randomly drawn from the membership of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) organization. The survey investigated ten teaching methods: CLT, Eclectic Approach, Audiolingualism, Grammar Translation, Total Physical Response, Natural Approach, Direct Method, Community Language Learning, Silent Way, and Suggestopedia. Results indicated that CLT and the Eclectic approach had the highest rates of usage, familiarity, and personal preference. Variations emerged when factors such as teaching context; instructional setting; learner proficiency; class size; and

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<sup>16</sup> Newer practices such as *plurilingual pedagogies* and *translanguaging* (Choi & Ollerhead, 2018) are not considered in this thesis as it is felt that they would expand the scope too broadly and dilute the relevance to grammar of the approaches selected for discussion.

teacher background, experience, and English-speaking status were taken into consideration. The author identified, for example, some constraints on CLT in EFL settings, which involved larger class sizes than ESL contexts. He also confirmed that *Audiolingualism* and *Grammar Translation* were familiar to about half the respondents, and that the latter continues to be used in EFL contexts, in larger classes, and with low proficiency learners.

A correlation was found between familiarity with various teaching methods and years of teaching experience, educational level, and teaching context. A statistically significant relationship was confirmed between teacher education and familiarity with the *Eclectic Method*, leading Liu to conclude that knowledge about language pedagogy increases in direct correlation with teacher educational level. He posited that this advantage will result in less likelihood of rigid adherence to a particular teaching method and better enable language teachers to choose resources appropriate to learner needs.

The findings of this study prompted Liu to argue that there is still a place for methods in the “post-methods” era. He states that the key issue debated over the last century has been how to balance grammar and communication. To guide language teaching in the post-methods era and assist teachers to more deeply examine their own teaching practice, he proposes a “multi-dimensional theoretical framework” that consists of 25 open-ended questions categorized into five dimensions which Liu has defined as “historical,” “architectural,” “developmental,” “contextual,” and “reflexive” (p. 147).

Razmjoo, Ranjbar, and Hoomanfar (2013) attempted to measure teacher adoption of Kumaravadivelu’s (1994, 2001) framework concerning post-method pedagogy. They surveyed 254 Iranian EFL teachers and interviewed a subset of 60. Results showed that Iranian EFL teachers are a long way from wholeheartedly embracing these novel ideas, raising doubts about its practicality. In a finding consistent with Liu (2009), they also determined that the *Eclectic* method is the primary teaching approach in Iran.

## 2.4. Compromise Solutions: The Return of Grammar Teaching

As criticisms of CLT mounted, many scholars began to argue that explicit grammar teaching remained important despite the continued prevalence of communicative language teaching, and that it was time to re-integrate it (Chang, 2011; Liu, 2009; Long & Rothman, 2013; Scott, 1990; Ur, 2011). Research providing evidence that CLT does not necessarily lead to grammatical accuracy came from Canadian French immersion programs (El-Dakhs, 2014; Ellis, 2002; Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2002; Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Lyster, 2004; Sarkhosh, Soleimani, & Abdeli, 2012), among other sources. Ellis et al. (2002), for example, maintain that the need for attention to form, and not just communicative language use, arose when Swain (1995) and others connected the failure of students in Canadian immersion programs to acquire verb tense marking even after many years of study. El-Dakhs cites several studies (Genesse, 1987; Harley, 1991; Lyster, 1994) on Canadian French immersion that showed that students failed to develop native-like written or oral production and sociolinguistic skills even after six or seven years of instruction. This section explores the newer approaches that have emerged in the “post-methods” era in response to these concerns, as well as the work that has been done in the last few decades concerning learner cognition and input processing.

### 2.4.1 Noticing and Focus on Form

One of these newer approaches to grammar teaching is called *focus on form* (FoF).<sup>17</sup> According to Ellis (2016), the term was coined by Long in 1988. It references a type of intervention in which relevant grammar points are covered either deliberately or incidentally in the course of a communicative lesson. Wang (2013), for example, describes the use of probing questions during a communicative class to encourage students to identify patterns and focus on target structures. Kumaravadivelu (1994) urges teachers to provide sufficient amounts of text to

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<sup>17</sup> Many people confuse *focus on form* (FoF) with *focus on formS* (FoFS) and, unfortunately, these terms are sometimes used interchangeably (Sheen, 2002). Lessons that utilize the latter approach are similar to traditional explicit grammar teaching. According to Ellis et al. (2002), *focus on formS* involves the “intensive and systematic treatment of specific features chosen from a linguistic syllabus” (p. 420), maintaining the primary focus on the target grammatical form rather than on meaning. Many scholars (El-Dakhs, 2014; Ellis, 2015; Ellis et al., 2002; Klapper & Rees, 2003; Laufer, 2006; Sheen, 2002; Sarkhosh, Soleimani, & Abdeli, 2012) have discussed this difference, extensive examination of which is beyond the scope of this paper.

“activate learner intuitive heuristics” and enable them to find patterns and infer underlying grammatical rules (p. 37).

According to Laufer (2006), “learners have a limited capacity for simultaneously processing L2 meaning and form” (p. 151). They will therefore naturally prioritize meaning when engaged in a communicative activity, and it is the teacher’s job to draw their attention to form. Ellis et al. (2002) define *focus on form* as “the treatment of linguistic form in the context of performing a communicative task” (p. 419). They state that, though FoF is most often associated with grammar, it may refer to other aspects of linguistic form, including lexical and phonetic items, and can encompass meaning as well.

FoF classroom implementation can vary, both in nature and in timing. Such interventions can occur at the input, processing, production, and feedback stages of a lesson in the form of structured input, explicit instruction, production practice, and negative feedback, respectively (El-Dakhs, 2014; Ellis, 1998). According to Ellis et al. (2002), a FoF intervention may be planned, incidental, reactive, or pre-emptive. *Planned FoF* involves the use of focused tasks designed to elicit the use of specific linguistic forms within a meaning-centred context (Ellis, 2002). According to Zhang (2012), such tasks may take many forms, including structured input activity, explicit teaching, input flood, and text enhancement. (*Input flood* involves modification of a text so that a linguistic element occurs repeatedly enough to attract learner attention, as in the repeated use of the past tense *-ed* morpheme; *text enhancement* involves the use of underlining, boldface, or another strategy to make a specific element in a text more salient for learners.) *Incidental FoF* can arise unexpectedly in the course of a communicative activity. Negative feedback typifies *Reactive FoF*, which entails responding to learner errors, and *Pre-emptive FoF* involves a break from communicating, initiated by students or a teacher, to topicalize a specific linguistic feature (Ellis, 2002).

Doughty and Williams (1998) state that FoF interventions vary in the extent to which they interrupt the flow of communication, suggesting they be viewed on a continuum based on degree of attention to form and explicitness. *Input flood*, for example, is considered minimally disruptive while VanPatten’s (2002) *Input Processing* intervention (see next section) is clearly obtrusive.

This section would not be complete without discussion of the concept of *noticing*, which is fundamental to FoF (Cross, 2002; Lyster, 2004; Sarkhosh, 2012; Schmidt, 1990, 2010; Truscott, 1998; Ünlü, 2015; Zhang, 2012). After all, it seems rather obvious that one cannot focus on a grammatical or lexical form if one does not notice it first. The *Noticing Hypothesis* originated in Schmidt's (1990) investigation of the reasons for poor accuracy in otherwise proficient production by a Japanese L2 English speaker, together with Schmidt's analysis of his own acquisition of Brazilian Portuguese.

Noticing is the first stage of language acquisition (Ellis, 1999; Gass, 1988; Zhang, 2012). According to Skehan (1998), it is triggered by frequency and salience of the linguistic element within the input, as well as by input modifications made for instructional purposes, such as text enhancement or input flood. When successful, the noticed input becomes comprehended input and, ultimately, intake (the part of the input used for acquisition). Schmidt (2010) maintains that "input" does not become "intake" unless it is consciously registered, or until learners notice the gap between the input and their interlanguage. Others (Schmidt & Frota, 1986; Ünlü, 2015) discuss the importance of prying apart the noticing of surface structures in the input from the rules to be inferred from them.

Though Schmidt's (1990) ideas have wide support (Ellis, 1999; Long, 1981, 1983, 1985; McLaughlin, 1987; Schmidt, 1990; Swain, 1985, 1995), several arguments have been raised against noticing (Carlson, 1991; Carroll, 2006; Meyer & Kieras, 1997; Schachter, 1998; Schwartz, 1993; Shiffrin, 1988; Tomlin & Villa, 1994; Truscott, 1998). Some reject the hypothesis outright; others argue for its reformulation. Truscott (1998), for example, states that it is difficult to precisely define "attention," let alone determine when and how it is allocated to a given task (p. 105). He challenges the foundations of the *Noticing Hypothesis* in cognitive psychology, believing that cognition research does not support the claim that conscious awareness of the information to be acquired is necessary or helpful, though he concedes that it may aid in the acquisition of metalinguistic knowledge.

### 2.4.2 Empirical Studies on Focus on Form

Many studies have investigated *focus on form*, some of which have compared it to *focus on formS*. Others have looked at these interventions for specific teaching objectives.

Laufer (2006), for example, believed that form-focused instruction had not been sufficiently studied in the context of vocabulary research, stating that no prior vocabulary study had compared the effectiveness of the two FFI approaches for L2 vocabulary teaching. Her two-phase study investigated lexical acquisition by 158 Israeli L2 English high school students. Her finding of significantly higher scores (72% as opposed to 47%) for the FoFS group at the end of the first phase led her to conclude that form-focused instruction, and particularly FoFS, is indispensable for L2 vocabulary learning.

In 2008, Laufer teamed with Girsai to further investigate the use of FFI for vocabulary learning. An interest in the effect of contrastive analysis (CA)<sup>18</sup> and translation on incidental<sup>19</sup> lexical acquisition (single words and collocations) led the authors to expose 75 L1 Hebrew high school students to one of three FFI teaching interventions for L2 English: a meaning-oriented group that focused on reading comprehension followed by pairs discussion; a form-focused group that completed a reading and subsequent practice activities focused on the target lexicon; and a third group (deemed the CA group) that translated two texts after receiving “brief explicit contrastive instruction” (p. 705). Answers were checked and corrective feedback was provided for all three groups, all of which then underwent the same immediate and delayed post-tests. Results showed that group three significantly outperformed the other two groups on all tests, with the lowest scores occurring in the meaning-focused group. The exceptional performance of the CA group led the authors to assert that few other studies that had investigated “incidental vocabulary acquisition resulting from FFI” (p. 710) had yielded such strong results. Their findings led them to argue for a return of CA to the language classroom, stating that “cross-linguistic instruction” (p. 710) forces

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<sup>18</sup> An SLA theory dating to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century that compared features of two languages and attributed learner difficulties in acquiring an L2 to interference from the L1 (Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

<sup>19</sup> *Incidental* learning is often contrasted with *intentional* learning, and relates to the presence or absence of intention to commit lexical information to memory (Laufer, 2006).

learners to notice target items in the input, which become salient when people are taught the corresponding L1 forms and made aware of the difficulties that can arise from differences.

Poole's (2005) findings support those of Laufer (2006), though it was not his original intention to investigate the effect of form-focused instruction on vocabulary learning. In order to learn more about the types of forms attended to when learners engage in a FoF activity, he recruited nineteen international university students studying L2 English. An initial survey confirmed that few had had previous experience with communicative teaching; rather, most reported learning English through traditional methods such as teacher-fronted lectures, memorization, and repetition, making the study's FoF intervention a novel experience for them. Participants worked in small groups and their discourse was audio-taped over ten weeks and subsequently analyzed for what Poole called "language-related episodes (LREs)." The LRE definition used in this research drew on Williams (1999): "Discourse in which the learners talk or ask about language, or question, explicitly or implicitly, their own language use or that of others" (as cited in Poole, 2005, p. 3). Lexical LREs concerned meaning, usage, spelling, and pronunciation of words, and grammatical LREs involved a focus on morphological or syntactical features. Results showed that the majority of forms attended to were lexical in nature. Just under 90% of forms analyzed involved vocabulary, while only 10% involved morphosyntax. These results led Poole to conclude that FoF instruction provides stronger benefits for lexical than for grammatical development, particularly with advanced learners.

Klapper and Rees (2003) conducted a four-year longitudinal study to compare the two approaches for grammar teaching. The experimental groups comprised students enrolled in two streams of university L2 German studies: the first was devoted to the German language and to various aspects of German society and culture; the second, to studying German in combination with a degree in Commerce, Social Science, or Law. Over four years, the authors exposed one group to FoF instruction and the other to a FoFS approach, with a goal of measuring grammatical accuracy rather than oral fluency. They assessed the two approaches by documenting proficiency gains for both classroom instruction and a compulsory study abroad program component. The

findings of the study identified specific areas of the L2 German syllabus that benefit most from explicit instruction and those which develop primarily through naturalistic exposure. Ultimately, this study provides evidence both for the study abroad experience and for the authors' conclusion that type of language instruction is less important than "natural language exposure that builds on instruction" (p. 310).

Lightbown and Spada (1990) analyzed the effect of FoF on the developing oral skills of approximately one hundred Quebec ten- to twelve-year-old L1 French students studying L2 English. The students were distributed among four classes, all of which had a strongly communicative orientation, in a five-month intensive elementary school ESL course. This study was inspired when its authors noticed a difference in previously collected observation data confirming that students from one class in particular showed better grammatical accuracy. Upon further investigation, they discovered that the teacher in question used considerably more form-related instruction (defined here as instruction that "explicitly dealt with grammar, vocabulary, phonology, or syntax" [p. 435]), despite maintaining an overall communicative orientation.

For their study, the authors selected specific grammatical features that were known to cause difficulty for francophone ESL learners, and collected 20 hours of observation data from each of the four classes. Among the data they coded for was an indication of whether the activities involved focus-on-form or focus-on-meaning, as well as the extent to which form-focused behaviours were "instructional" or "reactive." Results showed that all four classes were primarily communicative in approach, and classroom interaction focused on meaning, not form. However, substantial between-class differences in accuracy were observed in the use of certain English structures (progressive -*ing* and adjective-noun order). The authors attributed this finding to teachers' differing use of FFI, and concluded that meaning-based instruction will probably best develop "accuracy, fluency, and overall communicative competence" (p. 443), so long as guidance is provided "through timely form-focused activities and correction in context" (p. 443).

Lyster (2004) conducted a comparative analysis of five quasi-experimental studies that investigated the effects of form-focused instruction (FFI) that took place over fifteen years and

involved 1,200 students aged 7 to 14 recruited from 49 French immersion classrooms across Canada. The studies involved looked at the effects of FFI on four grammar topics known to be difficult for anglophone L2 French learners. Lyster argued that immersion contexts lend themselves particularly well to research on FoF because “they require novel ways of focusing on form in primarily experiential contexts to counter the persistence of interlanguage forms in immersion students’ productive repertoire” (p. 325) and that such classes provide “a content-based instructional context where learners develop high levels of communicative ability yet demonstrate a levelling-off effect in their grammatical development” (p. 321). His findings led him to conclude that FFI may be an effective intervention (p. 325) so long as it includes opportunities for noticing, language awareness, and controlled practice with feedback.

Finally, one cannot leave this topic without mention of Norris and Ortega (2000), whose influential (but since challenged) meta-analysis comparing explicit and implicit L2 instruction found the two FFI interventions to be equally effective, both resulting in “large and probabilistically trustworthy gains” (p. 500). This led them to establish an order of effectiveness that suggested “explicit FonF > explicit FonFS > implicit FonF > implicit FonFS” (p. 501).

#### ***2.4.3 Van Patten and Processing Instruction***

Though not directly relevant to the teaching methods found in this study, this information is included here to provide a thorough picture of the evolution of “post-methods” language teaching pedagogy. *Processing Instruction* (PI) is an intervention designed by VanPatten (2002) to exploit his *Input Processing* (IP) theoretical model. The acronyms above designate closely related concepts: IP refers to the non-optimal processing strategies that VanPatten (2002) believes learners default to when attempting to derive intake (defined as the linguistic data retrieved from input and held in working memory for further processing) from input; PI, on the other hand, is the teaching intervention he developed which uses highly structured input to guide learners away from these strategies.

VanPatten maintains that learners construct meaning from certain lexical cues in the input, rather than from grammatical elements. They do so in a predictable order, which he identifies in a set of defining principles: learners process content for meaning before form; lexical items are

searched out first and learners retrieve semantic information from these content words; when learners attend to morphology, they assign a hierarchy of meaning, tending to prioritize “more meaningful” morphological cues; words in sentence-initial position are processed first; and learners tend to assign the agent role to the first noun encountered in a phrase.

VanPatten argues that, since the point of PI is to assist learners to make form-meaning connections during input processing, it is appropriate to view it as a type of FoF or input enhancement intervention. He notes that what critically differentiates it from other input-oriented strategies such as text enhancement, recasts, and input flood, is that PI first identifies potentially problematic processing strategies and then provides activities that foster correct processing.

His PI intervention manipulates learner attention through a combination of structured input and explicit teaching. Lessons under this approach provide information about a specific form and draw attention to an IP strategy that could negatively affect student ability to notice the form. This is followed by structured input that has been manipulated to direct attention to the form in question and provide an opportunity to process the form correctly. VanPatten provides an example using the French causative verb *faire*, explaining that when students encounter the sentence *Jean fait promener le chien à Marie* (“John makes Mary walk the dog”), their instinctive response is to assume that it is *Jean* who is walking the dog, since *Jean* is the first noun and students typically ignore the underlying subject of the second verb (*Marie*). To address this tendency, a PI lesson on the French causative would commence with a brief explanation of the form. Learners would then be warned of their instinct to erroneously process the first noun as the subject of the second verb, after which they would work through structured input activities in which they are guided to process sentences correctly.

## **2.5. Other Approaches**

Two of the courses investigated in this study utilize specific and rather unusual approaches to L2 language teaching: participation in a theatrical production and French-English translation. Pertinent research is discussed below.

### **2.5.1 Theatre**

Gill (2013) is among several scholars who have investigated the use of theatre for language teaching. He conducted a study to determine the effects of drama on the oral production of ten multi-national L2 English university students over twelve weeks of instruction. He notes that the use of drama as a teaching method has been under-investigated, and he argues that it provides many benefits, particularly for learners who are shy, inhibited, anxious, or risk-averse.

In a semester-long experiment, he broke classes into four three-week sessions that alternated between two teaching approaches: “communicative non-drama-based (CNDB)” lessons and “communicative drama-based (CDB) methodology.” Results did not support Gill’s hypothesis that all participants would show improvement once CDB methodology was introduced, as only two participants showed steady improvement. However, his hypothesis that mean scores would be higher by the end of Week 12 than when first observed was upheld: all ten participants had higher scores by the end of the program.

The author identifies several factors that may have contributed to his findings, foremost among them the possibility there may have been too much alternation, resulting in too short an exposure for the initial CDB approach. Other possible explanations for the improvement include increasing participant comfort with the communicative approach itself, the format of the course, classmates, the teacher, or the presence of observers, thereby reducing inhibition and spurring greater participation as the course progressed.

A quasi-experimental study by Gomez (2010) adopted the second strategy described above. Hoping to implement alternatives to established ESL teaching practice, which he felt lacked innovation, Gomez investigated the effectiveness of drama compared to traditional instructional methods for teaching L2 English oral skills, with a focus on pronunciation and fluency. Two mixed-ability classes of L1 Spanish learners who attended public school in Madrid received instruction in differing methods over a three-week period. The pre- and post-tests took the form of an interview that afforded measurement of speaking fluency, grammar, and pronunciation.

Gomez' (2010) results indicated greater improvement in the results of the intervention group than in the control group, and Gomez tentatively concluded that teaching English through drama produced better results than via traditional methods. This study provides results that corroborate Gill (2013). However, three classes per week for only three weeks is a very short duration, casting some doubt on the results, a limitation that Gomez himself acknowledges.

### ***2.5.2 Translation and Own Language Activities***

For much of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, as the global spread of CLT resulted in mandatory use of the L2—particularly in ESL contexts—L1 use became virtually forbidden in many classrooms. This opposition to classroom use of the first language is believed to date to the 1982 publication of Krashen's *Input Hypothesis*, which spurred the growth of CLT, replacing earlier methods that had relied heavily on the first language (Bruhlmann, 2012). However, this trend has reversed again in the last decade or so (Bruhlmann, 2012; Kerr, 2014), fueling a shift toward renewed acceptance of first language use and prompting a spate of new research.

Carreras (2006) is among several scholars who have examined the pedagogical effectiveness of translation. She surveyed learners in their second and third year of a modern languages degree at the University of Cambridge for their thoughts on L1/L2 translation, and vice versa, with a simple eleven-item questionnaire. Responses for all but two of the questions were measured on a five-point Likert scale; the other two were true/false questions. Fully 100% of those surveyed felt that translation should be taught as part of a modern languages undergraduate degree, and 54% felt there was no faster way to make progress in language learning. There was stronger preference for translating from English to the L2 (4.6 out of 5) than for the contrary (3.8 out of 5), and there was a more ambivalent answer (3.4 out of 5) to the question, *Do you enjoy translation classes?* When asked to rank language learning aspects that could best benefit from translation between English and the L2, vocabulary was rated highest, for both translation from the L2 to English (93%) and the reverse (100%). Other areas where learners felt translation could help included grammar (96%), writing (96%) and L2 register (90%). Commenting on the contradiction between the low score for the question about enjoyment of translation classes and the overall strong support for their

necessity, Carreras suggests that the lack of enjoyment may reflect dissatisfaction with the way certain teachers approach the topic. She does not specify the number of learners surveyed, and she notes herself that the high entrance standards of Cambridge University mean that this student population may not be representative.

Hummel (2010) is among the few studies that report results of research into translation as a language teaching method that were not focused on grammar. The orientation of this study is toward vocabulary, which aligns well with the translation course that was observed. Hummel states that the literature on language processing and memory suggests certain cognitive advantages for translation that can directly benefit vocabulary learning, particularly in classrooms where the L2 learners have the same first language in common. She cites research showing that degree of difficulty can be directly related to retention, and argues that the more difficult translation direction (L1 to L2, as opposed to L2 to L1) suggests support for the notion that “learning difficulty ultimately benefits performance” (Hummel, 2010, p. 64). To investigate the effect that active translation might have on short-term incidental recall, she recruited 191 French university students with intermediate L2 English proficiency. Participants were arbitrarily assigned to one of three experimental conditions: translation from L1 to L2; from L2 to L1; and completion of an “exposure and copy” activity, whereby L2 words were presented in a sentence context, with L1 translation provided. All three conditions resulted in significant vocabulary retention compared to pre-task levels, with no difference between the two translation conditions. Hummel acknowledges that her finding of no significant difference regarding direction of translation conflicts with the “well-known finding that translation into one’s stronger language (the L1) is invariably done with greater skill and less effort than translation into one’s weaker language (the L2)” (p. 70). In an unanticipated result, participants who were merely required to copy sentences significantly outperformed the other participants. Hummel (2010) concedes that her results did not reveal the expected advantage for active translation, which she believes may demand greater cognitive processing than the copying condition. She states that cognitive benefits from active translation may have been offset by the relatively weak L2 skills of the participants

(intermediate level ESL students), speculating that this approach may lack benefits below advanced proficiency levels. In addition, she only measured short-term recall: an obvious next step would be measurement of long-term recall of the target vocabulary.

Also noteworthy here are the findings of Laufer and Girsai (2008), who set out to research the use of FFI for vocabulary learning. One of the three teaching approaches they investigated was the use of translation together with CA to highlight target lexicon and orient students to differences between the L1 and L2. Their research showed exceptional performance in the group taught using this method, leading the authors to surmise that “cross-linguistic instruction” (p. 710) can increase salience of target forms in the input and help identify the difficulties that can arise from differences between the two languages. More detail is provided on page 28.

## **2.6. Research on University Foreign Language Learning in France**

This research study investigated teaching methods used in a French university’s intensive summer L2 French program. Few studies (published in English) have examined foreign language teaching approaches utilized in the French university system. The two sections below review key recent studies in this area.

### ***2.6.1 Whyte (2011): The Inspiration for This Research***

The state of L2 teaching in French universities first came to my attention in a 2011 paper by Whyte, who argues that a problem exists within the French university system regarding foreign language study. She notes that the French education system has long maintained an academic distinction between “modern” and “foreign” language study. She explains that university programs in France tend to divide language study into two strands differentiated by teaching approach and academic domain: modern language (*langues vivantes*) courses focus on literary topics; foreign language (*langues étrangères*) courses (e.g., English, German) focus more on communicative approaches. These two approaches to L2 study are represented in the French university system by a *Langues, Littératures, et Civilisation pour Enseignement* (LLCE) strand for modern languages, and a *LANGues pour Spécialistes d’Autres Disciplines* (LANSAD) strand for foreign languages.

Courses in the former strand “are defined in opposition to the classical languages, Greek and Latin, and thus situated in the academic family of literature and the arts,” while those in the latter “more properly belong in the fields of linguistics and education, in the domain of social sciences” (Whyte, 2011, p. 214). Thus, the same language may be studied in an arts program as a cultural aspect of the countries where it is spoken, or in social sciences as a communicative tool to be acquired by students.

The two strands differ significantly in their priorities, especially with respect to culture and language proficiency. According to Whyte, LANSAD courses focus on communicative language use (including L2 comprehension and expression), with the culture of countries where the language is spoken of minor concern. The LLCE approach, on the other hand, is characterized by a strong cultural orientation that includes literature and social and political history. Educators within this strand typically consider language proficiency a prerequisite, with ongoing development the personal responsibility of students, often undertaken during study visits abroad.

Moreover, this academic stratification of language learning influences teaching methods. Whyte explains that French modern language courses use traditional *Grammar Translation* teaching methods, with “high culture” their ultimate goal. Foreign language instruction, on the other hand, strives for language proficiency and has tended to follow L2 teaching trends, from *Audiolingualism* through CLT to TBLT (p. 214).

She maintains that university teaching is dominated by the literary strand,<sup>20</sup> and argues that a schism between these two approaches leads certain French university students—some of whom will become language teachers—to fail to attain competency in foreign language communication. This reality has consequences for L2 teaching throughout France. Whyte points to the considerable irony in the fact that the modern language specialists emerging from literary, LLCE programs at French universities are responsible for all instruction in their language in

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<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, Whyte also claims that French university foreign language textbooks, which continue to reflect *Grammar Translation* principles, were created by people trained in literature rather than language teaching or applied linguistics, an assertion congruent with Richards and Rodgers (2014).

French primary, secondary, and university language programs. The LANSAD departments are themselves staffed by LLCE professionals, as are the teacher training colleges.

Whyte identifies several issues she believes contribute to foreign language teaching and learning challenges at French universities:

**Quality and quantity of language instruction:** Whyte identifies problems both in terms of hours of instruction and learning conditions. She points out that LANSAD courses in French universities fall far short of the minimum number of hours recommended by CEFR standards to achieve C2 proficiency.

**Evolution of teaching methodology:** She maintains that current approaches to language education are based on the transmission of knowledge, which she calls an apt description of French university teaching. Whether in *cours magistraux* (lectures, often on theory, presented in lecture theatres) or in *travaux dirigés* (more practical classes conducted in smaller classrooms), instruction takes a lecture format. The “facts” of a foreign language consist of its grammar and vocabulary, with sequencing determined by specialists in its literature, who specialize primarily in writing and translating.

**Poor uptake of new methods by French universities:** Whyte maintains that neither cognitively oriented nor socio-constructivist learning theories<sup>21</sup> have yet become established in foreign language instruction at French universities. She attributes this to logistical and economic trends, arguing that “external factors (from continually rising *baccalaureat* [high school] pass rates and a generally gloomy job market, to the expansion of EU membership) have brought increasing numbers of [students] to university, while lack of funding creates large, heterogeneous classes” (p. 228). She points out that students differ widely in their L2 competence, motivation, and even L1, and often lack the study skills to benefit from standard teaching models. Organizational constraints such as class size, hours of instruction, and exam schedules make it difficult to develop constructive approaches that might help these students.

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<sup>21</sup> Defined as “focusing on information processing, leading to methods based on comprehension and communication,” (Whyte, 2011, p. 215) as opposed to behaviourist learning models which “viewed language acquisition as the formation of habits” (p. 220).

**Status of teaching in French higher education:** Whyte argues that teaching has low status in French universities compared to other activities of professors, arguing that, at university, “teaching is telling, evaluating is policing, and anything else devalues the academic enterprise” (p. 227). She cites Elton (2009) who, she notes, “deplores the schism which has developed in universities between research and teaching, such that research is seen as a noble undertaking, and teaching is barely worth consideration” (as cited in Whyte, 2011, p. 227).

While Whyte is clearly very knowledgeable and her arguments are powerful, there are some problems with her paper. She draws conclusions about the state of university language education throughout France without citing specific examples. Indeed, it is not clear what institution(s) she is referring to, and she provides no sources for her conclusions about the state of affairs in France. This lack of empirical support leaves a very large subject for further exploration.

### ***2.6.2 Other French Universities***

The above critique notwithstanding, Whyte’s (2011) analysis aligns with my personal experience as an L2 learner at a French university, and her paper provided the inspiration for this research. Central to the justification for my own study, however, is the question of whether her conclusions apply to other institutions, including the one investigated. Currently, little information exists to make that determination. The studies described below are among the very few available (in English) on the state of foreign language education within the French university system.

As fluency appears to be an important objective of the school that participated in my research, the findings of Freed, Segalowitz, and Dewey (2004) are noteworthy. These authors investigated the effect of three different learning contexts on second language fluency development. They compared the fluency acquisition of 28 L2 French learners in an at-home classroom (AH) setting, an intensive summer immersion program (IM), and in a study abroad (SA) setting (Paris). Their research question concerned the contribution to fluency of each of these settings, as well as the respective contributions of instructional time versus free time spent interacting with native speakers—an obvious advantage of study abroad. The findings of this study support both summer immersion and study abroad learning contexts: both the IM and the

SA groups made significant fluency gains, with the most improvement found in the summer immersion context. The at-home group made no significant fluency gains.

A Canadian study conducted by Piquemal and Renaud (2006) also took place in a French university setting and is the only empirical evidence I have found that directly supports Whyte's (2011) claim. The authors looked at four universities. Like the circumstances described by Whyte, the L2 curricula of these institutions diverge into two streams that students are required to choose between: LLCE (*Lettres, Langues, et Cultures Etrangères*) and LEA (*Langues Etrangères Appliquées*), with the former focused mainly on literature, civilization, and history, and the latter on economics, business administration, and law. This fact would appear to support Whyte (2011), particularly if teaching methods differ within these two streams. However, this study, which surveyed 1,305 students, focused not on teaching methodology but on student beliefs and attitudes toward foreign language learning. The authors set out to explore factors that promote or hinder multilingualism and how beliefs and attitudes change as students progress through school. Survey questions were intended to assess perceived social norms and advantages of foreign language learning, personal language learning experiences, and—importantly—the role of instructional strategies in foreign language learning. The study produced encouraging findings, suggesting that internal factors (e.g., personal attitude) provide more motivation than external factors (e.g., social value) for first-year students to study a foreign language. Importantly, students expressed disappointment in a perceived lack of focus on communication and oral practice in the teaching methods they encountered.

This study encompassed four French universities with wide geographic distribution. Discovery of a similar divergence of curricula in varied regions of the country, together with the consistent desire of students for stronger focus on communicative teaching methods, provides strong support for Whyte (2011).

## **2.7. Research Questions**

Given inconsistent evidence regarding the effectiveness of implicit versus explicit teaching approaches documented here, along with Whyte's (2011) assertion that a schism exists between

“literary” (LLCE, explicit) and “communicative” (LANSAD, implicit) approaches in foreign language education in French universities, this study set out to investigate student and teacher perceptions and behaviour in four courses in a French university’s summer FSL program.

Whyte’s arguments, however, pertain to French citizens studying a foreign language such as English or German at French universities. I speculated that the schism she identifies may also affect international students who attend L2 French programs at these universities. This research study examined Whyte’s assertions in the context of one French university, by seeking answers to the following questions:

- 1) What are teachers’ expectations regarding learning objectives and what challenges do they anticipate? What L2 French teaching approaches and methods do they use?
- 2) What are learners’ expectations and anticipated challenges? What are their perceptions of the teaching approaches and methods used by their teachers and of their overall learning experience?
- 3) How well do student and teacher expectations align?

### 3. Methods

This qualitative study is informed by an interpretivist theoretical underpinning. Descriptive and inductive in nature, it has encompassed a holistic scope and was conducted within a natural setting. To collect data about student and teacher behaviours and perceptions in an FSL context, an embedded multiple case study (i.e., one that contains multiple units of analysis, with sub-cases for each [Yin, 2012]) was used to investigate the approaches taken by four teachers, each of whom instructs a specific FSL-integrated subject (see Table 1), along with one or more students per teacher. The research took place within a theoretical framework that acknowledges the rich history of SLA pedagogy and which affirms that each teaching method has something beneficial to offer.

#### 3.1. The Research Context and Cases

The FSL program that was investigated is associated with a French university and runs daily for a month every summer. Its student population is typically a mix of both genders and falls within the 15 to 30 age group (with a few middle-aged outliers). Many nationalities and languages are represented; English is the most common, though it may be a second, third, or even fourth or fifth language for some participants. French proficiency varies widely, from none to very advanced, and students are assessed for proficiency on admission and subsequently assigned to one of four streams tied to the six levels of language ability identified in the *Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)*.<sup>22</sup>

Students may enrol in one-week increments, although most remain for the full four-week duration, which is followed by a post-test and a transferable certificate. Various courses are available and classes are scheduled back-to-back, much as they would be at a Canadian university. Guest lectures and youth-oriented activities and excursions are a fundamental part of the program that also provide important language learning opportunities. The four courses that were investigated are briefly described in Table 1.

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<sup>22</sup> Refer to <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/>.

Table 1

*The Four Research Cases*

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Description</u>
Theatre CEFR B1 and up	The drama workshop offers first-hand knowledge of stagecraft, which includes physical training, improvisation, and interpretation. The course, which culminates in the public staging of a play in French, provides an opportunity for students to work on pronunciation, textual analysis, vocabulary comprehension, grammar clarification, and speaking confidence.
Grammar CEFR B2/C1	Students will learn to produce clear, well-constructed, unhesitating speech that demonstrates the well-controlled use of structures, connectors, and articulators; to transmit subtleties of meaning with precision; and to know how to use a wide range of modalities.
French Culture <sup>23</sup> CEFR A2	An “action-oriented approach” is taken to the arts, literature, and other cultural topics in this class for beginners. Goals include grammar, vocabulary, phonetics, and comprehension and oral expression, as described in the CEFR.
Translation CEFR B2/C1	A close examination and translation of selected texts from local and national press. Students will discuss linguistic and cultural issues while translating texts from French to English. They will improve their skills in French through an examination of high-frequency idiomatic expressions used in articles and realia targeted toward native speakers.

The overarching goal of the school, according to the teachers interviewed, is not only to provide an enriching and pedagogically sound language learning experience, but to provide an opportunity for people of different nationalities to mix, discover cultural differences, and create international friendships.

### 3.2. Participants

This study involved two groups of participants.

**Teachers:** Four teachers were recruited, three of whom are native French speakers. The fourth teacher is an American French teacher who has worked with the school for over fifteen years, and whose French is native-like. Pseudonyms are used in Table 2.

<sup>23</sup> This course is one of two that the syllabus showed Caroline teaching back to back for the same proficiency level. These were supposed to be different (*Written and Spoken French*, followed by *French Culture*). The time at which I was asked to attend overlapped the class change at least twice; however, there was no distinction in subject matter and no change of attendees took place.

Table 2

*Participant Demographics - Teachers*

	<u>Georges</u>	<u>François</u>	<u>Caroline</u>	<u>Nicole</u>
Course taught	Theatre	Translation	French Culture	Grammar
Years teaching	30	30+	19	25
Nationality	French	American	French	French
Experience	Taught FLS in Indonesia for many years. With this school since 1960. Initially taught grammar and literature. First theatre course in 1990. Became Director in 2014. Directs <i>La Mazurka du Sang Noir</i> theatre company and runs theatre workshops globally.	Teaches French language, literature and culture at an American university. Focus 17 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> century French literature.  Associated with this school for 25 years. Taught Translation course for the last four years.	Ethnolinguist who completed PhD in Poland in 1999. Taught French in Brazil from 2011 to 2013. Has operated her own business doing FLE training for six years. With this summer program since 2003.	Linguist with a speciality in pedagogy. Taught at university in Spain, Mexico and Morocco. Secondary school FLE teacher since 1993. Certified DELF tester and teacher trainer. 20 years with this school. Syllabus responsibility.
FLS teaching qualification	FLE certificate	Doctorate	None	FLE-FLS/ Master 2 DDL
Program stream	Langues Vivantes	Langues Étrangères	Langues Vivantes	Langues Vivantes (Spanish) / Langues Étrangères (FLE)
Degree	PhD in French language, literature, and culture	PhD in 17th-century French literature	PhD, Masters in Germanic, Scandinavian and Slavic literature and civilization	Masters in linguistics and language teaching

*Note.* FLS = *Français Langue Seconde*; FLE = *Français Langue Étrangère*; DELF = diploma issued by the French government to certify French language skills; DDL = *Diplôme de Didactique des Langues*, “diploma in language teaching”)

As can be seen from Table 2, each teacher possesses many years of L2 French teaching experience and all have advanced degrees specializing in language and literature. Three of them passed through the *Langues Vivantes* (LLCE, modern languages) stream discussed earlier.

François indicated that he had also undertaken a *Langues Étrangères* (LANSAD, foreign

languages) program and Nicole had completed degrees in both streams, one of which was a Masters in language teaching pedagogy. She carries responsibility for delivery of FLS teacher training throughout her region.

**Students:** Six students from the school's pool of international students volunteered to participate in this study.<sup>24</sup> Pseudonyms are used in Table 3.

Table 3

*Participant Demographics – Students*

	<u>Astrid</u>	<u>Stefan</u>	<u>Emma</u>	<u>Paulina</u>	<u>Klara</u>	<u>Wen Xiang</u>
Age	26	42	19	20	36	19
Gender	F	M	F	F	F	M
Course taken	Theatre	Theatre	Translation	Translation	French Culture	Grammar
Nationality	Norway	Czech Republic	China	Slovakia	Poland	China
CEFR level	B2	C1	B2	B2	A1	B1
First language	Norwegian	Czech	Mandarin	Slovak	Polish	Chinese
Other languages	English, French, German	Russian, German, English, French, Slovak	English, French	English, French, Russian, Czech	English	English, French
Age of first contact with French	13	40	18	17	15	14
Years studied French	6-7	2	1	4	6.5	1
Occupation	Student	Patent examiner	Student	Student	Business systems analyst	Student
Education	MA linguistics	PhD	High school	High school	“Yes”	First year university

As can be seen from Table 3, the second participant group comprised young adults ranging in age from 19 to 42, with an average age of 27. The majority were students at various stages of university education; two were working professionals. In terms of nationality, they very

<sup>24</sup> It was originally anticipated that eight students would participate, two for each teacher.

much represent the international mix of people who attend this program, with nationalities that included several Eastern European countries as well as Norway and China. Linguistically, almost all were multilingual. Their existing French proficiency (determined by a pre-test) ranged from CEFR level A1 to C1, with the majority (four) falling in the intermediate range. L1s included Norwegian, Czech, Mandarin, Slovak, and Polish. All but one person commenced their French studies in their teenage years, with time devoted to this pursuit ranging from one to 6.5 years.

### **3.3. Data Collection and Analysis**

For triangulation purposes, multiple data collection methods were used to produce thick descriptions of the four FSL classrooms and to gather the perspectives of the participants (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013). Questionnaires, classroom observations, interviews, focus groups, weekly student logs, and researcher field notes were included in the analysis.

All participants completed a background questionnaire. One-hour interviews were audio-recorded with teachers, along with audio-recorded 30-minute pre-course student interviews and a final post-course teacher focus group. Several classes were observed and video-recorded for each teacher, with the number of observations per teacher varying from one to three for logistical reasons. Students were asked to complete a weekly log to reflect on their learning, and researcher field notes were maintained throughout.

#### **3.3.1 Data Collection Instruments**

The data collection instruments are described in the following section.

##### **a. Background Attitude Survey (Appendix A)**

The study commenced with a questionnaire that both teachers and students were asked to complete. Designed to collect participant background and attitudinal information, the form had a semi-structured design based on the *Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory* (BALLI) instrument. It contained three open-ended questions and fourteen general language learning statements that participants were asked to rate on a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated strong disagreement; 7, strong agreement; and 4 was neutral. Another section concerned the four

core language skills, which participants were asked to rank in order both of importance and difficulty on a four-point Likert scale.

**b. Pre-Course Teacher Interviews (Appendix B)**

All four teachers participated in one-hour individual pre-course semi-structured interviews which took place in quiet locations before the course started. The goal of the pre-course interview was to identify pedagogical goals, planned teaching approaches, and anticipated challenges. Conducted in French by necessity, the interviews were audio-recorded digitally. The four teachers were asked the same guiding questions, supplemented by a subset of questions tailored to each teacher's area of specialization.

**c. Post-Course Teacher Focus Group (Appendix C)**

The four teachers also participated in a post-course focus group immediately upon conclusion of the course. The goal of this activity was to debrief what worked and what did not, with respect to original expectations as well as challenges encountered in meeting their instructional goals. Conducted in French, the focus group lasted just under two hours and was audio-recorded. I facilitated and all four teachers attended, as did the second observer.

**d. Pre-Course Student Interviews (Appendix B)**

Thirty-minute individual semi-structured student interviews were conducted within the first few days of the program start. The goal of the pre-course interview was to identify student expectations and anticipated challenges. All but one of the student interviews were conducted in English. All were audio-recorded.

**e. Weekly Student Reflective Logs (Appendix D)**

Student participants also completed a one-page weekly log in which they reflected on their learning and noted any obstacles. This semi-structured form contained four seven-point Likert-scale questions concerning their in-class experience; a single question concerning frequency of speaking French outside of class; and space to respond to six open-ended questions related to personal goals and challenges they had encountered that week. The students submitted the completed form each Friday.

## **f. Researcher Field Notes**

Field notes were kept in a variety of locations. Both observers made notes during the observations, which were subsequently reviewed and compared to the video record in case of discrepancies. In addition, I recorded my developing ideas in a *Notes* app, which was exchanged for a spreadsheet as analysis progressed and findings began to coalesce, and I kept a regular record in NVivo to document the research and to track coding progress.

### **3.3.2 Data Collection Procedures**

The activities involved in data collection are set out below.

#### **a. Recruitment**

With the school's approval, we attended all four classes at the start of the second week to explain the research procedure, in both English and French, and distribute the opt-in cards. Completed opt-in cards were retrieved from all four classes. Selection criteria included an age requirement of 19 or older, enrollment for the remainder of the four-week program,<sup>25</sup> and sufficient English or French proficiency to be able to communicate with the interviewer.

#### **b. Other Procedures**

Data collection took place from June 16 to July 27, 2018. The school's program ran from July 2 to 27, and the two-week head start was intended to ensure that the teacher interviews could be completed, and transcription and translation underway, before the students arrived. The teacher interviews commenced with an explanation of the university's ethics protocol and signing of the informed consent documents. The questionnaires were then distributed, and all four teachers completed them on the spot. The audio recorder was then started and the interviews were completed. Because two of the teachers did considerable thinking aloud, I started the audio recorder while they were completing the questionnaire.

Once students had been recruited, individual appointments were made and the student interviews were completed. They proceeded in the same manner: ethics protocols were explained and the consent documents signed, following the university's ethical guidelines; students were then

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<sup>25</sup> Students can choose among one-, two-, three-, or four-week enrollment.

given the questionnaires and the first of three weekly log forms and the log procedure was then explained. Students were instructed to return their completed log forms each Friday. The audio recorder was then started and the interviews were completed.

Classroom observations commenced in the second week of the program. Nine video-taped observations were conducted: three each for two of the teachers, and two and one each for the remaining two teachers. The video-recordings were made once per week, over three weeks, and the recorded durations matched class durations, at just under one hour. Every effort was made to be as unobtrusive as possible and to shield student identities, positioning observers at the back of each classroom so that student faces were obscured. Teachers, however, remained visible in the recordings, as their behaviour was the focus of the research. Two observers were present at all observations.

The final procedure was a teacher focus group, which took place at a mutually agreed upon location on the afternoon of the last day of the course. The discussion lasted just under two hours and was audio-recorded.

### ***3.3.3 Qualitative Data Analysis***

#### **a. Preparation: Transcription, Translation, and Verification**

After each observation, observer field notes were compared. Discrepancies were identified and discussed and, where necessary, checked against the video record. The audio- and video-recorded material was transcribed in the language used by each participant (French or English). A professional translator and the second observer shared this task, which coincided with data collection throughout the summer and continued well into the fall. The audio and video files (interviews, focus group, and classroom observation recordings) were sent for transcription as the material was produced, and returned for verification against the original audio or video recordings as they were completed. The verified transcription was then translated into English, if necessary and, where possible, the translations were verified by the second observer or myself.

## b. Coding

NVivo Plus was licensed for two computers, so that the second coder<sup>26</sup> and I could code independently. Cases and case classifications were created for each participant, and file structures and node hierarchies were established to align with the data instruments used. (NVivo defines a *node* as “a collection of references about a specific theme, place, person or other area of interest” [QSR International, n.d., ¶4]). *Case classifications* are used in NVivo to store demographic and other quantitative data (e.g., Likert ratings) about participants, enabling further analysis of the qualitative data.

Coding commenced as soon as the verified transcripts were received. Several rounds of coding were undertaken. I initially autocoded the open-ended interview and survey question data, the student weekly log data, and the focus group results to two sets of cases based on the two participant groups. I then autocoded the same datasets to sets of nodes mapped directly to the questions in the instruments. These are contained within a node hierarchy organized by instrument, then by participant group.

Once the autocoding was complete, I manually coded the same instruments, as well as the classroom observation data, to sets of thematic nodes also organized hierarchically by instrument, and then by participant group. Open coding was used to identify themes, which emerged naturalistically from the data as I coded (Grbich, 2013; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013).<sup>27</sup>

I coded 100% of the data and the first full round of coding was completed in early December 2018. The second coder then coded 30% of the interviews and 30% of the classroom observations, after which coding comparison queries were run. The first coding comparison produced zeros and kappa scores ranging from .4 to over .9. Inconsistencies were mostly due to initial differences of opinion or the discovery of references that had been missed or, in some

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<sup>26</sup> This was the same individual who acted as second observer. She participated in the classroom observations and the focus group; worked on-site transcribing, translating, and verifying data; and completed the second round of coding. She has a background in Linguistics and is fluent in French.

<sup>27</sup> Field notes were viewed not as a data source but were used for verification purposes, and thus were not coded.

cases, wrongly assigned in earlier rounds of coding. The data underwent several further rounds of coding until strong agreement (kappa scores of .9 or better) was achieved for all nodes within all six node hierarchies. This process was completed by early January. Another cycle of adjustments to the organization of the themes followed, in consultation with my supervisor.

Because two people were working on the NVivo file—with the potential for accidental overwriting entailed by a non-server-based software solution—I established a coding protocol that stipulated merge and backup procedures, including how changes were to be made to the master file and how and when duplicates were merged. I also set out a procedure for the creation of new nodes and a policy for handling questions and uncertainty. Top-level nodes were created for potential quotable passages, material needing follow-up with participants, and anything requiring discussion. Selected examples of the top- and second-level node hierarchy are provided for each instrument. See Appendix E for the complete codebook.

**Interviews:** The top and second level thematic node structure for the interviews is indicated in Figure 1. Eighty-nine manually coded themes emerged, with 316 references.

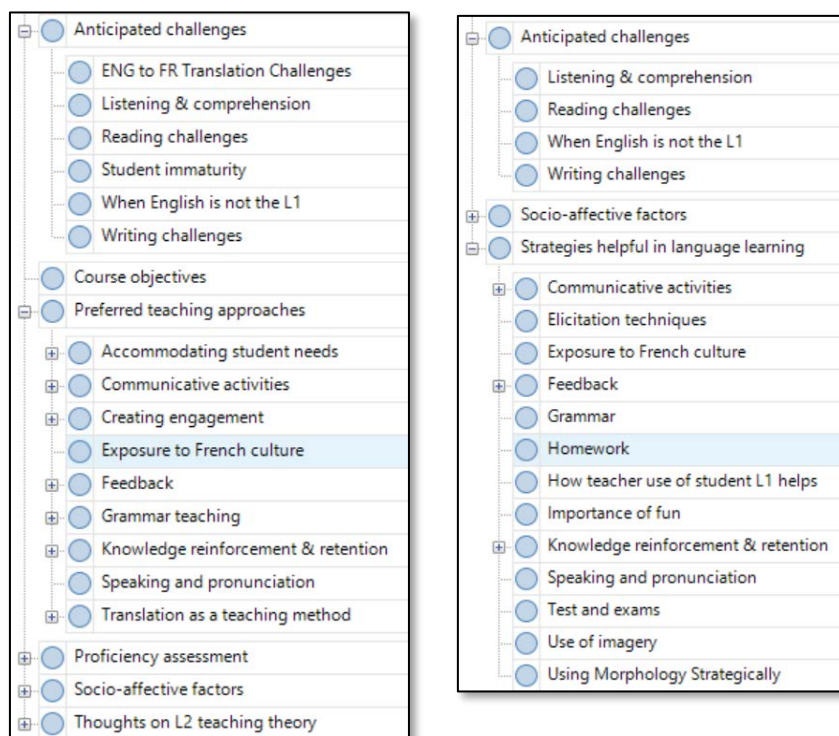


Figure 1. Teacher (left) and student (right) interview nodes.

**Focus Group:** The top and second level thematic node structure for the focus group is indicated in Figure 2. Forty manually coded themes emerged, with 68 references.

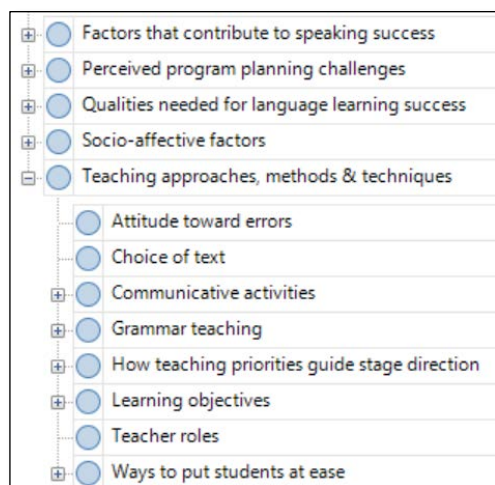


Figure 2. Focus group nodes.

**Classroom Observations:** The top and second level node structure for the observations may be seen in Figure 3. The names used in this set of nodes derive from behaviours that were observed in the classroom. As coding proceeded, it became apparent that a way was needed to differentiate what teachers were teaching (e.g., discussing a 19<sup>th</sup>-century French impressionist painter) from how they were teaching (e.g., making use of *focus on form* to highlight vocabulary or teach a grammar point). The “how” information is organized under “Observed Teaching Approaches,” which is by far the largest category. One hundred and six manually coded themes emerged, with 1,588 references.

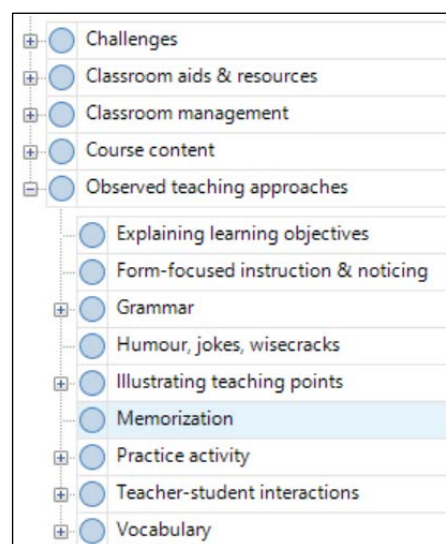


Figure 3. Classroom observation nodes.

**Surveys and Student Reflective Logs:** The quantitative data from the questionnaires and student logs were input into Excel for analysis, where they were split into two spreadsheets: one for demographic details and a second for the Likert scale data. The spreadsheets were subsequently imported into NVivo, and the quantitative data separated into student and teacher case classifications. The qualitative data from the open-ended fields were autocoded to question nodes then manually coded to thematic nodes. The thematic nodes are shown in Figure 4, for both instruments. Twenty-four manually coded survey themes emerged, with 67 references. Seventeen manually coded student log themes emerged, with 172 references.

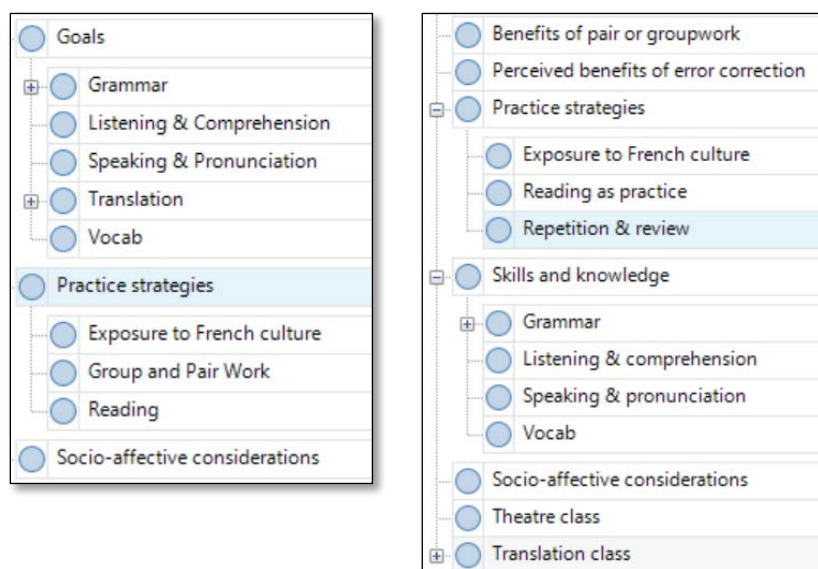


Figure 4. Survey nodes (left) and student log nodes (right).

### c. Querying the Data

Once the coding was finalized and .9 or better inter-rater reliability established, I utilized NVivo's query tools to identify patterns in the data. I started by building matrices that allow for an at-a-glance examination of teacher and student responses to the questions asked in the interviews and surveys, summarizing key findings in a spreadsheet as I worked. I then ran queries to compare the weekly student logs, interviews, and focus group results to data from the observations, first overall, then on a case-by-case basis. I then began creating sets for the themes most consistently discussed across the data sources, tracking these as well in Excel, where I mapped them to the

research questions. As the spreadsheet grew and the ideas presented here coalesced, columns were added for emerging issues and concerns, possible interpretations of findings, theoretical implications, possible explanations, limiting factors, and potential recommendations.

#### ***3.3.4 Quantitative Data Analysis***

The amount of quantitative data amassed in this research, though minimal, proved useful. As mentioned above, data from the surveys and weekly student logs were input into Excel and subsequently imported into NVivo. Excel enables the computation of standard descriptive statistics. NVivo provides the ability to extract the open-ended qualitative question responses to a set of nodes, and store the remaining data in a separate case classification for each participant. This functionality provided the ability to use the Excel data within NVivo to filter the qualitative data by specific demographic criteria. For example, I was able to compare teacher responses broken out by formal training type, and student responses by CEFR level.

In addition, the imported Excel data enabled the examination of the qualitative data through a purely quantitative lens. I could, for example, compare how students rated the difficulty of speaking in the survey (Likert score) to their response to interview questions on this subject, or examine contradictions between their survey or weekly log responses and their thoughts on the importance of grammar, practice and memorization, classroom interaction, and frequency of French spoken outside of class. Likewise, with teachers, the use of quantitative data as a filter enabled the comparison of opinions and behaviour with survey responses on topics such as the importance of grammar, the desirability of nativelikeness, fluency versus accuracy, error correction, and L1 use.

#### ***3.3.5 Trustworthiness Measures***

Multiple sources of data, the participation of two observers, the creation of a videotaped record, the use of thick descriptions, and the comparison of researcher field notes after each observation are among the measures that have been used to enhance trustworthiness. The participation of a professional translator, along with careful validation of the transcriptions, ensured accuracy of the transcribed audio and video data, and independent coding by two people enabled inter-rater reliability measurement and enhanced the dependability of results.

## 4. Results

The case study presented here has four sub-cases and has employed a variety of instruments to develop rich descriptions. The results that follow describe the perceptions of the participants as articulated by them, and their behaviour in the classroom as documented by myself and a second observer. Section 4.1 examines teacher perceptions and behaviours; Section 4.2, those of students; and Section 4.3 provides a summary of the results obtained.

### 4.1. Teacher Perceptions and Behaviours (Q1)

This section examines responses obtained from teachers through interviews and surveys, behaviours witnessed in the classroom observations together with student responses to those behaviours, and post-course focus group results.

#### 4.1.1 Beliefs About Language Teaching

The participants completed a survey intended to complement the qualitative results. In addition to three open-ended questions that sought responses to the primary research questions, the survey contained fourteen statements about language learning. Teachers and students were asked to rate their agreement with the statements on a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated strong disagreement; 7, strong agreement; and 4 was neutral. Responses are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

#### *Teacher Survey Responses*

	<u>CP</u>	<u>FM</u>	<u>GL</u>	<u>NG</u>	<u>Mdn</u>	<u>SD</u>
1. Anyone can learn to speak French.	2	6	7	7	6.5	2.1
2. It is important to speak with a native-like French accent.	4	6	7	2	5.0	1.9
3. Teachers—not students—should control the classroom.	4	4	6	1	4.0	1.8
4. Errors in writing should always be corrected.	1	4	5	3	3.5	1.5
5. No one teaching method works for everybody.	7	4	4	4	4.0	1.3
6. Fluency is more important than accuracy.	6	4	7	7	6.5	1.2
7. Students should speak French whenever possible outside of class.	7	6	7	4	6.5	1.2
8. Building vocabulary quickly is the key to learning French.	6	5	4	3	4.5	1.1
9. A good understanding of grammar is necessary to learn French.	4	5	3	2	3.5	1.1
10. Pronunciation errors should always be corrected.	4	4	5	2	4.0	1.1
11. Classes should provide lots of opportunities for student interaction.	7	5	5	7	6.0	1.0

12. Translation to/from the first language should be encouraged.	4	5	3	3	3.5	0.8
13. French is a difficult language to learn.	4	5	4	4	4.0	0.4
14. Daily practice and memorization is the key to learning French.	5	5	5	4	5.0	0.4

*Note.* CP=Caroline; FM=François; GL=Georges; NG=Nicole; *Mdn*=median; *SD*=standard deviation. Cells indicating the areas of greatest divergence, determined by *SD*, have been highlighted.

As can be seen from the table above, there is quite strong agreement among the four teachers about the last few statements, especially the last two. Some of these responses are noteworthy, particularly the divergence between Georges and Nicole in response to statement 2, importance of nativelikeness. The discrepancy is perhaps predictable, considering that Georges' focus is theatre, where making oneself understood by the audience is critical, and Nicole's focus is on the grammatical and syntactic elements of discourse. Statements 3, 11, and 12 relate to teaching approach. Responses to statements 4, 8, 9, 10, and 14 relate to other themes that emerged in the interviews, such as error correction, vocabulary expansion, importance of grammar, and memorization.

#### **4.1.2 Goals**

Individual teacher responses to survey and interview questions concerning the goal(s) of their courses are examined below.

##### **a. Case 1: Georges – Theatre Course**

In addition to teaching, Georges is also the director of the summer program. As such, he wears two hats, a dual responsibility evident in both his interview and survey responses. In the survey, he indicated that his primary goal in Program Director capacity was “to support the progress of the students and supervise the teaching team.”

Almost all of Georges' other remarks came from his interview, during which he observed that his goal for the theatre course was “to give the students more self-confidence in using the French language,” an objective accomplished by the nature of the course itself: “It is the tool [...] that makes the class unique, “that is, the theatre, but not only playing little scenes to focus on the vocabulary, but really taking ownership of the language, and creating a show.”

Georges believed that speaking is important, but helping students overcome the apprehension and shyness they may have about expressing themselves in a foreign language and eliminating worry and anxiety is a higher priority: “Getting over their inhibitions, getting over any reservations they may have, feeling at ease with the language, theatre is a good way to do that.”

According to Georges, the group preparation activities and confidence-building exercises used in a theatrical production can help students who are shy or anxious. He maintains they share a certain emotional state with actors prone to stage fright: “There again, the theatre is always a struggle with a particular malaise that actors have, which we call *le trac*. It’s nervousness about appearing before an audience, losing one’s way.”

For Georges, group dynamics are critically important. He felt that group theatrical preparation could benefit his students by helping them gain familiarity with the language, and confidence that—within the group—they would receive support and not be judged.

#### **b. Case 2: François – Translation Course**

François is the only teacher who is not a French citizen. He had recently been asked by the school to teach an afternoon beginner workshop, which he was about to do for the first time. His responses to survey and interview questions about goals tended to focus on this new responsibility, and involved learning new methods of French teaching and comparing French L2 teaching methods with approaches he was familiar with back home in the U.S.

Contacted by email to clarify his pedagogical goals, François responded that “the goal of this course is to introduce students to the linguistic and cultural issues surrounding translation of texts written in French into English. The primary focus of the course is the study of journalistic texts written in and about the region in which our program takes place.” He expanded on this during his interview, explaining that emphasis on the production of “correct translations” would expose students to both French culture and new vocabulary in both French and English:

I would like them to appreciate French culture. So that’s the first thing, the first goal. The second goal is to [...] enrich their French vocabulary, because I slide things in when I choose the translations. [...] and then afterwards they’ll learn expressions in English too.

Like Georges, François talked about the importance of putting students at ease and making classes enjoyable. He pointed out that choice of text is very important, explaining that—at first—he had used “standard resources such as articles on *Place Stanislas*<sup>28</sup> or regional heritage” but that, over time, he had realized that more interesting texts led to more fun for students. At some point, he began to select news items that also catered to various student interests and preferences. Other factors upon which he bases choice of text include grammatical structure, cultural references, and terms used in the news. He never uses the same texts twice, because his focus is on current events as well as translation. The texts increase in difficulty as the course progresses and student preferences are considered when selecting them, to make the content fun and interesting.

### c. Case 3: Caroline – French Culture Course

Caroline teaches a course that, while ostensibly about cultural subject matter, targets all four foundational skills as well as grammar and vocabulary. All of her responses came from her interview, in which she stated that she plans course objectives with her students, but indicated that it is the students themselves who set the agenda: “It’s the students who put forward the objectives. The goal is really to totally meet their objectives. It’s the purpose of the second group. It’s lexical comfort, phonetic, grammatical, it’s comfort.”

One goal Caroline identified was the need to ensure that students interact with local native speakers and use their French. To accomplish this, they are sent to various venues (shops, restaurants, etc.) where they are expected to converse with locals. “There are questions they must ask people in the street,” she explained. “It’s a way of overcoming their [...] anxiety, and having fun.” In fact, ensuring that the students enjoy themselves is an important priority for Caroline: “Approaching it with a real sense of fun, asking yourself, ‘What’s waiting for me this morning?’ Simply having fun, and setting the example for fun, for having fun.”

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<sup>28</sup> Nancy’s celebrated 18<sup>th</sup>-century baroque plaza, which is a World Heritage Site.

#### **d. Case 4: Nicole – Grammar Course**

Like the other teachers, almost all of Nicole's responses came from her interview, during which she explained that the students come to France "for a language stay along with a cultural experience" and that the overarching objective of the school is "to respond to learners' needs." Like Caroline, she stated that her goal for the course tends to vary with the needs of the students, which she determines on the first day of class by passing around a list of potential topics on which students indicate their priorities.

Officially, the grammar course that Nicole teaches targets students who possess the advanced French proficiency found at CEFR level C1. She aims slightly lower, however, explaining that her target audience comprises students who have attained level B1 and are working toward B2: "Some may have it already, which means we can easily lead the students to practice and perfect their French."

She explained that the grammar taught is "structured around the broad linguistic areas of the language" and "the ability to produce a written argument, synthesis, or account" and speculated that this focus may explain why "some people prefer to study grammar rather than [interviewer: another subject], because they feel that the learning of language is through the grammar." She reiterated, however, that her objective is not to make people linguists, but to give them the ability to communicate in the language. Moreover, because the course is based on student needs, topics can vary from year to year, as can student proficiency. This sometimes requires her to modify her plans when it becomes apparent that some students lack the requisite minimum proficiency. In such cases, she stated that, rather than lower "the level of the course," she works to "review the means of support."

#### **4.1.3 Anticipated Challenges**

Individual teacher responses to survey and interview questions concerning the challenges they anticipated in meeting their goals are described below.

**a. Case 1: Georges – Theatre course**

The challenges that Georges described originated almost entirely from his interview and tended to relate more to his Program Director responsibilities than to teaching. They mostly involved logistical matters such as student accommodation and attending to the needs of minors (many of the school's students are 14 to 18 years of age) and "those who may be feeling a bit lost." He expressed confidence, however, in the ability of his team to rise to any challenge, observing that one of its strengths is the fact they have known each other for a long time and they are used to working together.

In terms of his role as the theatre teacher, he acknowledged that significant challenge lay in attracting shy students to enrol. These students may realize that theatre class is a tool that can help them overcome their shyness, but many will hesitate nonetheless. However, when they gather the courage to join the class, Georges observed that they often make progress as they come to feel at ease within the group.

Georges stated that the text used in a theatre class can often become a barrier, and that it is preferable for the teacher to model pronunciation for students. The issue lies in oral versus written discourse, and the fact that, in French, many letters are not pronounced: "As soon as you read, it's finished. It's a catastrophe. The moment that you speak, and you ask [them] to repeat, it goes really well." The other major challenge lay in trying to anticipate pronunciation difficulties and determining appropriate exercises to rectify them.

**b. Case 2: François – Translation Course**

During his interview, François talked at length about the many challenges he had encountered in teaching the translation course, such as getting students (who come from many different countries) motivated to interact. This issue must be addressed early on if the course is to succeed, according to François. He does this with icebreaker activities that get students up and moving around, tasked with obtaining specific information from people they have not met.

A challenge unique to this class (according to both François and the students) is the fact that students must translate from French to English when English is often not the L1. Added

complexity is introduced because these students must translate first into their L1, then English. Because he has a very small minority of [native] English speakers, François maintains that he winds up teaching two languages simultaneously.

Another challenge lies in the fact that students may have little knowledge of France and thus lack local and national context for the material they are translating: “We were just talking about *départements*, for example. If I say to a French person, ‘yes, I’m spending four weeks in Meurthe et Moselle,’ they understand right away, without me having to tell them, that I’m in the east of France.” Explanations would be necessary, though, for people coming from elsewhere: “If I say to an American, ‘yes, I come from Nancy,’ that means absolutely nothing.”

Another challenge involves helping students learn to address nuance. One of the most significant learning outcomes of this course is the realization that there are multiple translations for any given sentence. How does one know one is choosing the right one? François also raised the issue of the author’s style as something difficult to address in class: “When you translate, should you try to imitate or reconstitute the style of the original text? I don’t expect my students to re-establish the style because that’s too much to ask, especially if their native language isn’t English.”

### **c. Case 3: Caroline – French Culture Course**

Major issues that Caroline identified on her survey form include certain intercultural challenges, the prospect of being observed by us, and the last-minute formation of groups. Above all, it became clear in her interview that this last issue—which is related to the school’s assessment procedure and resulting class sizes—causes her the most difficulty. Students assemble the day after the tests and class begins immediately. Student ability is unknown, leaving little time to prepare, and students arrive stressed: “Well, the big challenge is passing the Monday [placement] tests. They arrive here overwhelmed, so the test doesn’t reveal a lot about their true performance, and also it’s a written test, not oral.” Though students self-assess online in advance, Caroline finds self-assessment unreliable. She stated that her classes tend to be large because of migration from other proficiency levels: “In general, I have a whole part of group one [A1] who want to come into my

group and a whole part of group three [B1/B2], plus my students who don't want to leave, so that means I find myself with forty students.”

Socio-affective factors are another concern. She explained in the interview that “management always gives me the personalities who are a bit ... delicate, let's say, because they know that with me, they really need to, um, be there, so there's a lot of apprehension about that.” The interactive nature of Caroline's classes sometimes leads to difficulties as well, as seen in this instance where a student was re-assigned because of distress due to Caroline's highly interactive teaching approach:

We had an HPI,<sup>29</sup> “highly gifted,” with great intellectual potential. So Georges told me, ‘you're going to take her into your classes,’ because as soon as anything's abnormal, it's for me. She had an extremely bad reaction to my classes, because you can't necessarily say to a child who almost has symptoms of autism, you can't force her to interact. It was very painful for her, and for me at the same time. She soon left my class and she did better with adults who did not interact.

In addition, Caroline admitted that she is not really at ease with young people, who comprise the principal target market for the school: “Last year, we didn't have the interactional magic. Things didn't really move. It was a young audience. I'm not really comfortable with young audiences. Because I tell grown-up jokes. So I can't use those jokes.”

#### **d. Case 4: Nicole – Grammar Course**

The sole concern that Nicole expressed in her survey response was her ability to respond adequately to the needs and goals of her students, given the short course duration (normally four weeks, but just two this year). In her interview, she elaborated on the challenges inherent in adequately addressing student needs in the regular program's compressed time-frame: “We try to meet their expectations as best we can. We try to do that, we hope we succeed because it's frustrating for a teacher [...] not being able to achieve the objectives, not being able to respond to their needs. [...] So you need to find a recipe for being able to devote enough time.”

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<sup>29</sup> *Haut potentiel intellectuel.*

In addition, she indicated during the interview that it can be challenging to balance student needs that may vary widely or even conflict:

So you always have some people who aren't satisfied because, 'yes, but I came here mainly to work on written production, but I can see that we're doing more written and oral comprehension.' But the majority always prevails. We try anyway. It's the same thing if you want to work on written production, there are so many possibilities that it becomes complicated, you can't do everything. Sometimes you just have to feel sorry for not being able to do that.

#### ***4.1.4 Preferred Teaching Approaches***

This section presents teacher perspectives on pedagogy, on a case-by-case basis. Each subsection commences with discussion of teacher responses to survey and interview questions concerning his or her preferred teaching approach. This information is followed by a description of the classroom behaviour observed for the teacher in question and, finally, by responses to instruction reported in students' reflective logs.

##### **a. Case 1: Georges – Theatre Course**

Georges stated in his interview that, in the past when he had taught FLE overseas, he had “followed a method with the normal progression” but his focus in recent years had been on the use of theatre as a teaching tool: “I develop a theatre workshop for foreigners. So it's an approach that's very pragmatic and mainly focuses on getting them to express themselves in French.” He explained that the techniques he uses, such as breathing and improvisation, “belong to the theatre” but can easily be adapted to language learning:

It's by breathing that we speak a language. Breathing gives us better control of our flow, words, etc. So I often suggest that kind of exercise. Or group dynamics, games, contact exercises, that are sometimes conveyed through language, but sometimes only by the body.

In fact, Georges spoke emphatically about the importance of the body/mind connection: “I think that speaking a language also means transforming your body in a way. For me, language

cannot be dissociated from the body. It's a whole. When you speak a foreign language, you think differently, walk differently, move differently." In discussing how he planned to help students memorize the script, he spoke about the importance of repetition, but dwelled more on how the body/mind association relates to the connection between gesture and learning. He explained that the use of games develops both cognitive and physical memory, and that physical gesture is the critical link between them. He points out that, in theatre, when actors have forgotten a line, it is sufficient to make the accompanying movement to trigger recall. He argues that this is also true when one is learning a language, "so you don't disconnect the word in the foreign language from the rest of the body." He sees improvisation as a fundamental part of this process, and maintains that it adds an element of fun: "It's a game, it's playful. In general, it's funny and they like that." He also believes it is a critical tool for inspiring imagination, which spurs the ability to actually think in the L2: "That's what I think is important in improvisation. It's that they make their imagination work by thinking directly, without [having to translate]. When you improvise, you try to think directly."

Asked his views on CLT, Georges mused that he tends to use certain communicative strategies in his teaching: "I think I work a little with that approach, because [it] is very interactive. And I think that's what we should give priority to, specifically, is communication, it's exchange." His primary objective lay more in helping students gain comfort in expressing themselves than in speaking perfect French. He was the only teacher to emphasize the importance of memorization. This strategy was critical to student success, as the outcome of his classes would be a full theatrical production by the students.

He also discussed the relation between preparing for a theatrical production and improved intelligibility, observing that, in theatre, one learns to be "really heard, really understood, really seen," and that the theatrical tools for bringing this about "can easily be transposed into the language classroom," specifically by helping students work on articulation, pronunciation, diction, and precision, aided by constant repetition and error correction. There is a limit, however, to how often a teacher should correct student errors, according to Georges. The key is

the degree to which intelligibility is affected: “The important thing is to dive in and then realize that you can be understood, and you can understand, even with the errors.” He tends to correct once or twice, realizing that there is a delicate balance: “If I correct them all the time, we won’t move forward. [...] We must arrive at a linguistic performance even if it’s not perfect.”

Georges stated that grammar is not a high priority in theatre class, which stresses speaking and pronunciation. However, when he had taught it in the past, he had started by asking students for examples from things they had read or heard, and they would work from that, “in an experimental way, trying to extract things together by observing the rules,” after which Georges would introduce “the necessary theoretical complement.” With theatre, grammar only arises in response to questions or particular instances found in the text in use: “So, if there is a question, or if I feel something could be interesting or ambiguous, I talk about it, ask them if they understand it clearly, etc.”

He explained that his choice of text depends on the year and varies by genre. He leans toward classical plays such as those by *Molière* but has introduced contemporary material in the last few years, including modern theatrical adaptations of fairy tales.

In cases where students encounter unknown words in a text, Georges wants them to exercise initiative rather than turn immediately to a dictionary. He dislikes dictionaries intensely, and believes they are a disincentive to resourcefulness: “I think the dictionary is a virus! I find it parasitic. It cuts off communication. [Without it], if you don’t know a word, you’ll muddle through to express yourself, get there by another route.” When he notices a student using a dictionary, Georges encourages them to ask him rather than look the word up, to avoid finding answers that make no sense in the context: “When you’re at home, you don’t have a French person right there. You can look it up in the dictionary, but you have me right here, so make the most of it, use me.”

Georges also cautioned against over-reliance on the L1: “I have nothing against it, but it shouldn’t be systematic. Students shouldn’t always be translating. They need to understand without thinking about translation. They need to think in French. That’s also why I really don’t like them using the dictionary.”

## OBSERVATIONS

Table 5 provides a description of the one videotaped observation for Georges.

Table 5

*Georges - Single Observation Description*

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Observation Three

Georges' classes differed from those of the other teachers in that they were three hours in duration. Although three sessions were attended, taping was only logistically possible in one class. All of the theatre classes observed were rehearsals. We attended once weekly, on Fridays, and all three classes involved students practicing their roles in the play they were to perform, mostly by reading from scripts, with occasional input from Georges. The videotaped class was the very last one in the program, a full dress rehearsal in the theatre on the day before the live performance. There was no script and Georges was seated behind us in the audience. We were therefore only able to capture his voice, not his physical presence, on video for most of the session.

### **Behaviours Observed**

The play presented by this class was a modern-day production of the fairy tale, *Cinderella*, with two of our participants playing key roles: Astrid played the lead character and Stefan took on the role of the fairy godmother.

It was unfortunate that scheduling precluded attendance in the first few days of class, when Georges was doing breathing, pronunciation, and improvisation exercises. All three sessions that we attended essentially comprised rehearsals of the theatrical production. In all of them, the students practiced their lines, at first reading from the script and ultimately attempting to rely on memory the day of the dress rehearsal. One student (the Prince) in particular was still missing many lines and needed frequent cues the day before the live performance. This appeared to be a source of worry for Georges, but this student surprised everyone with a stellar performance the next day.

Georges' role in all three sessions was essentially constrained to what we have deemed "stage director," i.e., issuing instructions that ranged from actor voice projection and onstage positioning to the handling of props. One such interaction, for example, involved control of an

improvised device that was to magically drop a fancy ball gown into Cinderella's waiting hands when the fairy godmother clapped her hands:

Stop, stop, stop. Can you put that back up? Don't take it from the top. There you go. Stay there where you are. And then say, *la robe trente-six, deux-mille-dix-huit*. {claps twice} *Tac, tac*. And {whistles, imitating bag falling} *hop*, and then *paf*, it arrives. You have time before the dress arrives. Yes, like that. There you go.

Other than stage direction, most of Georges' interactions with the students involved the provision of encouragement in the form of short reassuring utterances of the form "OK," "yes," "there you go," and so on. True to form, the low importance of error correction was evident. We coded only ten instances of recasts and/or modelling language and, upon checking the transcription against the actual script, we identified fourteen cases of missed lines or inconsistency with the script along with several uncorrected mispronunciations.

Georges had stated during his interview that he felt the location of the performance in a real theatre away from the school was critical to the students' success, and indeed their excitement was palpable, especially when the costumes were brought out. As I observed the students' physical ease onstage, I was reminded of Georges' remarks about the mind/body connection during his interview. Even the shy participant, Astrid, who had been so worried that "embarrassment and fear would hold [her] back" shone in the starring role and received a standing ovation on the night of the actual performance.

Refer to Appendix F for all teacher behaviours observed in Georges' one videotaped class.

## STUDENT RESPONSES TO INSTRUCTION

Over the three weeks of the theatre course, Astrid reported diminishing fear and growing confidence about interacting with locals. Stefan described how the experience had aided comprehension: "With every repetition of the theatre play, I am surprised, I understand the play a bit in a different way than at the beginning."

Both students reported challenges with memorization of lines, stressed the importance of repetition, and expressed a desire for more emphasis on pronunciation.

They also described an unexpected grammar benefit. Astrid noted that working through the lines in the script had given her a better understanding of the relationship between verb tenses, and Stefan had not only become more attuned to the register of the language in the play vis-à-vis what he heard elsewhere, he had become more aware of how often the important pronouns *en* and *y* were used in spoken French.

#### **b. Case 2: François – Translation Course**

François and Nicole were the only teachers to discuss L2 teaching approaches at length in their interviews. In his interview, François spoke about the methods that were popular when he was receiving his training and the emphasis in the U.S. on role-playing versus the real-life exposure of study abroad programs like the one in this study. He regarded the latter as a strong advantage.

In terms of pedagogy, he maintained that a mixture of approaches “would probably be perfect,” though he seemed to believe that CLT inflicts pain on students: “In my class, what you see with the purely communicative method is ‘those poor kids.’ Oh, the poor things! They’re in agony.” He indicated that he does not use this method in the translation course because “at the advanced level, it must be accurate, it must be correct.” With respect to speaking, however, he felt that a balance of fluency and accuracy was needed: “If we reflect too much before we speak, we end up not saying anything.”

His aversion to CLT notwithstanding, François’ method of facilitating student interaction at the beginning of the course exhibited classic CLT characteristics. With new groups that do not know each other and are reticent to speak, he maintains that students must be quickly “welded.” To accomplish this, he has people participate in a classic communicative icebreaker, instructing students to stand up, move around, and locate someone “at the other end of the classroom.” Students exchange information, and François has them frequently change partners “so they don’t always repeat the same little scrap of dialogue.” He observes that, “little by little, they start to have fun.”

He clearly admires Caroline's approach in this regard, particularly the authenticity it promotes: "Here's Caroline, for example, who's doing some extraordinary work in getting the students into nature, getting them to go out in nature, in real situations." He pointed out that this level of interaction is very different than the approach he was accustomed to in the U.S., where "it's always role-playing."

The sequence of activities François uses in the translation class does not vary much. He distributes the French text, allowing time for students to read it, then checks for understanding and asks for questions. This is followed by provision of a vocabulary list with suggested translations for words and expressions likely to be unfamiliar. Students then work in pairs on a possible translation, after which he elicits it—usually a sentence at a time—by asking for volunteers or calling on specific students. Ample time is allowed for discussion.

The icebreaker described above is one strategy François uses to counter the student tendency toward L1 use, which he finds tends to happen naturally in his classroom because of the student inclination to congregate by nationality. One of the goals of the school is to mix nationalities, however, to facilitate the creation of international friendships and the discovery of cultural differences. People need the language they share—however basic—to do this. François therefore tries to mix students up to encourage use of French: "On one side of the room they were speaking Russian; on the other side it was Italian; and over there it was English. That's not in the spirit of these courses. The spirit is to shake up the nationalities and get people to go beyond their preconceived ideas."

His selection of texts supports an important course objective, exposure to French culture. Texts are tailored to the ability of the class and tend to concern local news and current events. Normally, the translation direction is from French to English. The reverse direction is not often done because of the higher cognitive demands it makes on students. On the rare occasions when it is used, he stated that his desire to avoid frustrating or discouraging people mandates the selection of "something approachable, feasible, like *USA Today*, for example" [as compared to the *New York Times* or *The Atlantic*].

A major disadvantage of translation as a teaching approach, according to François, is that the text used—by its very nature—informs grammatical content. He compares this to a dedicated grammar course, which requires the study of topics such as the conditional tense or subjunctive mood. His course, on the other hand, is limited by the text in use: “You’re obliged to work with the structures inside our texts. So, if I [have] a text on current events, what structures are we going to see there? The present and the past, that’s all. There’s no guesswork, because it’s just facts.” The few occasions where he feels it would be appropriate to call student attention to a grammar point in the text involve situations where certain complex verb tenses may be required due to nuances of probability or supposition encountered in the text.

In terms of error correction, though accuracy is important at the advanced level required by the translation course, François believes that teachers should exercise some restraint because “the more we correct, the less the students feel encouraged.”

To help students build their vocabulary, he creates short lists to prepare for each new translation activity. He emphasized the importance of memorization and repetition in the context of acquiring vocabulary, and regularly includes vocabulary drills in lessons. He indicated that students encounter particular difficulty conjugating verbs, which he addresses by making grids of verbs and tasking students with filling in the missing forms.

Like Georges, François dislikes reliance on dictionaries, and he points out that they are not allowed in the course post-test. Instead he encourages students to first discern word meanings by their context within the surrounding text. After that, if necessary, he points them toward Internet resources where they can research meanings.

François’ interview and survey responses indicated that he places great importance on fun and humour as a teaching strategy. In fact, his response to the open-ended survey question on preferred teaching approach was succinct: “Un mot: Humour!” and he frequently stressed the importance of fun during the interview. This sense of fun, according to François, plays an important role in helping to put students at ease:

Yes, humour because, if you have the context of the thirty years that I've been playing this game, in the beginning, especially with the beginners, they're always anxious, tense, they don't want to do it because of these obligatory language courses, etc. It's never a pleasure. So, to make it more engaging, funnier, I use humour. If we get most of the people laughing, the course passes by. That makes everyone laugh, and it starts to create a certain ambiance. [...] Because, if they're all there sitting in their chairs with their arms crossed like this, they may open their mouth once, but only out of duty.

To introduce fun, he tries to choose activities that are entertaining for students, from the texts used to the icebreaker exercise described earlier. He believes doing so can “take the drama out of it” and reduce their stress in class. He admits he does not hesitate to mock people, both the students and himself: “Then, little by little, I make fun of some people. For example, if they make pronunciation errors, I say, ‘Ah, that was well pronounced. In Spanish.’” He does this for purposes of lessening power distance in the classroom: “I make fun of people and I make fun of myself, to put myself, in a way, on an equal footing with everyone, and if you can laugh at the prof, you can laugh at the other people in the class.” He acknowledges that it takes sensitivity: “You have to feel your way, because I feel that if it's a two-way street, it works, they seem to relax.”

## OBSERVATIONS

Table 6 provides a description of François' three videotaped observations.

Table 6

### *François - Observations One through Three Descriptions*

<u>Observation One</u>	<u>Observation Two</u>	<u>Observation Three</u>
Participants in this one-hour class worked through four French texts about current events, to create English translations. The session was teacher-fronted, with brief opportunities for pair work, and time to review popular idioms. Texts included an	Participants in this class worked through translations of three French texts about current events, and a short reverse translation. The session started with a review of several popular idioms. It was teacher-fronted, with brief opportunities for pair	Participants in this class worked through four French texts about current events, to create English translations. The session started with a review of several popular idioms. It was teacher-fronted, with brief opportunities for pair work.

article on an incident at the local World Cup victory celebrations; a satirical article about a speech at the National Assembly; a story about an immigrant who had received French citizenship for saving a child (continued from previous day); and an article about the controversy surrounding a mixed race girl portraying Joan of Arc in a local festival.

work. Texts included an article about a young French woman who had won a seat at the World Cup final in Moscow; an article about a comedian; a piece about a lawsuit involving local emergency services (continued from previous day); and a reverse translation of a headline about a woman who had survived her car plunging off the cliffs at Big Sur.

Texts included a continuation of the story about French emergency services; more on the World Cup celebrations; a story about the murder of a young woman and the changing story of her husband, who was ultimately found guilty; and a piece about a five-year-old whose phone call to police saved his father's life.

### **Behaviours Observed**

The three translation classes that were observed all proceeded in much the same way, with the sequence of activities consistent with the process François had described earlier. Two of the sessions started with a quick review of target vocabulary from the previous day, which included both individual words and idiomatic expressions, after which François displayed parts of the first text onscreen, sometimes singling out a student to read them aloud, sometimes doing so himself. After this, he allowed a short time for students to review the article, then asked for questions and any problematic vocabulary. Students were then given time to work in pairs to produce a possible translation, after which François elicited the translation orally, often a sentence or even a word at a time. This process typically generated discussion and questions, with possible multiple translations identified and (sometimes) prioritized. The above process was then repeated for the subsequent three texts, which were sometimes interspersed with headlines only.

Vocabulary building was a high priority for this course. This is particularly evident when one compares the 68 vocabulary references coded over three sessions against only nine for grammar. Six of the grammar references concerned verbs, with the remaining three clarifying noun+adjective order, explaining the difference between *lorsque* (“as soon as,” conjunction) and *lors de* (“during,” preposition), and highlighting the indirect object function of the pronoun *lui* (“him,” “to him”). The verb references involved tense distinctions, the use of auxiliary verbs, the subjunctive, and nominalizations.

François made occasional use of the whiteboard, primarily to highlight vocabulary he wished to emphasize. He also employed it as a tool to aid elicitation, sometimes writing an English word he was seeking one or two letters at a time until students volunteered the answer. François used hand gestures for the same purpose, indicating “slots” for the sought-after word in an utterance. In fact, he made frequent use of physical gestures and miming to illustrate teaching points. This ranged from physical depictions of concepts such as spacing and distance, deixis, size, and direction to identifying parts of the body, mimicking a bleating sheep, making air brackets, pointing at individual students, and acting out behaviour such as leaping, running, winking, nodding, crying, listening, washing dishes, crowning a monarch, calling in sick, and closing a book.

François also took pains, from time to time, to draw attention to the derivation, morphology and, sometimes, etymology of certain words, not surprising for a class focused on vocabulary. The types of language coded to this node included discussion of the relationship between certain nouns or verbs and their derivations (e.g., *rugir* → *rugissement*, “to roar,” “roaring”; *boiter* → *boiteux*, “to limp,” “lame person”; *vanne* → *vannier*, “joke,” “story-teller”; *auréole* → *auréoler*, “halo,” “to crown”; and *plonger* → *la plonge*, “to dive,” “dishwashing”), although the opportunity was missed to specifically identify the suffixes or the predictable changes in grammatical category they produce. François also made mention of the French/English etymological connections between words such as *transfert* and “transferred” and the fact that *bastion* (“bastion”) is the sole exception to the feminine grammatical gender assigned by the suffix *-tion*.

The foregoing excerpts illustrate François’ periodic use of *focus on form* (FoF). In fact, the nature of this course made this approach to teaching natural and spontaneous, and indeed we observed several instances of it during the three sessions, often during class discussions. Though he clearly prioritized meaning, François used FoF from time to time to call attention to particular grammatical and lexical forms. This occurred on an incidental basis as the forms were encountered, and sometimes reactively in the process of responding to student errors or questions, as in the following excerpt:

*Excerpt 1*

- François Yes, it's the *département de l'Orne*, so in general [...], instead of saying this city or that village, we give the department name, it's normal.  
Good. Ah, small problem, which verb tense is it?
- Student 1 Simple past.
- Student 21 Future.
- François It's the future, the simple future. Hmm, *La conversation durera quarante minutes pendant lesquelles la gendarmerie tentera de localiser la victime*. Yes, it's the future.
- Student 1 Why does French have to be so weird?
- François Why does French have to be so weird? Ok, I'll ask the question in English. Why the future?
- Student (?) Because the conversation wasn't finished ...
- François Exactly, exactly, all of this has happened. It's in the past, correct, but to make the description more real, the conversation [...] would last another forty minutes.

As this dialog illustrates, students felt very free to ask questions and volunteer opinions in this course. Indeed, the amount of teacher-student interaction in François' classes was very high ( $n=169$ ), although the number of references coded to checking for comprehension, acknowledging student responses, and correcting errors paled in comparison to the time François spent eliciting: I coded 85 instances of elicitation over the three classes. Almost all the words and expressions emerged this way, including virtually all the references to vocabulary and grammar. François' elicitation style was typically to ask for volunteers once or twice before calling on individual students. This is seen in the following excerpt:

*Excerpt 2*

- François           Ok, alright? Yes, alright, good. Ok, volunteer? Victim for the translation? Volunteer going once. Volunteer going twice. Volunteer a third time. Thank you, [Student 17].
- Student 17         The title?
- François           No, all of it, it's easy. It's easy.
- Student 17         Ok, ok. We have a few options. Starry-eyed?
- François           Starry-eyed.
- Student 17         Or stars in plain sight.
- François           Stars in plain sight.
- Student 17         But we're thinking more so that she is seeing the stars as in, I don't know ...
- François           Ok, ok. {indicating brackets with fingers} In parentheses, it's again a play on words {pointing to the title in question}. Why?

Note that, with the final utterance, François has switched from eliciting a potential translation to an open-ended question that stimulates discussion, a feature that very much characterized this course. Indeed, one activity that engendered a tremendous amount of discussion—vividly illustrating a key teaching point in the process—involved François guiding the class through a reverse translation (English-French) of an American newspaper headline: in the course of brainstorming the “best” translation, students realized that there was no single solution, but rather that many possibilities existed.

Although most of the discussion that took place in this course was class-wide, François also made time available for pairs discussion before students attempted to translate a new text. Twenty such instances were coded over the three classes. However, the time allotted to this activity totalled under 17 minutes over the three days, with an average of 42 seconds per discussion. If one three-minute outlier is removed, the average pairs discussion was a mere 36 seconds. This would appear

to be insufficient time to identify an optimal translation for a sentence, let alone a paragraph, even for native English speakers.

In terms of error correction, pronunciation was not important to François, with only six recasts observed over all three classes. His method of providing feedback was focused on meaning and fell into two rather polarized categories that we deemed “round of applause” (for outstanding contributions) and “mockery” (mostly for student reticence and hesitations). I coded 55 instances, for example, in which François acknowledged appropriate student utterances (mostly consisting of responses to prompting, tentative translations, and word definitions), of which ten were calls for a round of applause. On the negative side of the scale, François used the French expression *Oh la la la!* periodically to indicate displeasure.<sup>30</sup> These utterances were among the dozen coded to “mockery,” which also included instances of evident amusement, ridicule, or impatience with poor responses, hesitations, or class-wide apathy. An example is seen in the following excerpt:

*Excerpt 3*

François	The situation got worse, was getting worse.
Student 24	... was getting worse, um, his partner contact the ...
François	Contacted.
Student 24	... contacted the firefighters.
François	Yes, firefighters.
Student 24	... which uh ...
François	{fingers doing an arc, from one point to another} Transferred. Transferred. Transferred. Transferred. TransFERRED. Transferred. Transferred. Transferred. Transferred. Transferred. English, it's very simple, we steal, it's a robbery, half of the vocabulary in French, these are the same verbs, <i>transfert</i> , transferred.

<sup>30</sup> Variation in vowel features together with intonation change can convey positive, negative, or neutral information about the attitude of the speaker. François used it in the negative sense.

François utilized a number of strategies to inject humour into his classes. As he had indicated in his interview, he did not hesitate to “make fun of people.” In fact, this repartee was often self-directed: “Uh, *avoir la gueule de bois* (be hungover), it’s the usual state for Charlie.” I coded such instances to a node called “humour, jokes, and wisecracks.” Although François did not tell outright jokes, he did make frequent “wisecracks.” Some of these were subtle, such as referring to reluctant volunteers as “victims.” Others were more obvious: “I’ll give you a couple of seconds to talk to a neighbour, a friend, a pal. Please remember, if you have no friends, get some immediately.”

Most of the 25 references coded to French culture in François’ classes concerned local news and current events, French politics, and historical figures. Also of importance were sports headlines involving France, such as last year’s FIFA World Cup victory, which happened about halfway through the course. François also appeared to consider it a priority to acquaint students with French organizational structure, acronyms, and jargon, often using a specific passage from a text to work these concepts into his classes. One such example is illustrated in the excerpt on page 74, where he seized the opportunity to enlighten the students not just about the future tense but about the difference between *communes* (towns or municipalities) and *départements* (administrative jurisdictions similar to counties), critical knowledge for anyone who wants to travel or live in France.

Refer to Appendix F for all teacher behaviours observed in François’ three videotaped classes.

## STUDENT RESPONSES TO INSTRUCTION

Both of François’ students were very pleased with the amount of new vocabulary they were acquiring in his class. Emma appreciated the opportunity to work on a translation before the class-wide discussion and Paulina liked the focus on current issues and the onscreen presentation of the texts. She also found it helpful when François proposed his own interpretations (which did not always occur).

Emma also experienced some challenges in this class. She felt that the amount of time spent on review was at the expense of time for new translations. She also reported some frustration with how François broke up the texts, indicating that she would have found a focus at

the sentence level more helpful. She would also have liked to have seen some discussion about the different possible approaches to doing translation.

Both students described the challenges of attempting French to English translations when English was not their first language, particularly when it involved idiomatic expressions, and Paulina found the time pressure of classes daunting. She also discussed the considerable challenge inherent in translating headlines isolated from their associated articles, suggesting that a brief summary could be helpful. Both students also recognized the need to prepare beforehand, by translating in advance, researching new vocabulary, and identifying synonyms.

### c. Case 3: Caroline – French Culture Course

Although she readily admitted that she has no knowledge of formal language teaching theory, over the many years she has been teaching, Caroline has developed her own approach, the name of which she coined herself, as she explained in her interview:

It's common-sense pedagogy. And kindness. It's called *bon sens et bienveillance*, BSB, that's it. Differential pedagogy. I discovered that very late. I wasn't trained as a language teaching professional. I began FFL to earn a living. I was doing my PhD in Poland, and it was the first time I'd faced FFL. That's why I talk about common-sense pedagogy, that's my pedagogy – in other words, observing, seeing how I can help people have fun, then afterwards fun runs into the professional aspect.

Caroline credited French academic Philippe Meirieu as an important influence in the development of her BSB approach. He developed a method called *pédagogie différenciée*, which emphasizes the heterogeneity of a group of learners and the importance of accommodating each student's unique needs in one's teaching approach. The importance of this approach for Caroline quickly became clear in her interview:

The learning of a language is to look at every particularity, every uniqueness. The journey and the objective. To realize that in a class you have plenty of different elements and that your role is to take them onto the climbing wall, not to be afraid of what they're climbing or doing, it's them who are making their way, it's not you climbing. So, it's

finding the right method for each and every student in the group so that everyone climbs.

Exposure to French culture was central to Caroline's course. Her teaching strategy called for acquainting students with various aspects of culture as a way to accomplish her linguistic learning objectives (grammar, pronunciation, etc.).

Although she was unfamiliar with L2 teaching terms such as CLT, Caroline considered student "interaction and oral skills," with both local native speakers and with one another, an essential part of language learning. This conviction has led her to incorporate various activities into her syllabus that provide regular opportunities for students to speak. Following is an excerpt from her interview:

*Excerpt 4*

Caroline            Okay, interaction and oral skills. That's essential. That's the key to success at [this school]. So how do I set that up? In my preparation, I force them to interact. I have tons of strategies.

Interviewer        To encourage them...

Caroline            To force them, even, not encourage them.

Interviewer        Force?

Caroline            Of course, I'm the boss all the same. Normally, they have no choice.

Interviewer        How do you force them?

Caroline            I make them stand up and do activities where they're almost obliged to touch each other physically, to meet physically.

In discussing classroom roles, Caroline stated that it is important that teachers and students be equal stakeholders in the language learning experience: "If they haven't clearly set their own objectives, it's for them to be active players in their own learning. I'm an active participant in this learning project, but I want them to be as well." Students direct the interaction: "It's a triangle with teaching on top, an equilateral triangle, all the sides are equal. I'm not more than they are. I have more experience, but that's all."

Caroline believes that some understanding of French grammar is necessary at the high beginner level, though appreciation of the differences between written and spoken French is not very important. Her coverage of this topic is essentially limited to mention that the *passé simple* is used in literature but not in spoken discourse, which employs the *passé composé*. She indicated that, so long as errors do not interfere with comprehension, they can be ignored. When she does need to correct students or attend to a grammar point, she tends to use an FoF approach to draw attention to the teaching point and encourage self-correction and self-monitoring:

Well, we're clearly into observation. They observe first, so they use, they make mistakes. I see where they make mistakes. I make it a focus point by saying, 'Well, make sure you observe a little.' They correct themselves, and afterwards we do the morphology.

Descriptive grammar. If they haven't understood, we go back to class with independent exercises.

Caroline helps students build their vocabulary in several ways, remarking that "it happens through basic lexical exercises, [...] through singing, generally stuff they think is really cool." She does not actively encourage dictionary use, but she tolerates it to varying degrees depending on the activity in question: "For the first reading, with the dictionary, of course, but after that, it depends on the objective you set for yourself. In my classroom, they always have access to the electronic dictionary." She remarked that, when she notices too much dependence on dictionaries, "I amuse myself by switching the dictionaries around. I give the Chinese students a Russian dictionary, and I give the Russians the Brazilian dictionary. That's really fun."

The degree of L1 use in Caroline's classroom depends on the situation. She does not ban it and will sometimes tolerate it. She tends to find that, within a group, "there's always someone who gets it," and—since she knows several languages—she can often speed a struggling student's comprehension of a statement or question by quick recourse to their L1.

## OBSERVATIONS

Table 7 illustrates the variety of behaviours in Caroline’s three videotaped observations.

Table 7

*Caroline - Observations One through Three Descriptions*

<u>Observation 1</u>	<u>Observation 2</u>	<u>Observation 3</u>
This class was a lesson on traditional French cuisine that also involved a cloze exercise to review certain articles and pronouns. After completing the cloze activity, students were called on to read the short written descriptions of the various dishes aloud and identify a matching photo from among fourteen shown onscreen. The class worked through them together, one by one. Caroline facilitated and students responded orally.	This class was a lesson on several famous Impressionist painters from the region where the school is located. The class started with a short humorous video in French. Students then worked in small groups (from one to seven people) to create short scripts for role plays that would enact the scenes portrayed in six paintings shown sequentially onscreen. Caroline acted as facilitator and “stage director,” supporting and encouraging the student performances.	This class was a lesson about the cost of living in France. It was a whole-class activity that involved working from a reading about the struggles of a hypothetical character named Carla. The goal of this lesson was to construct a budget for Carla, with revenue and expense figures taken from the reading. Again, Caroline facilitated, building the budget onscreen as students responded orally to her elicitation efforts.

### **Behaviours Observed**

Unlike the other teachers, each of Caroline’s three classes was very different, as can be seen from the descriptions above. Because the activities differed so much from class to class, a variety of behaviours was seen and, in general, Caroline’s classes produced many more instances of the coded behaviours than those of the other three teachers.

Her classes were highly interactive, although most of the interaction was between teacher and students ( $n=222$ ) rather than among the students themselves ( $n=6$ ). Caroline made many quick checks for comprehension ( $n=19$ ) and acknowledged student contributions regularly ( $n=42$ ), the latter usually taking the form “very good, “bravo,” or yes!” The behaviour most frequently coded, however, was elicitation ( $n=81$ ). In fact, Caroline often overcame student hesitation by eliciting a response a little at a time, sometimes repeating back the student’s utterance, sometimes building on it, and sometimes correcting. This is seen in the following excerpt, which was typical:

*Excerpt 5*

- Caroline Go.
- Student 5 ... *du* ...
- Caroline *Du lard*. Very good, *du lard*, ...
- Student 5 *Du lard fumé, coupé* ...
- Caroline Student 5 ... *du lard fumé, coupé en dès*
- Student 5 ... *fumé, coupé en deux, des aubergines* ...
- Caroline {nods} Yes.
- Student 5 ... *des tomates* ...
- Caroline Okay.
- Student 5 ... *des oignons, du pain de campagne* ...
- Caroline Yes. {nods emphatically}
- Student 5 ... *de bouillon de poule, de huile d'olive* ...
- Caroline *De l'huile d'olive, yes*.
- Student 5 ... *et sel* ...
- Caroline No. *Du sel*.
- Student 5 ... *du sel*.

Two of the classes, in particular, involved intensive elicitation on Caroline's part. In Observation Three, for example, the budget was assembled as Caroline and the students worked through the reading, one sentence at a time, with the teacher prodding students to read each sentence aloud and identify numbers it contained. This led to discussion of the significance of each number and the determination of its placement on a balance sheet (revenue or expense), which she built on the whiteboard as the class progressed. (The strong focus on numbers throughout this lesson led me to suspect that the goal of the lesson was, in fact, as much a review of the French number system as reading.) The example that follows is typical of how she helped students extract the budget information, providing context at the same time:

*Excerpt 6*

Student 11 {reading} *Grave erreur selon elle, puisqu'elle découvre qu'elle paye cinquante euros pour gagner un degré ...*

Caroline So here, Student 11, do you have something from the budget in that sentence?

Student 11 Fifty euros.

Caroline Fifty euros for what?

Student 11 Um, for electricity?

Caroline For the electricity? Electricity and heating, okay [...] {writing on board} So, do you remember where she lives? What region does she live in? In Burgundy. In your opinion, how many months does winter last in Burgundy? You know that in France, we're not in a tropical climate, eh? [...] In your opinion, is it cold in winter in France or is it quite warm? Bah, no. Cold. [...] But in general, in Burgundy, in Lorraine, it's about zero or seven below zero. And winter lasts from November to April, more or less. So that makes November, December, January, February, March, April. Six months of heating. [...] Fifty euros, Student 11, per month? Per year?

Student 11 I don't know.

Caroline We don't know, but we expect that it's per month, Student 11.

Student 11 Per month?

Caroline Yes. Probably.

Student 11 But every month?

Caroline Yes, because, Student 11, in France, when you pay your bill, you are *mensualisé*. For the electricity and the heating, you pay fifty euros per month, *mensualisé*.

Some of the elicitation observed in this lesson involved encouraging students to perform mental calculations or use a calculator, requiring strong effort on Caroline's part to overcome

reticence. This lesson also created opportunities to compare incomes and cost of living in France versus students' home countries. In one such elicitation, for example, Caroline called on nine different students to identify teacher salaries in their country.

In Observation Two, Caroline broke the class into small groups to role-play six scenarios depicted in impressionist paintings by artists from the region. This lesson was the only one of the three that involved activity that could be called truly communicative, with approximately 26 minutes allocated to small group discussion and planning, during which time Caroline circulated to help, clarify, and encourage. Additional speaking opportunities occurred in the subsequent role-plays, which were on average two or three minutes in length. I coded Caroline's role during this activity to a category called "stage direction" that involved a mix of providing instructions, overcoming student reticence, and attending to props and positioning. All of these functions are seen in the excerpt below:

*Excerpt 7*

Go ahead, what do we say during a meal? What do we talk about? {indicates the painting} The weather, you're hungry. Student 7, you want something to drink! A little wine. I'm warm, I'm thirsty. What do you talk about? It's summer, it's very hot. Who wants meat, who wants bread? [...] Ah, could you pass me the chicken? Where is the cheese? I love it. Write a good dialogue about this, and pay attention to the partitive articles.

The elicitation observed in all of Caroline's classes involved overcoming considerable student hesitation. Like François, she tended to call for volunteers two or three times, before resorting to arbitrarily nominating someone to read. Caroline's elicitations often proceeded in short two- or three-word chunks with frequent recasts and corrections. This is seen in the excerpt below from Observation One:

*Excerpt 8*

Caroline	Okay, go, eight, eight, eight, eight. Who wants eight? Okay, go ahead,
	Student 11. <i>L'île flottante ...</i>
Student 11	<i>L'île flottante est un desert ...</i>

- Caroline Not a desert. The desert is the Sahara. [...] *Dessert*.
- Student 11 *Dessert*.
- Caroline Yes.
- Student 11 ... *à base de crème anglais*
- Caroline *AnglaiZ*. Feminine. *AnglaiZ*, feminine.<sup>31</sup>
- Student 11 ... *anglaise, et de blancs d'œuf montés en nage*.
- Caroline *En neige*, [Student 18], not *nage*. *En neige*. Because imagine, *en nage*, the egg is swimming like a dessert.
- Student 11 It's an island ...
- Caroline Yes, it's an island. [...] *L'île flottante est UN dessert à base de crème anglaise et de blancs d'œuf montés en neige*. So which image is that?
- Student 11 Uh, uh, the, the middle.
- Caroline Yes, it's in the middle, yes it's here, it's image N. It's super good, super light, yum yum. And sometimes there's caramel, almonds, raspberries, yum yum yum.

As can be seen from the above dialogue, error correction tended to focus on pronunciation (both liaison [ $n=7$ ] and individual segments [ $n=34$ ]), and typically involved recasts and/or modelling of the desired speech. Of the instances coded in this manner, the majority involved specific segments. One such interaction became extremely protracted, producing nine recasts, as seen in excerpt 9:

*Excerpt 9*

- Student 3 *Je baye* {/b/ sounded almost more like a voiced bilabial fricative /β/} ...
- Caroline Student 3, *je p<sup>h</sup>aye*. {she really emphasizes the /p<sup>h</sup>/, almost spitting it out}. /p<sup>h</sup>/, /p<sup>h</sup>/, /p<sup>h</sup>/, p<sup>h</sup>aye.
- Student 3 p/~~ɸ~~/aye. {he inserts the /ɸ /}

<sup>31</sup> ALL CAPS are used to code teacher emphasis which, in Caroline's case, was usually on individual segments or articles. Here, the final consonant is only pronounced in the feminine.

- Caroline /p<sup>h</sup>/, /p<sup>h</sup>/, /p<sup>h</sup>/
- Student 3 {he tries, only to produce the /pʁ / cluster}
- Caroline /p<sup>h</sup>/, /p<sup>h</sup>/, /p<sup>h</sup>/. {approaches student with paper and places it in front of his mouth}
- Student 3 Paye, paye, paye. P/ʁ/aye.
- Caroline No, not p/ʁ/aye. *Paye*.
- Student 3 *Paye*.
- Caroline There you go. So, one day, Student 3 says *je paye*, and I say, ‘Yes, that’s good.’ *Je p<sup>h</sup>aye*. Go on. Yes, Student 3, continue.
- Student 3 *Je p/ʁ/aye ...*
- Caroline No, *p<sup>h</sup>aye*.
- Student 3 *Je p/ʁ/aye*.
- Caroline *Je p/ʁ/aye pas*. {she puts her hands together in prayer}  
*Je p<sup>h</sup>aye*. No “r.” {She whispers when pronouncing the next part.} *Je p<sup>h</sup>aye*.
- Student 3 {whispers} – *p<sup>h</sup>aye*.
- Caroline Yes, {thumbs up}, [Student 3]. Continue. {turns around and begins to walk back to the front of the class}
- Student 3 *Je p/ʁ/aye, je* – {Caroline turns suddenly around}
- Caroline You what?
- Student 3 *Je p<sup>h</sup>aye* {Caroline wipes her forehead in relief}

I initially thought that this long interaction was about lack of aspiration in the student’s initial utterance (target was /p/), which would be an odd thing for Caroline to emphasize, given that aspiration of obstruents does not normally occur in French (Fagyal et al., 2006). On further consideration, I have come to believe his repeated insertion of /ʁ/ was an attempt to replicate the aspiration he was hearing in Caroline’s recasts. This is a stark contrast with François, who clearly did not prioritize pronunciation ( $n=6$  recasts versus  $n=52$  for Caroline).

Caroline also corrected frequently for grammatical errors, drawing student attention to specific parts of speech. The majority of such references ( $n=16$ ) concerned articles and prepositions (almost exclusively *le*, *la*, *de*, and *du*, which are a source of considerable confusion among L2 French beginners and which were the subject of the cloze activity in observation one). The rest focused on pronouns ( $n=2$ ) and verbs ( $n=4$ ).

It was interesting to observe her use of FoF to call attention to particular grammatical forms. The majority of references coded in this manner involved highlighting direct or indirect objects and pronouns in a text and prodding students to identify their antecedents. This can be seen in the excerpt below, in which she was seeking a prior reference to a coffee table:

*Excerpt 10*

Go ahead, Student 8, we're going to read it, start the sentence again. *Elle* [the coffee table] *vient d'Ikea, mais le mois prochain j'espère pouvoir m'en offrir UNE de Maisons du Monde.* So look closely at that sentence, it comes from Ikea. What replaces the pronoun *en* here? Look, you read *elle vient d'Ikea, mais le mois prochain, j'espère pouvoir m'en E-N offrir une.* What replaces the pronoun *en*? What does that replace?

Sometimes, this occurred reactively in the process of responding to student errors or questions, but more frequently, it was on an incidental basis as forms were encountered in an activity, as in the above excerpt. Caroline also sometimes alerted students to be on the lookout for upcoming repetitions of a target form: "Ah, that's still a headache, the pronoun *en*, you'll see. It's not easy, French. And wait, Student 11, there's another *en* coming."

Caroline's attention to lexical forms tended to focus on individual words rather than expressions in the sessions observed. Often, this just meant a quick definition of a word or acronym encountered in a reading, thrown out almost as an aside ("*Dérisoire*, that means too little," "*Rigole*, that means ha ha.") At other times, meanings emerged through elicitation, as seen in the following excerpt:

*Excerpt 11*

Caroline: Yes, right, the big two-bedroom in the centre of town. But what do we call that, the generic term? When you pay money for an apartment, what is that called?

Student 14 *Loyer.*

Caroline *Le loyer.* That's the rent. The rent.

Sometimes, encountering a new word provided an opportunity to introduce its synonyms or word family: “*Supérette*, that's a supermarket that's too small [...]. There are *hypermarkets*, *hypermarchés*, *supermarchés*, and *supérettes*.” Like François, Caroline's focus was often on connecting meaning to aspects of French culture, and her explanations often provided rich semantic and cultural context. Notice that the below excerpt provides three polysemous meanings for the word *canotier*, tying them together with a visual example that illustrated all three:

*Excerpt 12*

You know that the *Meurthe* is the river in Nancy, and the *canotier* is someone who goes canoeing {she imitates rowing a boat} on the Meurthe. We go canoeing, so we call that *un canotier*. *Le canotier* also means a hat. So this painting is called, ‘Les canotiers de la Meurthe.’

Though Caroline drew student attention toward words, morphology was not a priority. Only two items were coded this way: one involved pointing out a clipping (*déco*, from *décoration*, “home décor”); the second, the relationship between a verb root and its nominal derivative (e.g., *raboter* → *raboteur*, “to plane,” “plane operator”). There was no discussion of the changes in grammatical category introduced by the suffix involved.

As seen in the prior excerpts, Caroline utilized physical gesture and miming frequently, often in a humorous way. She sang, whispered, whistled, and hummed. Her use of gesture ( $n=70$ ) was the most dynamic of all four teachers and encompassed her face and entire body. Gestures observed ranged from physical depictions of concepts such as liaison between words, directional movement, and size and quantity differences to numbering off with fingers, pointing at specific students, identifying body parts, and imitating lip rounding and other speech features.

She imitated a chicken and a whining dog and mimicked swimming, sleeping, crying, writing, listening, pouting, meditating, dying, breathing (to illustrate the word *soufflé*), dipping bread, taking a photo, rowing a boat, talking on the phone, and revving a motorbike. She rubbed her stomach to suggest hunger and used facial expressions to simulate relief, exhaustion, pleasure, and dismay. She also made the shushing gesture and used the thumbs-up sign to indicate approval (without acknowledging its cultural implications in certain countries).

She also injected frequent humour ( $n=37$ ) into her classes, mostly in the form of “wisecracks.” Sometimes, this involved dramatic gestures, such as responding to the information that a teacher’s wage in Hong Kong was €5000 per month by heading to the door, saying “I have classes [to teach] in Hong Kong. Ciao! Have a great summer!” Caroline’s form of humour often involved gentle teasing: “Oh, I’m hungry, let’s stop and go to the restaurant. Student 3 is inviting us and Student 2 is paying for the champagne.” On certain occasions, the teasing bordered on mockery: “Oh, you don’t want the Nobel Prize in mathematics, do you!” At other times, her humour had an offbeat character that could potentially be misunderstood:

*Excerpt 13*

It’s difficult, in France we don’t earn much. Student 13, may I take your pencil case?  
 {She takes the pencil case and circulates around the classroom, stopping briefly at each student.} Do you have some small change for the French profs? Please. It’s to buy milk and potatoes. And perhaps a bottle of vodka, please. Go on, go on. *Oh la la la*, solidarity, you really don’t understand it.

Each class created opportunities for Caroline to introduce different facets of French culture. In fact, her course was literally designed around this topic, exposing the students to readings and presentations that highlighted various cultural values from the ingredients and preparation of renowned French culinary specialties to celebrated impressionist painters to aspects of daily life in France. Caroline considered interaction with local native speakers an essential part of student learning, and she indicated that she also incorporated group outings into her syllabus to accommodate this requirement.

Please see Appendix F for all teacher behaviours observed in Caroline’s three videotaped classes.

## STUDENT RESPONSE TO INSTRUCTION

Caroline’s sole student, Klara, indicated that she would have liked to have had more time for practice during class. She was pleased, however, at the amount of new vocabulary she had acquired and she found the emphasis on grammar helpful, particularly discussion of different ways to talk about the past. She noted that she was gaining the ability to “learn effectively with different tools” and “understand from context” and that she was not afraid to ask when something was unclear. She indicated ongoing reluctance to speak French outside of class, but also recognized the importance of trying to overcome this.

### d. Case 4: Nicole – Grammar Course

When asked her views about L2 teaching theory, Nicole spoke with the most knowledge and authority about the succession of approaches used in Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including the *Structuro-Global Audio-Visual* method, a French method similar to *Audiolingualism* (Ostyn & Godin, 1985). She disliked the behaviouristic aspects of this approach as well as the narrow focus of *Grammar Translation*. She expressed strong preference for authentic language use and task-based teaching methods, arguing that the *Méthode Actionnelle* offers the best potential for developing full communicative competency, including both receptive and productive skills:

And then at a high level, at this point, are you more comfortable reading a document that’s long and perhaps specific. Being able to produce too, make your thoughts explicit and articulate them, Only the task-based communicative method can do that, because we’re closer to acts of language.”

She explained that her endorsement of this approach is rooted in the fact that it mirrors authentic, real-world language use more closely than traditional methods do: “It’s closer to reality. Teaching French, a language, French, means teaching people to communicate using the French language.” She also believes that the task-based nature of the approach encourages

greater student interaction and communication. The teacher's role is that of guide and facilitator and students work together to complete tasks and co-evaluate their work. She notes that they need not have the same proficiency level: "It could be that one student who's at a higher level coaches his or her partner."

Nicole teaches an advanced course dedicated solely to French grammar. In the interview, she emphasized accuracy, arguing that a good understanding of grammar is important to "speak well and write well" in French. At this high level, students need ability to "produce a written argument, synthesis, or account," a capability that grammar instruction must support. Moreover, because formulating an argument often requires expressing an opinion in French, review of the subjunctive together with common expressions that require this mood is essential: "So we're working on vocabulary, acts of speech, acts of language, and also on articulators and expressions for practicing the subjunctive with the infinitive."

Contrary to Caroline, Nicole believes register is important, though she has no specific activity for teaching this topic. She believes, however, that students should be able understand register differences between spoken and written French and recognize them in an interaction, particularly with respect to the familiar register, which is used for casual speech and which violates many grammar rules:

Well, there's spoken language and written language. And lots of things get dropped in spoken language. [...] You need to see all the registers of language, and [...] be able to explain them as well as in the familiar register, where grammar is flouted. [...] to recognize it in an interaction without saying, 'What's he saying? What does that mean?' Once you've understood that *j'sais pas* means *je ne sais pas* ...

In terms of receptivity to grammar instruction, Nicole finds that students tend to be "rather reserved and passive," placing the burden of responsibility on teachers: "They expect a lot from the teacher. So we have to, it may be always in the presentations and learning techniques, in other words deductive grammar, that won't pop into their minds." She cites the example of working from a corpus together, with students trying to identify "linguistic threads"

from which to deduce a rule: “They tell themselves it’s more up to the teacher and it’s not their problem, which is too bad, because they should do that to make better progress.”

Nicole expressed the belief that, to make grammar more engaging for students, there needs to be “more participation, more motivation, it needs to be playful.” Like the other teachers, she believes a grammar class should have a fun element. “Humour, that’s it. Vary the activities, don’t give too many lectures.” She stated that lectures should be avoided: “Give a few but not too many, solicit the students, don’t let them be passive. On the contrary, get them to be more active, get them into the action. I think I do a little of everything.”

She also believes, like Caroline, that it is important to adapt strategies to accommodate varied learning styles. Auditory or visual learners, for example, may require different approaches. As an example, she talks about the immigrant youth at the *lycée* (high school) where she is normally employed, contrasting this orientation with the summer program, where “it’s a bit more complicated” due to the short duration.

Building vocabulary is not a priority in the grammar course. When she teaches other topics, however, Nicole maintains that it serves no purpose to give students comprehensive vocabulary lists to memorize because they will not use the whole thing. Instead, she distributes a list from which she has students construct individual glossaries: “They’ll choose the expressions they want to remember, because sometimes it’s a technical term, or they have a technique for remembering the word, or they hear it regularly. It comes back often, so they find it easier to [...] absorb.”

She believes that students need to develop strategies for finding the information they need: “Well, they already guess words, try to understand from context. We need to stimulate learners’ efforts to go and search in other ways, to reactivate knowledge [...] that they may reinvest in [the current activity].” For Nicole, dictionaries should be a last resort: “The dictionary is a help, but it shouldn’t become a crutch or a substitute for the professor. And in the same way, the professor is not a dictionary.”

Likewise, Nicole does not believe translation is an effective language teaching tool. She argued that “during activities, one should not proceed systematically via translation, or

translation will become a substitute for the intended activity, which is not the objective. The objective is to understand a rule so you can complete the activity successfully.” She does believe, however, that, in certain situations, it can be helpful for students to apply their knowledge of the L1 to help one another comprehend an utterance: “It absolutely doesn’t bother me if a more advanced student who has understood the rule [...] explains it to a classmate in his or her first language. That’s not a concern for me, it’s a helping thing.” She cautioned, however, against over-reliance: “You need to be able to identify it, then let go bit by bit. At some point, you’ll have to stop. Otherwise, dependence on the L1 can become a block.”

## OBSERVATIONS

Table 8 provides a description of Nicole’s two videotaped observations.

Table 8

*Nicole - Observations One and Two Descriptions*

<u>Observation 1</u>	<u>Observation 2</u>
The majority of the first session was devoted to an explanation of several sets of time-related confusable words (e.g., <i>jour</i> , <i>journée</i> , <i>an</i> , <i>année</i> , <i>soir</i> , <i>soirée</i> , etc.). In the short time left at the end of the class, she introduced the next day’s topic, an overview of common French prepositions.	This class also contained two distinct lessons. The first involved a lecture to explain the difference in usage between the French verbs <i>savoir</i> and <i>connaître</i> , both of which mean “to know.” The second provided an overview of language used for hypothetical situations including subordinate conjunctions of cause and effect, as well as a quick review of coordinating conjunctions.

### Behaviours Observed

Each of Nicole’s classes consisted of an hour-long lecture on one or more specific aspects of advanced French grammar. To introduce the teaching points, she read aloud from a Word document that was displayed onscreen and subsequently made available to students via email or download link. The document was written in French and contained thorough explanations of each teaching point, accompanied by several examples.

Instruction was explicit and highly *FoFS* oriented: both classes were strongly teacher-fronted, with topics presented in a traditional university lecture format that approached the Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) model, without the third component. The only opportunity for student participation occurred in the first class, where a teacher-facilitated practice activity—which took the form of an oral drill utilizing a cloze exercise—was introduced at the end of the main topic. Nicole read the sentences aloud, pausing for the gap or substituting a sound effect, and students volunteered answers, after which Nicole affirmed correct answers, corrected errors, and elaborated where necessary. There were no opportunities for student practice in the second class.

To illustrate her teaching points, Nicole made modest use of the whiteboard ( $n=16$ ). Information recorded on the board included a timeline that was referred to periodically, spelling of tricky or unusual vocabulary, and sketches to illustrate certain lexical items (such as the size difference between a teaspoon and a soup spoon).

Her use of gesture and miming to illustrate teaching points was more frequent ( $n=36$ ). This ranged from depictions of concepts such as the direction of accents, time divisions and duration, deixis, size, and quantity to the acting out of certain scenarios. This latter use of gesture included mimicking disgust, stuttering, running, and fishing as well the acts of strangling a person, admiring a pretty girl, putting an object in a drawer, and slashing one's throat.

Interaction with students was limited to eliciting ( $n=12$ ), periodic checks for comprehension ( $n=10$ ), and acknowledging and encouraging responses ( $n=36$ ). Acknowledgment of responses was usually provided in the form of short “yes” or “no” answers with the occasional “very good” or “there you go.” Nicole's checks for comprehension usually involved a quick aside: “Ok? Any questions?” The small amount of eliciting that took place in these two classes mostly occurred during the oral drill described above. Most elicitations involved starting to read a sentence aloud and using tone of voice to prompt for the missing information: “*Il revient chaque ... (année)...*” Others were outright questions: “Yes, *la soirée*. Why?” Nicole also tended to use eliciting to check for comprehension, as in this attempt to ascertain whether students had understood the difference between the verbs *savoir* and *connaître* (both meaning “to know”) that

she had been discussing: “Can we, for example, say *Je sais la biographie de David Bowie, Je connais la biographie de David Bowie?* Are the two possible or not?”

Just seven references were coded to “parts of speech” in Nicole’s two classes, whereas concern with this topic had very much characterized Caroline’s beginner-level classes. This is perhaps surprising in a course devoted to grammar. It can be explained by the fact that very large blocks of discourse tended to concern a single sub-node such as “prepositions” or “conjunctions,” and the remaining grammar references focused on abstract concepts (definiteness and uncertainty, gender, register, time, and discourse markers) rather than discussion of specific parts of speech.

Likewise, only three references were coded to derivation and morphology. These fell into two categories: cursory mention of the creation of first group regular verbs from nouns via suffixation of *-er* (e.g., *amorce* → *amorcer*, “bait” → “to bait”; *séjour* → *séjourner*, “stay” → “to stay”) and a lengthy discussion of the formation and meaning of a set of words containing the *-ée* denominal suffix (*matinée, journée, année, soirée, nuitée*). The latter topic was, in fact, the principal subject of one of the classes.

A single pronunciation reference, in which Nicole modelled liaison in the phrase *vingt ans* (“twenty years”), was coded to recasts and teacher modelling.

Exposure to French culture in this class tended to focus on how certain French words or idioms communicated social norms. This information was provided spontaneously now and then as it related to a grammar point being discussed, more as an item of interest than a topic critical to learning objectives:

And the French, [...] when they organize a *soirée* in the evening, it’s more like eight p.m. that we have the *apertif*, then we go to dine at nine p.m. Seven p.m., that’s really early, it’s very rare, seven p.m. Because the time to get in from work, to change, to see to the children ...

Please see Appendix F for all teacher behaviours observed in Nicole’s two videotaped classes.

## STUDENT RESPONSE TO INSTRUCTION

Nicole's sole student, Wen Xiang, valued the practice opportunities: "That permitted me to correct my erroneous thoughts. For hypotheticals and the conditional, we did many sample sentences in person and together to understand and feel these contexts." He also conveyed appreciation for the freedom to express opinions in class as well as discussion of "different possible responses." He liked the way Nicole guided the class to the "best answer," observing that her approach allowed students to "not only to know the reasons for the correct answer but also the errors in the incorrect responses." (The interaction he described must have occurred outside the two classes we observed because this is not the teaching approach that was witnessed.) Overall, Wen Xiang found the classes a little "slow" at times and indicated that more practice activities, both in class and at home, would have been helpful.

Wen Xiang's log responses reflect an ongoing concern with verb tenses, consistent with the priority he had described in both his interview and survey. He appreciated learning to distinguish the imperfect and the simple past, and observed that conjugation of the latter was likely to pose ongoing challenges, as was identifying the appropriate context (state versus action) for choice of correct tense. He discussed the importance of conjugation exercises and believed that regular reading would help with mastering subtleties of context.

### *4.1.5 Results from Post-Course Debrief Session*

The last data collection activity was a two-hour focus group, which was conducted at the conclusion of the program, a few hours after the school's farewell ceremony. The purpose of the meeting was to ascertain whether teachers felt that their learning objectives had been met and to identify any challenges that had arisen unexpectedly. Discussion topics were chosen to further this objective, which aligned directly with the first research question.

When asked whether they felt they had achieved the goals they had articulated at the outset of the program, all four teachers expressed frustration and disappointment.

Georges indicated that he had had a very low turnout for theatre class, for the first time ever, with students having to be cajoled into participating. He had also encountered challenges

with exceptionally high student passivity this year: “That is to say that, other years, often the group has some ideas, has some suggestions, and now, this year, there was nothing. Nothing, nothing. [...] Very, very passive. Very little dynamic, very little suggesting on their part.” In addition, low French proficiency had presented serious comprehension difficulties for certain students. Georges cited as an example the failure of four people to turn up at the theatre the day of the dress rehearsal despite repeated reminders. In fact, the limited linguistic capabilities of this group of students apparently required a great deal of extra work on memorization, pronunciation, and diction.

Nicole also expressed frustration that the proficiency level of the students (supposed to be B2/C1 for her class) was much lower than in past years, a fact that all four teachers had noticed and which created program-wide challenges such as the need to review basics covered in lower levels:

So for all of these groups, we were below, slightly below, we really had to adapt because we worked, we are working on the grammatical points based on need. [...] Effectively, we pulled out grammar elements more so B1 than a B2 level. [...] There, it’s more an A2 going towards B1. It’s interesting, no? Because returning to these, to the use of present indicative, oh I’m sorry, but that shocked me.

In fact, Nicole was dissatisfied overall with how her course had proceeded and she expressed profound disappointment with her own teaching, which mostly appeared to concern failure to utilize a FoF approach and introduce rules only after students had an opportunity to reflect: “Because I’d omitted a part that is really important to me, it’s observation. It’s a part of the framework to observe and ask questions, to reflect, before bringing in information of how the language works followed by a rule. That, I didn’t do.”

This description matches what was observed. The teaching approach we witnessed was lecture-oriented, the instruction FoFS rather than FoF oriented. She stated, however, that this is not the approach she uses in the school where she normally teaches, where she concentrates on the four

competencies and on “communicative ability” and grammar is rarely taught as a specific subject. Nor was it consistent with how she described her teaching approach in the interview.

Because we had observed practices that are typically associated with theatre rather than school, I felt it was important to question Georges about how he interpreted the balance between the “stage direction” role that we had observed him play and his responsibilities as a teacher. He felt that techniques from theatre had direct application in teaching: “It’s a teacher who uses techniques from stage direction. I really was more teacher than stage director.” Georges maintained that he did not really use many tools typically used by a theatre stage director: “There, I really stayed in the role of teacher who’s preparing a show that leads the students, with the biggest comfort possible on the language level.” This took considerable patience: “I sometimes perceived that I explained to them the same thing four times, [...] because there’s a group that had a lot of difficulty concentrating on the French language.”

Much discussion ensued when the teachers were told that some of the student participants had expressed reluctance to speak French outside the classroom in their logs. After some discussion about how widespread this might be, Georges responded that he had seen certain students “really open up” over the course of the program. He went on to describe the moment during a school excursion when he first became aware of this transformation, which we initially coded as “The Click”:

And in particular, I determined upon the trip to Paris that suddenly, click, there’s something that happened, and certain among them who were a bit reserved, who had [interviewer: addressed me or their classmates] in English, suddenly, they became autonomous and dared to do things. [...] I saw it, I saw the differences in behaviour, in the use of the language, the students who had spoken more in English, *par*, they came to see me, [speaking] in French. I said to myself, ‘Ah! Maybe there is a barrier broken down.’

He maintained that this occurs spontaneously during a theatrical production, particularly when students notice how other people react to what they are saying. This insight is often accompanied

by recognition of the role that humour plays in establishing audience rapport and boosting confidence, and by awareness of the difference between a live performance and the classroom:

And [...] the fact that we succeeded in making something on stage that was presentable. [...] They realize that, ah yes, there was a click that I spoke of earlier [...] They become conscious of it, because they say ‘yes, we heard the people’s reactions [...] we heard the audience laugh.’ And there, we say to ourselves, ‘Ah! There, we’re in the process of succeeding to communicate [...] and people [are] laughing, and yet when we read it together in class, it’s not the same thing as in rehearsal. [...] That doesn’t make us laugh because we know it by heart.’

Caroline agreed with Georges that, with patience on her part, students do indeed experience a breakthrough at some point, leading to an increase in student comfort and confidence that feels almost tangible:

It’ll come, it came. I don’t know if you were there, but suddenly, they started to give their opinions in a spontaneous and authentic manner. That’s the [?] that I expected. So we start the engine day after day, it’ll catch one day. [...] And in their eyes, we saw that something had happened, I see it, I feel it, the well-being, the comfort increased.

The teachers were in agreement that student qualities that contribute to this speaking success include being “sufficiently at ease,” “gaining the wish to communicate,” and “opening ourselves up to others and ourselves.” Caroline pointed out that speaking French is an essential component of her class, and that she makes it a priority to create regular opportunities for students to interact with locals.

The discussion of student hesitation to speak led to debate about the effect of nationality on student openness to speaking. Of the 31 countries that were represented at the school that summer, all four teachers agreed that certain nationalities were “more reserved orally” and less receptive to communicative activities. The general consensus was that Asians in general, and Chinese and Korean students in particular, were the hardest to coax to speak: “We sometimes see some students who have surprising results in the written [section], on the exam,” observed Georges, “though for

speaking, they never put themselves out there, they aren't going to spontaneously answer questions. That, I think, is cultural." Nicole pointed out that it was very challenging with Russian students as well, because teaching in that country is highly traditional.

There was also considerable discussion about the merits of the study abroad aspects of the program and how they benefited students. Georges compared the typical language classroom to a laboratory, arguing that the experience is not authentic. In contrast, the immersion opportunities provided by the school "put learning into practice" and are profoundly enriching for the students, provided they are willing to take advantage of them: "We are no longer in the laboratory, we are in reality, we go out into the street [...] We are constantly confronted in the linguistic and cultural environment of the language that we're learning, from the morning to the evening." François agreed, pointing out that even the role-plays he is accustomed to in the U.S. do not capture the authenticity of the situation the way this type of immersion does.

## **4.2. Student Perceptions and Behaviours (Q2)**

This section reports student perspectives on learning on a case-by-case basis. It commences with a synopsis of survey quantitative responses concerning beliefs about language teaching, then turns to the individual responses to survey and interview questions concerning goals, anticipated challenges, and preferred teaching approaches. Finally, the quantitative weekly reflective log results are considered on an aggregate basis. (For the qualitative weekly log data, refer to Section 4.1.4, where student reaction is considered in the context of response to the instruction documented in the observations.)

### ***4.2.1 Beliefs About Language Teaching***

Students completed the same survey form as the teachers. In addition to the three open-ended questions discussed in sections 4.2.2, 4.2.3, and 4.2.4, the survey contained fourteen statements about language learning, shown in Table 9. Teachers and students were asked to rate their agreement with the statements on a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated strong disagreement; 7, strong agreement; and 4 was neutral.

Table 9

*Student Survey Responses*

	<u>KS</u>	<u>AH</u>	<u>SW</u>	<u>EW</u>	<u>VP</u>	<u>WH</u>	<u>Mdn</u>	<u>SD</u>
1. It is important to speak with a native-like French accent.	6	2	4	2	4	7	5.0	1.9
2. Anyone can learn to speak French.	3	6	7	6	6	7	6.0	1.6
3. Classes should provide many opportunities for student interaction.	5	5	7	6	7	3	5.0	1.5
4. Teachers—not students—should control the classroom.	3	3	7	3	3	5	3.0	1.4
5. French is a difficult language to learn.	5	5	6	7	3	3	5.0	1.4
6. Fluency is more important than accuracy.	3	6	5	2	3	5	4.0	1.3
7. Students should speak French whenever possible outside class.	7	6	7	3	7	7	7.0	1.3
8. Daily practice and memorization is the key to learning French.	6	3	7	7	7	6	6.0	1.2
9. Building vocabulary quickly is the key to learning French.	3	3	4	6	5	3	3.0	1.1
10. No one teaching method works for everybody.	7	6	5	6	4	7	6.5	1.1
11. A good understanding of grammar is necessary to learn French.	7	4	7	6	7	7	7.0	1.0
12. Translation to/from the first language should be encouraged.	4	4	4	4	7	4	4.0	1.0
13. Pronunciation errors should always be corrected.	6	5	5	5	7	4	5.0	1.0
14. Errors in writing should always be corrected.	6	6	7	6	7	7	6.5	0.5

*Note.* KS=Klara; AH=Astrid; SW=Stefan; EW=Emma; VP=Paulina; WH=Wen Xiang; *Mdn*=median; *SD*=standard deviation. Cells indicating the areas of greatest divergence, determined by *SD*, have been highlighted.

As can be seen from Table 9, there is considerable agreement among the six students concerning the last few statements. Here, the widest spread is seen with statement 1, which concerns nativelikeness of speech. Surprisingly, however, the two students in Georges' theatre class, Astrid and Stefan, do not rate nativelike speech as very important, assigning it 2 and 4, respectively.

Statements 3, 4, and 12 relate to teaching approach. Wen Xiang is the outlier on statement 3, expressing mild disagreement with the importance of classroom interaction. Stefan expresses the strongest agreement with statement 4, concerning need for teachers to retain the locus of control, and Paulina voices the strongest agreement with statement 12, regarding the importance of translation to/from the L1, not surprising since this was her primary goal. The other students avoided taking a stand on this question by selecting the neutral option.

Responses to statements 8, 9, 11, 13, and 14 relate to other themes that emerged in the interviews, such as error correction, vocabulary expansion, importance of grammar, and

memorization. Not surprisingly, Nicole's one student, Wen Xiang assigns high importance (7) to grammar, as do most of the other students. There was strong agreement among the students on the importance of error correction, particularly in writing, and there was general consensus on the need for practice and memorization, with the exception of Astrid. Responses concerning importance of vocabulary tended to cluster around the neutral option, with Emma expressing the strongest agreement.

#### **4.2.2 Goals**

##### **a. Georges' Students – Theatre Course**

Astrid's focus was on oral skills. Like her classmate Stefan, she identified improved speaking ability as a high priority. She sought to improve her French pronunciation and gain greater comfort in speaking. She also wanted to increase her ability to participate in conversations with native speakers. She planned to track her progress by noting increased comfort with real-world interactions, but indicated that sometimes progress can be so gradual that one does not even notice it:

I don't know, I think maybe like some, some things that are like, you know, if I go to buy something and I'm suddenly not, like, panicking. Um, but honestly, I don't know, I think sometimes you don't notice until it's been a while and then it's like, 'Oh, suddenly I'm better at this.'

Stefan also prioritized the improvement of pronunciation and speaking. He hoped to gain greater fluency, increase his confidence, and receive regular correction of mispronounced words. He felt that the combined effect of error correction and the repetitive nature of theatre class would aid memorization and thus learning: "Normally in a class, you are corrected but it is easy to forget and repeat a mistake. It is here also, but since it is one text that is repeated again and again, so the mistakes are corrected again and again."

Vocabulary and listening were also mentioned as priorities. He indicated that he could confirm that he was making progress by comparing his rate of improvement both with other students and against where he had been a year prior.

**b. François' Students – Translation Course**

Emma indicated that improved speaking ability was also a priority for her. She indicated that she was weak in speaking because she tended to lack adequate vocabulary.

Her principal goal was to improve fluency. Other priorities were reading, writing, vocabulary expansion, and translation strategies. She stated that she would know when she was making progress when her dependence upon dictionaries lessened: “When I have lectures and classes, if I can understand the teachers, what he or she is saying more, that means I make progress. And I read something, I can understand more without referring to a dictionary.”

Paulina has a high (C1) level of French proficiency and described ambitious goals. These included a more nuanced understanding of translation techniques and the ability to apply those techniques to the translation of articles on a variety of topics. She sought to gain the ability to translate texts “fluently,” to look at an article from differing perspectives, and to not just translate texts literally but also “from the metaphoric point of view.” Other goals articulated by Paulina included learning “a lot of new advanced vocabulary and expressions.”

**c. Caroline's Student – French Culture Course**

Klara stated that listening comprehension was a problem, especially in conversation with French people. She stated that she would like to understand better when listening. Other priorities were to improve her grammar, expand her vocabulary and, like Emma, speak more fluently in French. She indicated that she would know she was making progress when she noticed that native speakers could understand her better.

**d. Nicole's Student – Grammar Course**

Wen Xiang expressed a desire for “more precise and clear French” and better understanding of several grammar points he had been finding challenging. He indicated that he had had particular difficulty with French verb tenses as this is something lacking in Chinese. He also hoped to improve his speaking ability, and planned to interact with French locals and with other students to achieve that goal.

### 4.2.3 Anticipated Challenges

#### a. Georges' Students – Theatre Course

Astrid anticipated problems memorizing her lines and pronouncing them correctly, and was worried that embarrassment and fear would hold her back, but she also realized that she needed to learn to take risks:

Um, that it will be very difficult to memorize everything, that it will be very difficult to pronounce everything, that it'll be embarrassing, but yeah, I think that's it. [...] I'm so afraid of doing it wrong but I technically realize that it doesn't really matter [...] when you're in this [...] learning stage. You just have to speak.

She planned to confront the challenges head-on by practicing hard, working with other students to memorize lines, and trying to not “take [herself] so seriously,” indicating that this was a recognized character flaw. (She ended up playing the title role in the performance of *Cinderella*, for which she received several standing ovations.)

Stefan was another person who ultimately played a key role in the play, bringing an offbeat sense of humour to the role of the fairy godmother. Stefan indicated that he finds French pronunciation difficult. Indeed, heavy L1 interference tended to make his speech extremely hard to comprehend, which could be a particular issue for a theatrical production. This was presumably one of the reasons for his strong focus on speaking and pronunciation as his foremost goal.

Stefan's struggles extend to written French as well, as he often tends “to write it a little bit phonetically.” He stated that it can be easier to remember the correct pronunciation but very difficult to find the correct way to write or spell French words. He is not easily discouraged, however, and his comments about his prior experience learning German hint at the importance of intrinsic motivation:

It is already easier [because] the first difficult barrier to start to talk in at least one foreign language, I have broken with German [...]. And it helps a lot because the first step is really the most difficult and also the motivation is now here.

Stefan also indicated that he was experiencing difficulty understanding “real everyday French,” such as “a discussion among our animators,”<sup>32</sup> which he found “almost impossible.”

#### **b. François’ Students – Translation Course**

Emma’s challenges related to some of the issues that François described. Because English was not her L1, she had too small a vocabulary to complete the translation tasks easily. She was worried that there would be too many new or complicated words in an article and, because she lacked vocabulary, she tended to be dependent on dictionaries: “So I want to translate something but I don’t have many vocabulary. I have to keep on referring to dictionaries. So you use your second language to, like, translate your third language.”

She also anticipated challenges with listening, and was worried that her limited English would cause problems understanding both the teacher and her classmates, noting that English-speaking students often used phrases unfamiliar to her: “Actually, I only know some English, like very formal. [...] Yeah, so often I don’t know what they mean when they say something.” Emma’s strategy for dealing with challenges involved spending time preparing in advance of each class.

Paulina also expected to struggle more than English-speaking classmates since François’ course is focused on French to English translation and English is not her L1: “Mainly because I am not able to translate majority of sentences as fluent as it is expected. It takes much more time for me to concentrate on the actual translation.” She anticipated challenges in understanding certain expressions and idioms and feared that she might not know their meaning, even in English. She indicated that she responds to this challenge by trying to find synonyms in French, which she translates into Slovak, and then into English.

Like Emma, Paulina tended to compare herself to other students: “It’s not a quick process when I compare myself, my way of working in the class, with American-speaking people, English-speaking people.”

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<sup>32</sup> Animators are hosts/facilitators/team leaders, in this case regular students of the French university who were hired to support the program and assist the international students. These young people tended to spend a great deal of extracurricular time with the students, drinking and socializing.

### c. **Caroline's Student – French Culture Course**

Klara expected that listening and vocabulary would be her most significant challenges in Caroline's class. She anticipated encountering a lot of new words and feared that her ability to understand the articles discussed in class would depend on successfully acquiring the target vocabulary.

She also anticipated finding the quick pacing of Caroline's classes challenging. She indicated that she was already struggling to understand not just spoken discourse but some of the media used in class as well: "And understanding what somebody is saying to me. For example, today we had a song, it was very quickly, and so it, I was like, 'what?'"

Klara planned to address challenges by focusing on problems after hours, in the student residence: "I try and find some time in the evening, in the afternoon at GEC<sup>33</sup> to check things that are difficult for me." She had a pragmatic, realistic attitude and her expectations were modest: "Also, I think that it's ok not to understand 100% of everything that is going on. It's just a process. I need some time to learn new things and I don't have to understand everything right now."

### d. **Nicole's Student – Grammar Course**

Wen Xiang indicated that his understanding of spoken French was rather weak, and he feared that he would not be able to understand everything that the teacher said. Another challenge lay in the fact that, in his home country, French grammar was taught in his L1: "One difficulty is that, before, we learned the grammar in Chinese, but here it's grammar in pure French. And so, uh, there are a few, a few proper nouns...."

## 4.2.4 ***Preferred Teaching Approaches***

### a. **Georges' Students – Theatre Course**

Astrid indicated on her survey form that she wants courses to be "fun and sustainable," and that one way teachers can do this is by combining methods, such as "reading novels and watching movies, together with a grammar course." Georges' course is, of course, not a grammar course, but I interpret this to mean that she likes variety in the classroom. On being asked, in her

<sup>33</sup> *Groupe des Etudiants du Cours Léopold*, one of the school's residences.

interview, how Georges could best help her succeed, she indicated that she prefers a teaching approach that is encouraging and non-threatening: “Just keep doing what he’s already doing — fixing our pronunciation, being very non-scary, which is good and, like, making sure everyone understands.” When asked to clarify “non-scary,” she responded:

I don’t know, I’ve had French teachers before that I’ve been terrified of speaking in front of, because I would feel like if I said one thing wrong they would hate me forever. He’s very not like that. It’s very, it’s very like you’re allowed to make mistakes and it’s all good, like we’re just getting better.

Astrid appreciated Georges’ tolerance of errors, which she felt encouraged speaking, a sentiment that contrasts with the view expressed by Georges’ other student, Stefan, who sought as much correction as possible.

Like all the students, Astrid was asked to evaluate where on a continuum her preference would fall—in terms of locus of control in a language classroom—from a strongly teacher-fronted approach at one extreme to a student-centred approach at the other. She responded that she would probably place herself “like a quarter of the way from the lecturer type, so that it’s like, closer to that, but not quite there.” She denied that this preference was because explicit instruction is the preferred approach in her country and, in fact, expressed some ambivalence about the importance of interaction:

No, I think it’s just, I don’t know, I’ve always kind of liked working on my own and the other extreme often involves a lot of group work and [interviewer: social interaction]. I’m not very great at that, but I, like, I also feel like they should push us to try to talk a little, so somewhere kind of to that lecture side but not, yeah.

Despite recognizing its benefits, Astrid is not enamoured of group work as she finds that it creates high levels of anxiety that block learning:

I kind of hate it, which I know I shouldn’t, but I kind of do. [...] I feel like, for me, for that to work, I’d have to be really comfortable with that person, and often I’m not, and then it just kinda, I’m so focused on, like, that I can forget about whatever language goal

we're working on.

The apparent ambivalence seen here connects strongly to her language learning goals, which centered on communication and gaining comfort in speaking.

To grow her French lexicon, Astrid stated that she finds it helpful to keep a written record of new words she is learning. Like several other students, she indicated that she draws upon an intuitive understanding of morphology to tease apart words and identify meanings and/or grammatical functions. For example, her Linguistics degree has given her a good understanding of potential relations among words and morphemes and she applies her lexical knowledge to guess from context when she encounters unknown words. She indicated that she can examine the morphology of a French word, and conclude with reasonable confidence, from her knowledge of French and English, that it is “obviously a verb.” For her, dictionaries are a last resort, employed only when she cannot deduce the meaning from cues surrounding the target lexeme.

The subject of Astrid's Masters degree was cleft constructions in Norwegian WH questions, and her passion for syntax and grammar was equally evident. Nevertheless, she was pragmatic about its importance in her language learning journey, stating that no-one was going to care “if you said a thing in the conditional instead of the *futur anterieur*, whatever, no one cares.” Once again, she acknowledged that fear tends to hold her back, but “it doesn't really matter [...], you just have to speak.”

As the only Norwegian speaker at the school and a fluent L2 English speaker, she expressed disappointment at the amount of English she was encountering: “I hate being forced to speak in French, I'm horrible at it, but it helps.” She indicated that this was happening in several classes, though not in theatre class. She did not fault teachers, but blamed fellow students, who she felt were too quick to resort to mutual first or additional languages: “But in theatre, we don't do that very much. I appreciate that, that we keep it in French. Not about the professors or whatever, but um, among us.”

She finds French more difficult than English, which she started studying at a younger age (six). She started learning French at thirteen, as a required third language.

To reinforce her learning, Astrid indicated that she tries to read in French and she makes an effort to converse with locals in shops and restaurants. To build listening competence, she makes French films and music a priority. Like several other students, Astrid recognizes the importance of memorization, though she anticipated difficulty in learning lines. She decided that recording her lines in writing and practicing with other students was the best way to overcome this challenge.

Stefan was asked to consider the same locus-of-control continuum as Astrid. Presented with a choice ranging from a strongly teacher-fronted approach at one end to a student-centred dynamic at the other, he responded that he prefers the teacher to be in charge: “It’s like, if I’m in an unknown city and I have a tourist guide, so it gives me a certainty [*sic*], [interviewer: an orientation], so I think that if I should deduct [*sic*] something by myself, it takes more time, so yeah.”

He indicated, however, that he is willing to tolerate group work as long as it is of short duration and closely monitored by a teacher. He believes that if teachers sacrifice control, students may flounder: “I have nothing against, it must be in short intervals, interaction with teacher, or the teacher must go from one group to the other and look how it progresses. [...] Teacher needs to keep some control; otherwise I feel lost.” He prefers small groups of two to three students with a dedicated native-speaking teacher, provision of homework, and “intensive contact/interaction.”

He stated that he likes a teaching approach that pays strong attention to pronunciation, a preference that clearly aligns with his stated goal for the course: “So he’s, uh, native speaker. He has also experience with theatre, so he knows even more than average person how important it is to pronounce correctly.” He observed that the play they were attempting to memorize had many lines that were difficult to pronounce, and that Georges helped students master them through abundant repetition, correction, and pronunciation exercises.

The desire articulated above for correct pronunciation reveals the degree to which his opinion about the importance of error correction differed from that of Astrid: Stefan wanted not only as much correction of his pronunciation as possible, but as much repetition as possible. In

fact, he saw several benefits in repetition, including the possibility of receiving repeated corrections of his mispronunciations: “Uh, for me, [...] I have to hear it, write it, use it many times, several times, until one day suddenly, ‘Ah! I can remember, I can use it.’” Likewise, while he stated that he has no “magic method” for broadening his vocabulary, repetition was helpful, together with recording new vocabulary in a notebook. Upon encountering unknown vocabulary, Stefan prefers dictionaries to guessing from meaning, though the degree to which he relies on them depends on circumstances: “Um, if I have time, I prefer [looking] into the dictionary. If I have to do quickly, something with the text, [...] even if it is homework, I just try to guess what it means.”

Stefan expressed the belief that mastery of grammar is vital to gaining proficiency and social acceptance in spoken discourse, especially at more advanced levels. He described observing how lack of grammar knowledge had held other students back during prior German classes: “They were not able to say correctly which country they were from, the declination etc. [...] I think so we progressed maybe quicker than the other who got stuck because they were not mastering the grammar.”

Citing the same German experience, where an L2-only policy had been strictly enforced, he argued that the appropriateness of L1 classroom use depends on the size of the groups, and described the cognitive fatigue that sets in after a long day speaking one’s L2: “It was exhausting, so I was really tired always after the six hours a day but I think it was a good method.”

Stefan indicated that he follows certain bloggers and finds YouTube useful for language learning outside of class: “It’s quite difficult to watch the news, but I’ve found quite useful some French TV channels who offer some simplified videos for French learning persons.” He also enjoys cinema and live theatre, and made it a habit to regularly attend showings of French films when he lived in Munich.

#### **b. François’ Students – Translation Course**

Emma indicated that she prefers her language learning to occur simultaneously in class and outside of class, “because [...] I can practice the knowledge I learn in class with others and, as a result, I can memorize the usage of words very quickly.”

She does not like group work at all, finding it “more efficient” to work on her own. Asked to consider the same locus-of-control continuum as the other students, she indicated that she likes the independence of working on her own, but with guidance from the teacher: “I think, confidence, ability to learn by ourselves. I really like independent learning.” A large part of that is the pleasure she derives from working out a problem “by myself instead of just being told.”

She prefers an approach in which the teacher involves the students in constructing knowledge by eliciting answers, prompting actively when needed, very much a defining characteristic of François’ approach. This form of encouragement spurs deeper deliberation and prods students to volunteer their thoughts, as illustrated in the following quote:

He doesn’t tell us the answer directly. I know some sentences are very long. So then, we’re translating. He knows there’s a better version. He will just give us tips and hints to make us to think more. Finally, we get the best version by ourselves. It makes you to think very deeply about the question. He gives us examples, hints. Like *c’est bien mais* ... (“that’s good, but ...”). So we’re forced to think more, and someone will come up with an answer, and maybe that’s the best one.

She stated that she appreciates François’ provision of the relevant vocabulary list in advance of receiving a text, indicating that it makes subsequent translation much easier: “In class he will give a list of new vocabulary, make us, we translate it by ourselves. And it will be easier to translate the whole text or article.”

In discussing vocabulary learning, she described a method that one of her teachers at home in China had used. Mimicking a bag opening and paper unfolding, she enacted how such a lesson typically unfolded: “He will give us pictures, and maybe it’s animals or food, and we write the words beside it, and sometimes we make sentences from this, for instance, or words. It helps a lot. I got like five or six on this paper for one year.”

Like several other students, Emma tends to rely on existing lexical knowledge upon encountering unknown words, preferring to guess meaning from context unless there are insufficient cues in the text. She stated that she often finds herself comparing French words to their

English counterparts, using her knowledge of derivational morphology to look for relations among words, grouping like words into families based on shape, and turning to a dictionary only to confirm accuracy. “Another way to remember vocabulary is same in English, like a verb, a noun, and an adjective,” she explained, noting that when she checks a word, she identifies the root and then looks for other lexemes with the same root. This method allows her to identify parts of speech and remember several words at once.

Emma asserted that “grammar is absolutely very important [...] because you need to know the, like, structures of sentences. Grammar, how to structure a sentence it’s the foundation of expressing something, a complete sentence. You need to know grammar and the tense.” She stated that she enjoys English grammar but was not yet sure about grammar in French, which she finds more complicated than English: “It’s very difficult in French. It’s different from other languages’ grammar, it’s very difficult.”

Emma indicated that she could not easily draw upon L2 English in this class, as hers was weak, and she lacked classmates with whom to speak her L1 (Mandarin). However, she felt that the opportunity to speak Mandarin would not have helped much anyway: “If there’s someone speaks Mandarin, I don’t think it will make a big difference because we discuss, we have to translate French into English, so Chinese don’t, but if I’m a native English speaker, I think it would be very helpful.”

For language learning practice, Emma reads and watches French films and videos.

Paulina had been studying French for four years. She indicated that she finds it easier than her native language (Slovak) which, according to Paulina, has a difficult grammar. She cited a few critical differences, which include a complex conjugation system and a contrast between /i/ and /y/.

Like Astrid, she saw herself situated somewhere between the two poles of the hypothetical locus-of-control continuum discussed earlier: “I prefer something in between. I feel like it’s good when the teachers give students space to themselves, even in translation seminar, because it’s important.” She also feels, however, that the teacher’s job is to help students identify

barriers and ways to surmount them, while providing autonomy so students can “figure things out on our own.”

She appreciated François’ efforts to encourage interaction, but admitted that group work and pair work was unfamiliar to her. In Slovakia, students receive homework, on which they work independently, and foreign language classes typically do not encourage teamwork. François’ class, on the other hand, placed strong emphasis on discussion, which Paulina found striking. She contrasted this orientation with translation classes in Slovakia, where students receive little speaking practice and would not be expected to collaborate:

When I compare it with the teaching methods I am used to from my teachers in Slovakia, they are really different because his lessons, during his lessons we get to discuss different problems, different issues [...] Even though this is supposed to be a translation seminar, we get to talk a lot. [...] So this is a big difference, because here we have to discuss the meaning [...] even though we might not be sure.

She indicated that she was beginning to appreciate the benefits of this novel (to her) approach, one of which lay in its ability to aid translation efforts by exposing students to multiple viewpoints: “Yes, because I can hear different opinions, different proposals, different suggestions, how someone else would translate it.”

Paulina also reiterated the sentiment expressed by Astrid vis-à-vis the importance of a non-threatening approach: “What can help me is, I see the teacher is really tolerant and he understands that it’s going to be more harder for me that I’m to do some progress.”

Like others, she looked forward to opportunities to speak French while in France, something not possible in her French classes in Slovakia, arguing that it was important to speak French “all the time because this is the right time to practice it.” She felt that the experience gained would help improve her speaking and French language skills in general. Moreover, the daily exposure provided by the immersion aspect of the course was extremely helpful in acquiring and reinforcing new vocabulary and in strengthening her listening comprehension:

Because, here, I'm exposed to many of the daily situations. [...] I'm in the environment where the French language is spoken, so it's really easy to acquire all the new vocabulary because I'm exposed to it all the time and also I get to listen French people speaking. I notice that my listening got better just in the short time.

Like Stefan, Paulina placed high importance on repetition. She felt that repeated exposure to specific words in handouts, translation texts, and classroom discourse would help her acquire more vocabulary. She indicated that she, too, prefers to draw upon her innate linguistic knowledge when she encounters unknown words, attempting to guess from context and looking for "different forms of a word." When she encounters a word she cannot decipher in that fashion, she searches a dictionary for synonyms.

Paulina concurred with Emma and Stefan with respect to the importance of grammar. She enjoys grammar exercises and stated that understanding grammar rules was key to mastery of the subject: "It's obviously really important, because with more advanced level in language, also the grammar is more advanced. So without knowledge of grammar, you are, me personally, I wouldn't be able to make progress." She indicated that she does grammar exercises on her own and that, at school in her home country more time is dedicated to grammar exercises than to speaking.

For practice, Paulina reads and watches French films and videos, and she also makes an effort to converse as much as possible with native speakers.

### **c. Caroline's Student – French Culture Course**

Klara, like Astrid, prefers a supportive, non-threatening approach. She likes the teacher to check in often with students about pacing and comprehension: "I think she's trying to, she's asking if everything is ok, if we understand, *Ça va? Ça va?*" ("Everything OK?"). Klara also indicated that she appreciates humour and instruction that is lively and entertaining: "I moved here to Caroline's group because she is very, how do you say it?, extraordinary. She's funny. I think she's making very good atmosphere at the classes, I really like it."

Asked her views on group work and pair work, Klara stated that she prefers to work independently: "I think I'm just the kind of person that's, I'm used to do things on my own. I

think that in group, many things are more hectic, more [interviewer: disorganized].” She seemed to dislike the unequal distribution of work often seen in group activities: “So it’s like somebody is not doing anything, someone is doing most of the work.” However, she also seemed to appreciate the opportunity that group work affords for passive participation, recognizing that with inaction come fewer opportunities for learning: “Sometimes it’s easier, you’re just sitting and watching, you don’t have to participate actively. But it also [...] doesn’t improve your skills.”

Her response to the question about locus of control seemed to contradict her last statement. Asked where she viewed herself on the continuum, Klara indicated that she favours a student-centred approach “because everybody is more involved in the classes. It’s more dynamic.”

With respect to vocabulary learning, Klara, too, records new vocabulary as it arises. She prefers to try to deduce meaning when she encounters unknown words: “I try sometimes to understand it from the context of the sentence, but when I don’t understand it, I just check it, write it down.” When she runs into trouble, she tends to ask Caroline, who usually provides an explanation in French. Dictionaries tend to be a last resort for Klara, retained for occasions when a verbal explanation does not suffice.

Klara, too, maintained that knowledge of grammar is essential. For her, it aids in understanding the structure of language: “I like the grammar because it’s logical so it helps me to build the logic of this language.” She contrasts L2 learning with L1 acquisition, maintaining that, when one learns the L1, “you don’t have to know the rules” because they are absorbed naturalistically, but “as you get adult, you have to understand the logic of this language, so that’s important for me.”

Klara was the sole Polish speaker in Caroline’s class. She indicated that she considers French and Polish both harder than English but similar (to each other) in terms of difficulty: “Everybody’s saying that Polish is very difficult. Uh, I think French is similar, it’s not so easy, it’s uh, much more difficult than English, it’s quite logical for me.” Polish has gender, a fact that helped Klara in learning French gender inflection.

She indicated that she sometimes found herself resorting to English when attempting to comprehend something said by an interlocutor, as she found it quicker to ask a question in English than to struggle in French: “It’s just me and sometimes it’s quicker to ask in English, so yeah, I do it sometimes.” She believes, however, that it is preferable to try to speak French when possible: “I think the best way should be to ask in French. But I think my French is not so good, you know, to ask that question if I don’t understand, but I try, to Caroline, I just ask *Comment dit en anglais?* (‘How do you say that in English?’)”

Caroline also speaks Polish, which she would occasionally employ to help Klara, once calling on her to model correct Polish pronunciation for the class: “Yeah, sometimes she’s saying something in Polish to me. She just said yesterday if I could say *Stanislas Leszczyński* [a Polish king for whom Nancy’s *Place Stanislas* is named], because he was from Poland, to the class.”

For learning outside of class, Klara spoke about her participation in a small group of students that had coalesced at the student residence. They gathered regularly to chat in French and plan outings for food and drink, and the international composition of the group mandated the use of French to communicate: “Usually when we go [...] for lunch, sometimes in the evening when we are sitting in the garden.” She notes that the disparity of proficiency level does not deter her: “Their level of French, [...] is higher than mine so I often just listen, but sometimes I try to ask them some questions or to say something in French. And I think it’s much better than in the beginning. I see it helps.”

#### **d. Nicole’s Student – Grammar Course**

Wen Xiang agreed with the near-majority view that mastery of grammar is vital to the ability to express oneself: “I think that if you, if you want to clearly and correctly speak a language, grammar is necessary. [...] If we don’t learn grammar, there are a lot of things that you cannot express.”

He feels that regular practice exercises and homework are essential to reinforce learning, although he does not really enjoy studying grammar because it is “monotonous.” Asked to clarify, he stated that he often finds the way it is taught “boring,” though teachers

can make it more interesting by using “colourful and engaging methods, for example, give examples, provide stories, and organize games, etc.” He believes that such activities “can provide students with deeper comprehension of the knowledge, above all for grammar.”

He cited Nicole’s teaching style as an example, expressing appreciation of her provision of “lots of examples” to aid understanding. He likened her approach to his class at home: “In our class in China, our professor wants to organize a few games, to play with the grammar. Everybody likes it.”

Perhaps his enjoyment of games explains Wen Xiang’s enthusiastic response to a question about group work. In fact, he was the only student who heartily embraced this type of interaction, stating “Yes, for sure, for sure!” in answer to a question about it. Asked to elaborate, he responded that “studying alone is monotonous” and that one can benefit from the insights of others and receive help with errors: “And uh, when we are working with a group, we can listen and understand the thoughts of other students and we can, we can um, we can look for our, some mistakes, and we can improve our meaning, yes.”

Given the same locus-of-control continuum discussed with other students, Wen Xiang offered the observation that, in fact, both approaches had merit in specific contexts:

In my opinion, if the students are interested, very interested in the subject, the first type is more effective. But only if the students are interested in the subject of the class. If the subject of the class is very difficult, very monotonous, [or] the students are not very interested in the subject, I think the second type can stimulate the students’ interest.

Wen Xiang indicated that he finds reading the best way to learn new vocabulary. Like Astrid, Emma, and Paulina, he utilizes his knowledge of morphology to pry apart words and look for related lexemes when he encounters unknown words: “For example, when I see a verb, I will think of the noun and say it, [...], and I will look up the synonym and antonym.” He elaborated on this concept with an example of the French modal verb *pouvoir* (“can, to be able”) and its nominal derivative *puissance* (“power”), noting that such morphological relationships do not

exist in his L1: “It’s something new for China, for the Chinese because, because in Chinese, the noun and verb are the same.”

Another strategy that he finds useful is ignoring words that do not contribute significantly to understanding the text in question: “It’s not necessary to guess the meaning. But if it’s, it’s a word, it’s a key word, a very important word, and to help me to understand the subject, the meaning of the article, I will [...] search its meaning [in a dictionary or on his smartphone].”

Wen Xiang does not find French terribly difficult compared to Chinese. The key challenges for him lay in the language’s Latin alphabet and complex conjugation system, particularly the existence of past, present, and future tenses, which Chinese lacks.

He believes it is important to speak French whenever possible: “I think that if you’re learning French, I want pure French circumstances. My professor in China said that if you want to learn French well, you must speak French.” He observed that this is not the practice among the students in Nicole’s class: “English-speaking students speak English, Spanish-speaking students speak Spanish. [...] But when we answer a question, we use French [...] With a group of Chinese, we use Chinese, but when [...] there are others, foreigners, English or French.” He planned to compensate for this tendency by taking full advantage of opportunities for extracurricular interaction with locals: “I will go into boutiques, into shops, to buy something and connect with the staff. For example, when I bought something, I will learn how to say the order, and on the price.” He added that he sometimes uses such opportunities to learn more about the language and culture of his interlocutors.

#### ***4.2.5 Aggregate Reaction to Instruction as per Weekly Log***

To further answer the second research question, this section presents the quantitative weekly log results on an aggregate basis. (The qualitative data from the six open-ended questions on the student weekly reflective logs was reported in Section 4.1.4) Table 10 summarizes responses to the four statements that students were asked to rate on a 7-point Likert scale, as well as answers to a question concerning frequency of French spoken outside of class. Results are organized by teacher and listed vertically by week.

Table 10

*Student Weekly Log Results*

<u>Respondent</u>	<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Week</u>	<u>Difficulty</u>	<u>Progress</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Way Taught</u>	<u>Spoke French</u>
AH	Georges	2	7	6	5	6	Rarely
AH		3	6	4	4	5	Sometimes
AH		4	6	4	5	4	Sometimes
<i>AH Mean</i>			6.3	4.7	4.7	5.0	
SW	Georges	2	7	7	7	7	Often
SW		3	7	7	7	7	Often
SW		4	7	6	6	6	Sometimes
<i>SW Mean</i>			7.0	6.7	6.7	6.7	
<i>AH &amp; SW Mean</i>			6.7	5.7	5.7	5.8	
<i>AH &amp; SW SD</i>			0.5	1.2	1.1	1.1	
EW	François	2	3	6	6	6	Rarely
EW		3	2	6	6	5	Sometimes
EW		4	3	6	6	5	Sometimes
<i>EW Mean</i>			2.7	6.0	6.0	5.3	
VP	François	2	6	7	7	7	Sometimes
VP		3	7	6	6	5	Often
VP		4	5	5	6	6	Sometimes
<i>VP Mean</i>			6.0	6.0	6.3	6.0	
<i>EW &amp; VP Mean</i>			4.3	6.0	6.2	5.7	
<i>EW &amp; VP SD</i>			1.8	0.6	0.4	0.7	
KS	Caroline	2	7	7	4	7	Often
KS		3	7	7	7	7	Sometimes
KS		4	7	7	7	7	Sometimes
<i>KS Mean</i>			7.0	7.0	6.0	7.0	
WH	Nicole	3	6	7	6	6	Often
WH		4	6	7	5	6	Often

<i>WH Mean</i>	6.0	7.0	5.5	6.0
<i>Mean – All</i>	5.8	6.2	5.9	6.0
<i>SD – All</i>	1.6	1.0	1.0	0.9

*Note.* KS=Klara; AH=Astrid; SW=Stefan; EW=Emma; VP=Paulina; WH=Wen Xiang; 1=strong disagreement; 7=strong agreement; 4=neutral. Difficulty=Level of difficulty is appropriate; Progress=Helped me make progress toward my goals; Subject=Subject of this class helped me learn; Way Taught=The way this class is taught helps me learn; Spoke French=I spoke French outside of class this week. *SD*=standard deviation.

As Table 10 shows, with a few notable exceptions, students were quite consistent in their answers from week to week. There was the widest distribution of responses across all six students concerning appropriateness of difficulty level and the strongest agreement among them on helpfulness of teaching approach. The variation in difficulty is largely due to how Emma (EW) ranked this criterion. Her responses in this column stand out as they are in strong variance not only with her classmate but with how she ranked the other three criteria and with the responses of the rest of the student participants. This may suggest she was placed in a class (B2/C1) above her abilities (B2), an inference supported by some of the struggles she described.

For Georges' class, there was very strong agreement between the two students concerning difficulty, in particular, and a greater distribution of responses to the other three criteria. When the anomaly described above for Emma is dismissed, she and François' other student were, in fact, in strong agreement on the other three criteria. Klara (KS) and Wen Xiang (WH) were the only students in their respective classes, but their mean scores align fairly closely with each other and with the overall mean scores.

A final question concerned frequency of speaking French outside of class. Of the 17 responses, 15 were "sometimes" or "often." Only two students indicated "rarely." Both of these were in the first week and both had progressed to "sometimes" by the second week.

### **4.3. Summary**

This section provides a brief summary of the results presented in this chapter. Section 4.3.1 consolidates the observed teacher classroom behaviours reported earlier. Section 4.3.2 attempts a comparison of initial teacher perspectives and subsequent classroom behaviour.

### ***4.3.1 Consolidated Teacher Behaviours from Observations***

Table 14 in Appendix F provides an at-a-glance comparison of the coding completed for the four courses presented individually in Section 4.1.4. The coding patterns seen in this table reveal several sharp contrasts among the four teachers. François and Caroline, for example, had the heaviest concentration on vocabulary, with François focusing on the lexicon far more than anyone else.

In terms of grammar teaching, Nicole tended to focus more on abstract concepts whereas Caroline concentrated on specific parts of speech. Not surprisingly, grammar held varying importance for these four teachers. Two of them used FoF ( $n=17$ ) in their classes, at least occasionally, to draw attention to grammar points or to vocabulary

It was no surprise that Caroline provided more information about French culture ( $n=62$ ) than any of the other teachers. She also made by far the most use of gestures ( $n=70$ ) and recasts ( $n=52$ ), and utilized the whiteboard more than the other three teachers. None of these teachers made noteworthy use of derivation and morphology, though this was clearly valued by students.

In their interviews, all four of these teachers named “interaction” as one of their highest priorities, and several spoke at length about its importance. However, the majority of interaction observed was teacher-student, not student-student, and most of it took the form of elicitation, encouragement, and/or error correction. Most of the elicitation was done by François ( $n=85$ ) and Caroline ( $n=81$ ), who were also the only teachers to provide opportunities for group or pair work. All four teachers were observed acknowledging student responses fairly frequently, though the most instances were seen in François’ and Caroline’s classes. Caroline did the most checking for comprehension.

The use of humour stood out in both Caroline’s and—to a slightly lesser extent—François’ classes, and both of these teachers also made occasional use of a form of interaction that I coded as “mockery.”

### ***4.3.2 Teacher Expectations and Behaviours Compared***

Behavioural science research has shown that people do not always do what they say (Johansson et al., 2006; Nisbett & Wilson, 1977; Sprangers et al., 1987). In the course of this

research, I sought to determine the degree to which that may apply here. The three tables that follow compare the goals, challenges, and teaching approaches initially articulated by teachers against their subsequent behaviour in the classroom. Inconsistencies were relatively few.

Contradictions between intention and observed outcome are marked

on both sides of the table with an asterisk (\*). Boldface indicates instances where thoughts articulated in surveys and interviews directly match observed activity.

### a. Goals

Table 11 compares goals and expectations stated in surveys and interviews against priorities that could be potentially extrapolated from observable behaviour.

Table 11

#### *Teacher Goals - Stated Versus Observed*

	<u>Goals Articulated</u>	<u>Priorities Observed in Classroom</u>
Georges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Produce a successful performance</b></li> <li>• <b>Get students speaking French</b></li> <li>• <b>Increase student confidence, comfort</b></li> <li>• <b>Overcome shyness and inhibition</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Successful performance occurred</b></li> <li>• <b>Students interacted in French</b></li> <li>• <b>Encouragement and patience</b></li> <li>• <b>Shy students blossomed</b></li> </ul>
François	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Student needs drive agenda</b></li> <li>• <b>Produce successful translations</b></li> <li>• <b>Enrich vocabulary</b></li> <li>• <b>Understanding of nuance and possible multiple interpretations</b></li> <li>• <b>Provide fun, humour to reduce stress</b></li> <li>• <b>Learn about French culture</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Agenda-setting (missed but reported)</b></li> <li>• <b>Production of successful translations</b></li> <li>• <b>Vocabulary acquisition</b></li> <li>• <b>Understanding of nuance and possible multiple interpretations</b></li> <li>• <b>Use of humour to reduce stress</b></li> <li>• <b>Cultural references, e.g., current events, history, sports</b></li> </ul>
Caroline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Student needs drive agenda</b></li> <li>• <b>Overcome fear and have fun</b></li> <li>• <b>Facilitate interaction with locals</b></li> <li>• <b>Increase phonetic comfort</b></li> <li>• <b>Increase grammatical comfort</b></li> <li>• <b>Increase lexical comfort</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Agenda-setting (reported)</b></li> <li>• <b>Fun and humour</b></li> <li>• <b>Interaction with locals (reported)</b></li> <li>• <b>Frequent correction of pronunciation</b></li> <li>• <b>Emphasis on articles and prepositions</b></li> <li>• <b>Some vocabulary taught incidentally</b></li> <li>• <b>Cultural references, e.g., art, cuisine, finance and economy</b></li> </ul>

Nicole	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Student needs drive agenda</b></li> <li>• <b>Help students achieve DALF B2/C1</b></li> <li>• Foster French spoken and written communication ability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Agenda-setting (reported)</b></li> <li>• <b>Teaching of advanced grammar facts</b></li> <li>• French culture (incidental, limited to social norms)</li> </ul>
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*Note.* \* (marked twice)=contradiction between intention and outcome. **Bold**=thoughts articulated in surveys and interviews match observed activity.

## b. Anticipated Challenges

Table 12 compares challenges initially identified by teachers in surveys and interviews against behaviour and/or activities observed in the classroom that presented challenges for students or the teacher (or had the potential to).

Table 12

### *Teacher Challenges - Stated Versus Observed*

	<u>Challenges Anticipated</u>	<u>Challenges Observed in Classroom</u>
Georges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pronunciation difficulties</b></li> <li>• <b>Determination of appropriate remedial exercises</b></li> <li>• Texts sometimes a barrier</li> <li>• Attracting shy students to enrol/participate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Severe L1 interference for some</b></li> <li>• <b>Pronunciation exercises (reported but not observed)</b></li> <li>• Two plays to memorize</li> <li>• Difficulty memorizing lines (for some people)</li> <li>• No make-up activity for tardiness</li> </ul>
François	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>English not the L1 for most</b></li> <li>• <b>Students cluster by nationality</b></li> <li>• <b>Students hesitant to interact</b></li> <li>• No French context for texts</li> <li>• Concept of nuance hard to teach</li> <li>• No one “perfect” translation</li> <li>• Adherence to original style</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>English not the L1 for many people</b></li> <li>• <b>Students cluster by nationality</b></li> <li>• <b>Minimal student interaction</b></li> <li>• Insufficient time allotted for pairs discussions</li> <li>• Too many texts for short duration</li> </ul>
Caroline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Large classes</b></li> <li>• <b>Teaching approach can intimidate</b></li> <li>• <b>Appropriateness for youth</b></li> <li>• <b>Intercultural difficulties</b></li> <li>• <b>Inaccurate proficiency level info</b></li> <li>• Last moment group formation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Large class</b></li> <li>• <b>Humour sometimes perplexed people</b></li> <li>• <b>Not always age appropriate</b></li> <li>• <b>Not always culturally appropriate</b></li> <li>• <b>Some students closer to A1</b></li> <li>• Pace often very fast</li> </ul>
Nicole	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty meeting student needs within <b>short course duration</b></li> <li>• Student needs can sometimes conflict</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Only two weeks</b></li> <li>• Long lectures</li> <li>• Little interaction</li> </ul>

*Note.* \* (marked twice)=contradiction between intention and outcome. **Bold**=thoughts articulated in surveys and interviews match observed activity.

### c. Preferred Teaching Approaches

Table 13 compares the preferred teaching approaches initially identified as desirable by teachers against behaviour and/or activities observed in the classroom. Data is from teacher surveys, interviews, and classroom observations.

Table 13

#### *Teachers' Preferred Approaches – Stated Versus Observed*

	<u>Approaches Anticipated</u>	<u>Approaches Observed in Classroom</u>
Georges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Minimal error correction</b></li> <li>• <b>Repetition</b></li> <li>• <b>Emphasis on memorization</b></li> <li>• Facilitation of interaction</li> <li>• Encouragement of self-expression</li> <li>• Breathing, improvisation, gesture</li> <li>• Games and exercises</li> <li>• Prioritization of fun</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Minimal error correction</b></li> <li>• <b>Abundant repetition</b></li> <li>• <b>Emphasis on memorization</b></li> <li>• Reading from a text</li> <li>• Teacher-fronted, “Stage director”</li> </ul>
François	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Facilitation of interaction</b></li> <li>• <b>Prioritization of fun</b></li> <li>• <b>Use of texts</b></li> <li>• <b>Provision of vocabulary lists</b></li> <li>• Emphasis on accuracy/correctness (*)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Highly interactive</b></li> <li>• <b>Lots of humour</b></li> <li>• <b>Multiple texts per class</b></li> <li>• <b>Vocabulary lists and drills</b></li> <li>• Minimal error correction (*)</li> </ul>
Caroline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No teacher &gt; student hierarchy (*)</li> <li>• <b>Facilitation of interaction</b></li> <li>• <b>Prioritization of fun</b></li> <li>• Emphasis on fluency (*)</li> <li>• <b>Accommodation of individual learning styles</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher-fronted (*)</li> <li>• <b>Very interactive, some group work</b></li> <li>• <b>Abundant use of humour</b></li> <li>• Errors and accuracy emphasized (*)</li> <li>• <b>Activities changed daily</b></li> </ul>
Nicole	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Task-based approach (*)</li> <li>• Avoidance of lectures (*)</li> <li>• Facilitation of interaction (*)</li> <li>• Accommodation of individual learning styles</li> <li>• Prioritization of fun</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher-fronted explicit approach (*)</li> <li>• Long lectures (*)</li> <li>• Minimal interaction (*)</li> <li>• Short teacher-led practice drills (cloze)</li> <li>• Reliance on projected outline</li> <li>• Focus on “large” topics</li> </ul>

*Note.* \* (marked twice)=contradiction between intention and outcome. **Bold**=thoughts articulated in surveys and interviews match observed activity.

## 5. Discussion

Some clear patterns have emerged in the results presented in the previous chapter, concerning both the nature of the teaching and student reaction. This chapter discusses those patterns: Section 5.1 addresses the three research questions; Section 5.2 discusses the empirical, pedagogical, and methodological implications; and Section 5.3, the limitations of the study and future research directions.

### 5.1. The Research Questions

This study set out to a) identify teachers' expectations and behaviour regarding learning objectives, anticipated challenges, and preferred teaching approaches; b) identify student views on the same topics; and c) determine how well the two perspectives align. Together, the following three sub-sections address all three research questions: Section 5.1.1 synthesizes the thoughts articulated by teachers in surveys and interviews, followed by discussion of the teaching approaches observed. Section 5.1.2 summarizes the student view, from the same sources. Section 5.1.3 discusses the alignment of the two perspectives. Refer to Table 16 in Appendix G for a condensed comparison.

#### 5.1.1 Teachers (Q1)

##### a. Learning Objectives

The overarching priority of most of the teachers, expressed in both interviews and survey responses, seemed to focus on socio-affective factors. For three of these teachers (Georges, François, and Caroline), increasing student confidence and comfort with French ( $n=4$ ) was as important a goal in the self-report data as helping them achieve their communicative aims. Helping students overcome apprehension and finding ways to reduce worry, anxiety, and stress was mentioned as a high priority ( $n=6$ ) for these teachers.

None of the teachers mentioned specific pedagogical goals for their classes beyond general statements about improving lexicon and grammar. Three of these teachers (François, Caroline, and Nicole) indicated that they place high importance on allowing student needs and preferences to drive

the agenda ( $n=5$ ), and they spend a large part of the first day of class working with students to identify their objectives for the course.

### **b. Anticipated Challenges**

In terms of difficulties that teachers expected to encounter, no single overarching issue was anticipated by all four people in advance of the program. However, logistical concerns notably preoccupied three of them (Georges, Caroline, Nicole), while Caroline also worried about the potential impact of certain socio-affective factors in her classroom. Large class size and short course duration concerned Caroline and Nicole, respectively. François was the only teacher to provide in-depth descriptions of challenges that were specifically of a pedagogical nature, and they related mostly to the texts used.

### **c. Preferred Teaching Approaches**

In their interviews, two of the teachers (Caroline and Nicole) placed high value on teacher acknowledgment of the unique needs and individual learning styles of their students, and all four strongly stressed the importance of interaction in the classroom. As mentioned earlier, putting students at ease and reducing stress and anxiety was an important goal shared by several of these teachers. All four of them stated explicitly that they believe that making classes fun and enjoyable is an important way to achieve this outcome.

### **d. Approaches Observed in the Four Classrooms**

One of the goals of this study was to identify the teaching approach(es) used by each teacher. Observation data showed that, though the courses were all teacher-fronted, individual characteristics of many different teaching approaches were documented. In Georges' course, for example, traces of *Audiolingualism* could be identified in the vocal modelling, mimicry, oral drills, repetition, emphasis on memorization, and prioritization of speaking (Celce-Murcia, 2014; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Zimmerman, 2014). These factors align well with Chunsuvimol and Charoenpanit (2017), who deemed *Audiolingualism* especially useful for speaking and listening, priorities of Georges' two students as well. The strongest influence on his teaching method, however, appears to have been the *Total Physical Response* (TPR) approach. This was evident in

his emphasis on physicality and the body/mind connection as well as the use of gesture (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Rooted in humanistic psychology and based on the co-ordination of language and physical movement, this “designer” approach enjoyed particular popularity in the 1960 and 70s. One of its hallmarks was the belief that the absence of stress is an important pre-condition for successful language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2014), a position strongly embraced by Georges. In fact, this was the primary goal identified in his interview. This aligns well with Georges’ perspective. Moreover, his views about the importance of socio-affective factors are echoed in Gill’s (2013) assertion that the use of drama as a teaching method can benefit shy, inhibited, anxious, or risk-averse learners. Support for Georges’ approach is also found in Gomez (2010), whose results favoured drama over traditional methods for teaching English.

Nicole’s course provided the most consistent example of explicit instruction, adhering—for the most part—to a FoFS teaching approach. Each class was essentially a long lecture on a specific grammar topic. Intensive and systematic, lesson presentation adhered closely to a syllabus and maintained the focus on target grammatical forms, per Ellis et al. (2002). It could be argued that Nicole used a PPP approach, but the second and third “P’s” were not consistently present; in fact, the “production” component was entirely missing, and the few opportunities for practice were orally facilitated by the teacher. There was no emphasis (in the classes observed) on speaking. Nor were there any opportunities for task completion or for communicative language use.

It could be tempting to associate François’ course with *Grammar Translation* since each class was dedicated entirely to translating. More importantly, the strong teacher-frontedness observed, along with emphasis on accuracy, the sentence as unit of analysis, vocabulary derived from readings, and the unimportance of speaking align with several hallmarks of that approach (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). However, there was almost no focus on grammar in this class, leading me to speculate that perhaps François’ course could best be described as utilizing a TBLT approach, since the students were engaged in the task of producing a complete translation. Certain hallmarks of TBLT were present, namely a primary focus on meaning, the existence of a gap, and a clearly defined outcome (Ellis & Shintani, 2014; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). However, Ellis and Shintani

also state that, to qualify as TBLT, language must serve as the means for achieving an outcome, not as an end in its own right—a criterion that would appear to discount a translation activity as task-based. Their third criterion, student self-reliance, was also somewhat lacking, as the translation work occurred in a whole-class context facilitated by François. This is consistent with Erlam (2016), who found the self-reliance criterion the most difficult for teachers to implement. François did, however, build in opportunities for pair work and he encouraged whole-class discussion and negotiation of meaning. These are all hallmarks of CLT, as is the incidental treatment of grammar (Celce-Murcia, 2014; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Before I learned of Caroline's syllabus change, I speculated that she would take a content-based approach. This assumption prevailed even after the observations: understanding of content was important in this class and language was learned naturalistically, for the most part, rather than through direct instruction. Moreover, several other CBI hallmarks were present, including a text-based orientation, negotiation of meaning, corrective feedback, and prior knowledge on the part of students (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). ("Dialogic talk" is also a hallmark of CBI; however, this trait was much more characteristic of François' classes than of Caroline's, where student responses were less verbose.) I ultimately concluded that lesson content was merely a means to an end for Caroline: the primary concern was the grammar and vocabulary learning to be derived from it. Another clue that led to this conclusion was the fact that there was no logical progression of content from one lesson to the next.

A comparison of Caroline's and François' courses in terms of feedback and error correction is also instructive. Though the two teachers offered encouraging feedback at similar rates, Caroline corrected students three times more frequently than François did. According to Celce-Murcia (2014) and Richards and Rodgers (2014), low tolerance for errors is a hallmark of both the *Grammar Translation* and *Audiolingualism* approaches. Much of Caroline's error correction involved pronunciation recasts and modelling, another characteristic of *Audiolingualism*. However, this course was also where the strongest CLT influences were observed. The group work for the

painting re-enactments and Caroline's insistence on interaction with locals provided the most authentic communicative experiences offered in any of the four classes.

### **5.1.2 Students (Q2)**

#### **a. Learning Objectives**

Student responses to both interview and survey questions tended to prioritize the improvement of speaking. Improved pronunciation was a primary goal for Astrid and Stefan and better fluency was a concern for Emma and Klara. Paulina looked forward to more opportunities to speak French, and Wen Xiang considered the opportunity to converse with locals a vital way to improve his fluency. The other key priorities for students included listening comprehension and vocabulary expansion.

#### **b. Challenges**

The challenges that most preoccupied the majority of students included anticipated difficulties with speaking and comprehending others; socio-affective factors such as embarrassment and anxiety, particularly about speaking; and lack of adequate vocabulary to participate in activities or complete exercises.

#### **c. Preferred Teaching Approaches**

Despite the small number of student participants, certain preferred teaching characteristics and priorities emerged consistently enough in the data to merit consideration in future course planning. According to feedback from their surveys, interviews, and weekly reflective logs, students focused most on strategies that would help them both in class and afterwards when studying on their own. Two strategies in particular emerged prominently in this study and students seemed to instinctively rely on both. Repetition was seen as highly important by several students. Astrid felt that it was the surest way to succeed in committing her lines to memory. Stefan saw it as the most powerful way to receive corrections to mispronunciations. Paulina felt that vocabulary acquisition could most effectively be aided by repeated exposure to target words in handouts, translation texts, and classroom discourse.

In what was one of the more interesting findings of this research, several of the students indicated that they draw upon an intuitive understanding of morphology to tease apart words and identify meanings and/or grammatical functions. Almost all the students indicated that they make active use of this inherent knowledge to identify word components, relationships among words, and likely word families and even to make educated guesses about meanings. Four of the students, for example, indicated that they can often identify a type of word (e.g., a noun or an adjective) by the presence of a particular affix. Likewise, they are able to construct related grammatical categories by first identifying a common root. This was not a strategy that teachers mentioned at all, and this finding points to the importance of taking learners' background knowledge into account in course planning (Nassaji, 1997, 2006; Salbego & Osborne, 2016).

Other teaching approaches that a majority of students reported finding helpful included a low-key and supportive class atmosphere; classroom and outside interaction; vocabulary building; regular checks for comprehension; frequent error correction (particularly of pronunciation); regular practice activities (in class and at home); and variety in use of activities. If one adds strategies that students identified as helpful, but which the majority of teachers appear to have ignored or undervalued, the list could be expanded to include more focus on speaking and listening and greater use of repetition to reinforce learning and retention.

As well, the value to students of the study abroad aspect of this program cannot be overstated. Positive comments about growing confidence to interact with locals were observed in all their logs, even though Caroline's class was the only one to specifically facilitate such interaction. Though just anecdotal, the fluency and confidence gains reported by students align not only with Georges' focus group remarks concerning the important role of immersion but with empirical results obtained by Freed, Segalowitz, and Dewey (2004), Kinginger (2009), and Klapper and Rees (2003) concerning study abroad programs.

A concern expressed in the focus group, the perceived speaking reticence of Asian students, finds support among certain "post-methods" proponents and others who have looked at the cross-cultural implications of CLT (Chang, 2011; Didenko & Pichugova, 2016; Hu, 2002, 2005;

Kumaravadivelu, 2001; Littlewood, 2006; Natsir & Sanjaya, 2014; Wang, 2013). It is, however, refuted by Poole (2005), who maintains that western teachers tend to stereotype these students as passive and docile, dependent on the teacher, and uncomfortable with communicative approaches. To the contrary, Poole found that these students were comfortable working in groups and reaching out to their peers, arguing that this should discourage avoidance of communicative activities for purely cultural reasons. Interestingly, the two Asian students in this study had opposite perspectives on this issue in terms of their sentiments about group work and peer interaction.

### ***5.1.3 Alignment of Teacher and Student Attitudes and Behaviour (Q3)***

This section examines how well the teacher and student findings align.

#### **a. Goals**

There was a very strong match between Georges and his two students, both of whom stressed the desire to improve pronunciation and fluency. Likewise for the two students in François' class, both of whom emphasized vocabulary expansion and the acquisition of more sophisticated translation techniques as priorities. Goals seemed to align, as well, between Caroline and her student, where greater comfort with speaking and listening was a shared priority, as was improvement of grammar and vocabulary. Alignment of goals was also seen between Nicole, who stated that she wanted students to drive the agenda, and her student, whose weekly log feedback confirmed attention to the grammar aspects he had hoped to master.

#### **b. Challenges**

The concerns of Georges and his two students aligned closely around speaking and pronunciation. François was well aware of the challenges his course presents to students who lack L1 English, and there was a direct match with his two students, both of whom expressed concern in this regard. There was not a particularly strong parallel between the concerns of Caroline and her student, Klara, and insufficient information was provided by both Nicole and her student to make any inference about this topic.

### **c. Preferred Teaching Approaches**

Some parallels were evident in terms of expectations shared by teachers and their respective students. Georges' focus on pronunciation exercises and repetition aligned well with the expectations of his two students and his stated tendency to downplay errors was appreciated by one of them. (The other sought frequent error correction.) François' students appreciated the amount of discussion in his class, and one of them emphasized the helpfulness of his elicitation efforts, feedback that aligns with François' prioritization of interaction. Klara mentioned the importance of fun and humour in the classroom, a high priority for Caroline. Finally, both Nicole and her student emphasized the importance of examples, games, and activities to make lesson content more accessible and enjoyable.

## **5.2. Empirical, Methodological, and Pedagogical Implications**

### **5.2.1 Empirical Implications**

#### **a. The Dominant Teaching Method at this School**

The analysis provided in Section 5.1.1d lends itself to the conclusion that no single teaching approach predominates at this school, or even within these four courses. The classes observed exhibited a mix of characteristics suggestive of many methods, including *Augiolinguism*, *TPR*, *FoF*, *FoFS*, *PPP*, *Grammar Translation*, *TBLT*, *CLT*, and *CBI*. None of the teachers showed a wholesale commitment to any one approach. Rather, each teacher tended to draw elements from multiple approaches, ultimately fashioning his or her own unique method that best accommodates the given instructional context, student needs, lesson objectives, and teaching ability. This is literally a description for what has become known as the *Eclectic Method*, an approach to language teaching associated with the “Post-Methods” era that has grown steadily in popularity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Li, 2012; Littlewood, 2006; Mwanza, 2017, Puren, 1994). This concept is based on the idea that teachers must be able to devise their own “eclectic” approach, based on understanding of the many choices available and—importantly—deep insight into their own teaching.

Such an approach, according to Li (2012), should combine formal instruction and communicative activities, strive for a balance of input and output, avoid too much error correction,

and encourage student reflection. Littlewood (2006) cautions that “teachers can draw on the ideas and experiences of others but cannot simply adopt them as ready-made recipes: they need to trust their own voice and develop a pedagogy suited to their own specific situations” (p. 248). He is among a growing number of “post-methods” proponents who advocate sets of strategies outlining how teachers can best mix methods within a lesson. This approach does not mean random chaos in the classroom, but rather, teacher empowerment to select those elements that best meet each teacher’s unique circumstances.

**b. Support for Whyte (2011)**

The findings presented in Piquemal and Renaud (2006) constitute the only empirical evidence I found in support of Whyte’s arguments. My study provides additional support, although the results are mixed. In line with the strong cultural orientation that characterizes LLCE programs, as per Whyte, a focus on culture was observed in three of the courses investigated in this research, though different aspects of French culture were stressed in each. The instructional orientation seen in all four courses was consistently teacher-dominant and opportunities for communicative language use varied from few to none, consistent with both Whyte (2011) and Piquemal and Renaud (2006). The strongly explicit lecture-style teaching observed particularly in Nicole’s classes epitomizes Whyte’s assertion that French language education is based on the transmission of knowledge. These facts, taken together, tend to support her argument that socio-constructivist and cognitively oriented learning theories are not yet widespread at French universities.

The approaches taken by François and Caroline are less clear-cut. Like those of Nicole, these classes were teacher-fronted. However, implicit instruction was evident in the frequent use of elicitation by both teachers. The type of eliciting seen in these classes tended more toward what I would call *micro-elicitation*, the prompting of brief utterances at the word or phrase level. François, for example, used it to help students infer target lexical meanings from the surrounding context in a text and to encourage students to produce parts of a translated sentence. Caroline used it for a range of purposes, from helping students identify the function of a grammatical form to facilitating the

extraction of particular facts from texts. In both cases, student responses were usually no more than five or six words.

Richards and Schmidt (2010) define elicitation as “any technique or procedure that is designed to get a person to actively produce speech or writing, for example asking someone to describe a picture, tell a story, or finish an incomplete sentence” (p. 191). Eliciting stimulates noticing on the part of students. It can be used to encourage them to identify patterns and focus on target structures (Wang, 2013) or to provide corrective feedback (Dörnyei, 2009; Ellis, 2016; Razmjoo et al., 2013). It is associated with communicative language teaching (Wang, 2013), with the inductive approach (Çakır & Kafa, 2013; Darn & Çetin, n.d.), and with self-discovery and task-based learning (Darn & Çetin, n.d.). It promotes information exchange, helps break down traditional teacher-frontedness, and establishes variation in classroom interaction patterns (Darn & Çetin, n.d.). As such, the prominent use of this technique by two teachers would seem to undercut support for Whyte’s argument.

I started out speculating that this school would indeed appear to be a microcosm of the schism Whyte describes and that the teaching approaches used would affect international FLS/FLE learners as well as the regular student body. Three of the four teachers followed in this study (Georges, Caroline, and Nicole) have been exposed to the teaching methods used in LLCE programs. Because their classes exhibit many of the characteristics of the explicit teaching methods that Whyte argues dominate in these programs, the results reported here suggest that the approaches adopted by these teachers have, to varying degrees, been influenced by their training.

### ***5.2.2 Methodological Implications***

To my knowledge, mine is the only study (reported in English) that has used multiple data sources and instruments over the full duration of a summer L2 French course. This enabled the collection of as rich a dataset as possible and the provision of a detailed picture of the issues from multiple perspectives.<sup>34</sup> The deployment of interviews, surveys, classroom observations, student

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<sup>34</sup> Member checks were not possible or practical due to time constraints and language or logistical barriers (there was little uptake from teachers, and none from students, on email requests for follow-up, and most of the teachers do not possess sufficient L2 English to review the results).

weekly logs, and a focus group within a tight three-week timeframe (it was originally expected to be four) created many logistical challenges but ultimately resulted in the rich descriptions provided here.

### ***5.2.3 Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations***

This study has highlighted both teacher and student goals and expectations and examined the extent of their alignment, finding that, in certain cases, these sets of perspectives align quite well. However, the results also point to certain gaps: the research has shown that a number of areas clearly present challenges—for individual teachers, for students, and for overall program planning. These matters are discussed below, together with some recommendations to address the challenges identified and ensure goals are better met going forward.

#### **a. Suggestions for Individual Courses**

Some suggestions follow for each of the courses investigated.

**Translation:** The use of fewer texts would permit more time for pair work in this class. This would not only address the time pressure that students reported experiencing, it would offer an easy way to provide more authentic speaking opportunities in class. The headline translation exercises seemed to represent an important learning experience for students; perhaps more of these short activities could be included in lesson plans. As well, the suggestion made by one student that the course include discussion of various approaches to translation would be easy to integrate into an early lesson. These could include, for example, whether to produce a literal translation or translate for gist, the importance of author style, the role of censorship, interpreting subtext and connotation, when and how to introduce changes in grammatical structure, sociocultural aspects, and so on. Finally, the concern (shared by teacher and students) about insufficient L2 English could be addressed by a quick English diagnostic assessment the first day of class. This is discussed further on page 147.

Hummel (2010) states that the literature on language processing and memory suggests that the cognitive advantages inherent in translation can directly benefit vocabulary learning, a finding congruent with Carreras (2006), who identified vocabulary as the language learning aspect most

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likely to benefit from translation exercises. Since this course clearly prioritizes vocabulary building, it may be beneficial for François to consider measures to reinforce that priority, including a reassessment of the manner and frequency with which he uses form-focused instruction, the strong vocabulary benefits of which were identified by both Laufer (2006) and Poole (2005). Laufer (2006), for example, compared the two FFI approaches specifically for vocabulary learning. He found a significant difference in test scores between a FoFS (72% of target word meanings retained in immediate recall test) and FoF approach (47% of target word meanings retained in same test), an advantage for FoFS that disappeared upon testing for delayed recall. It might be worthwhile for François to compare these two approaches against Laufer or other FFI vocabulary studies, to determine which approach produces better short- and long-term lexical retention.

In addition, evidence exists that CA can be beneficial within a translation course (Laufer & Girsai, 2008) and that frequency and salience of a linguistic element within the input is more likely to trigger noticing (Zhang, 2012). To this end, François could make stronger use of enhanced input, especially since target words lend themselves naturally to emphasis either by input flood or input enhancement (Benati, 2017; Zhang, 2012). Though he made use of arrows once or twice to highlight target lexical or grammatical forms, more could be done to ensure consistency in this regard.

**Grammar:** This course could be enhanced by sequencing lesson plans to focus on one topic<sup>35</sup> per class and utilizing any extra time for practice. It would be a good idea to add more practices, ideally involving pair work or other activities students could do together, to encourage interaction and create more speaking opportunities. There are many ways to include a communicative component in this course. For example, a group activity can be combined with FoF (Long, 2016; Norris & Ortega, 2000) or explicit grammar explanations can be enhanced by provision of time for practice activities. These could be of a *recycling* nature (completion of a meaningful task using the newly learned language) or simply involve *repetition* of the form learned, as in a multiple choice quiz.

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<sup>35</sup> This recommendation is based on what was documented; sequencing was not clear as only two classes were observed and they were a week apart. In one case, however, a large list of prepositions was introduced in the last few minutes of a lesson that, to that point, had concerned time-related confusable words.

The method currently in use already partially aligns with the second strategy, which can easily be implemented by adding more practices to the current lesson format and making them communicative in nature. Students could work on a decontextualized cloze exercise together, for example, or work individually and compare answers in pairs. Benefits of such an activity include learning to infer from surrounding context; reinforcement of grammatical knowledge; and promotion of language production, not just word recognition (Fleisher & Jenkins, 1978; Ross, 2017). Handouts could be helpful, as would working from short texts with enhanced input for the constructions covered.

**Theatre:** Theatre can be a powerful tool for language learning, with the potential to address many components of communicative competence, including speaking (Cocton, 2013; Galante, 2018; Gill, 2013; Gomez, 2010; Bournot-Trites et al., 2007). Students in this course sought more attention to pronunciation and correction of their speech errors than was provided, clearly necessary goals given the need for an ultimately successful theatrical performance. Since they also reported finding the pronunciation drills helpful, perhaps the frequency of these drills could be increased and extended throughout the entire course duration. Students could also be directed to external resources such as online language services such as Forvo.com, ieLanguages.com, or AudioFrench.com, where they can hear and practice the specific sounds that are giving them trouble on their own time.

Georges' reported that the scripts used often tended to pose problems (due to differences between spoken and written French). Final letters are often not pronounced, for example, unless a word is feminine (e.g., *petit*, /pəti/, "small," m. versus *petite*, /pətit/, "small," f.), and subtle differences in articulation of /e/ and /ɛ/ can introduce unintended changes in tense.<sup>36</sup> Many of these differences are predictable (Fagyal et al., 2006; Lambert-Drache, 1997), however, and could perhaps be documented in a pronunciation "cheat sheet" that could be distributed to students, and extended as common errors are identified. The sheet could be organized in a number of ways: as they accumulate, entries on this sheet could be sub-categorized (e.g., by phonetic or phonological features); they could be prioritized by frequency of errors or degree of difficulty; or perhaps a class

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<sup>36</sup> These are among the pronunciation errors heard frequently in the observations.

discussion could determine the best organization of such a list (which would offer the added benefit of identifying the most common problems).

It may be worthwhile, however, to strive for a balance between intelligibility and “perfect French.” Georges’ clearly leans toward the view that so long as students learn their lines and their oral production is intelligible, he will have achieved his goal of increasing confidence and putting people at ease; the students, however, appear to place very high value on native-like pronunciation. This is not unusual, and it is often a source of considerable distress for students (Arabski & Wojtaszek, 2011; Baran-Łucarz, 2011, 2013, 2014a, 2014b; Hashemi, 2011). Discussion of this issue at the beginning of the course could perhaps remove, or at least mitigate, this source of anxiety.

Students also reported difficulty memorizing their lines, likely attributable to the need to commit to memory their roles in two plays within a four-week program. Student stress could be allayed by reducing this requirement to one play. Other strategies that could help include encouraging students to develop techniques for memorizing lines, such as writing lines by hand; “running” lines with a classmate; word, picture, or letter association; or employing mnemonic devices (Miller, 2005; Strassberg, 2016).

**French Culture:** Caroline tended to have a more rapid pace of speech than her colleagues, including those working at higher CEFR levels, whose diction was slower and more precise.<sup>37</sup> A rapid interlocutor speech rate is generally perceived as an important variable affecting listening comprehension (Chang, 2018; Griffiths, 1992), and may be particularly challenging for beginners (Chang, 2018; Griffiths, 1992; Manson et al., 2013; Samovar et al., 2015). Griffiths (1992) reports that rates of speech faster than 200 wpm or 3.8 syllables per second impair comprehension even for low intermediate learners. Indeed this issue did generate feedback from Caroline’s student, who reported experiencing difficulty comprehending much of what she heard in class and specifically mentioned pace. To help learners process what they hear, Chang (2018) recommends instruction on the characteristics of

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<sup>37</sup> I sampled three different observations for Caroline, using similar length material. Speech rates ranged from 138 words per minute (wpm) to 172 wpm. This compares to 117 wpm and 154 wpm for Nicole and François, respectively. Georges’ classroom utterances were too short to obtain useful data for this calculation.

spoken language such as linking and reduced forms (e.g., *chui* for *je suis*, “I am”), and slowing down speech when new linguistic forms are introduced.

As discussed above, Caroline also made extensive use of eliciting. Her efforts nearly always produced the desired result; however, sometimes repeated elicitation attempts were necessary. This was usually due to the need to overcome student reticence to speak, which could well have cultural origins, as discussed above. Darn and Çetin (n.d.) point out that many cultures do not encourage students to volunteer information or ask questions; in others, students risk losing face in front of classmates should they make errors. In collectivist cultures such as China and Japan, standing out is undesirable (Samovar et al., 2015), whether as a success or the contrary. Darn and Çetin suggest several strategies for dealing with a multicultural student population: nominate people when hesitation is encountered; give students time to prepare a response; avoid questions with right or wrong answers (not always possible, of course); and encourage rather than correct. They point out that feedback such as “nearly right” or “try again” is preferable to “no.”

As well, though Caroline indicated in her interview a keen awareness of the need for age-appropriateness in her use of witticisms and wisecracks, she may also want to consider the caution discussed below regarding cultural appropriateness. There is no doubt that her playful sense of humour endears her to many students, but I would suggest reconsideration of the use of *second degré* humour, in particular, given the multicultural make-up of her class. While many of these jokes are likely to fly over people’s heads, some could land and cause confusion, or even offense.

#### **b. Issues with School-wide Implications**

Two issues in particular emerged in the focus group that were of concern to all four teachers. These had to do with student reticence to speak and lower than expected L2 French proficiency for assigned CEFR levels. The latter issue involves the school’s intake procedures and is discussed on page 146 below.

The reticence of second/foreign language learners to speak in the L2 is well documented (Hamouda, 2013; Hashemi, 2011; Khan et al., 2018; Liu, 2005). Khan (2018) attributes this reluctance to lack of adequate vocabulary, an observation also noted by Hamouda (2013) and Liu

(2005), both of whom had investigated learner reasons for speaking reluctance. Lack of vocabulary was one of many factors identified in these two studies; others included fear of ridicule, worry about poor pronunciation, cultural beliefs, task difficulty, incomprehensible input, and many other factors.

Ironically, in my research, speaking improvement was identified as a topic of utmost concern for all students. Not only was it the highest priority articulated in the majority of surveys and interviews, it was mentioned repeatedly in their weekly logs, often with acknowledgement of the accompanying discomfort and the insight that they needed to “just do it.” Several people ( $n=3$ ) identified lack of adequate vocabulary as a contributing factor.

In terms of program planning, it may be helpful for the school to keep such student priorities top of mind. The four courses differed, for example, in the amount of authentic language use they encouraged, and teachers may want to review ways they could provide more speaking opportunities. Speaking has, of course, enjoyed fluctuating prominence in syllabus design as various teaching methods have come and gone. It nevertheless remains an important priority for learners today. To build genuine communicative competence in students, Huang (2018) recommends that speaking instruction include elements of grammatical, discourse, pragmatic, and strategic competence. Teachers may also wish to consider the balance between fluency and accuracy. Instruction observed in Caroline’s class, for example, tended to focus on accuracy and native-like pronunciation at the expense of fluency. This tension is consistent with the ongoing debate in L2 English instruction. The emergence of English as a lingua franca has placed growing emphasis on intelligibility rather than nativelikeness, and I am aware that similar tensions exist in the francophone world (between Euro-centric traditionalists and members of *la francophonie*).

Related to this is the issue of spoken versus written grammar. Nicole argued that students should be able to recognize the familiar register of spoken French, though she had no apparent strategy for teaching it. In her classes, like those of others, differences between written and spoken French were treated almost as a postscript. If, however, the program’s primary goal is enhanced communicative competence, including oral interaction with locals, it could be worthwhile to find ways to address spoken grammar.

There is little consensus, however, on the best way to proceed. Ur (2011) maintains that spoken grammar is a component of “online” spoken discourse, often constructed in collaboration with an interlocutor and not planned in advance. She advocates simply pointing out instances as they occur and limiting proactive teaching to “the most useful lexico-grammatical chunks that are specific to the target language” (p. 509). Whong et al. (2014) discuss the interfaces between linguistic domains, providing examples of how phonology interacts with semantics in, for example, use of intonation for question formation, or the syntax-discourse association seen in topic-comment constructions. They argue that “such instruction could facilitate understanding of required discourse notions” (p. 562), leading to greater understanding of how and when linguistic domains interact. Indeed, it seems to me that attention to such topics would provide a potent way to introduce spoken grammar in the classroom. Other approaches could be based on having students work with corpora, video, and/or transcripts of authentic spoken French or utilizing online chat rooms, forums, or other Internet technologies (Carter & McCarthy, 2015; Chan, 2017; Cullen & Kuo, 2011; Timmis, 2005).

Another student priority that emerged in this research was the importance of derivation and morphology as a lexical strategy. Given this, it may be advisable to examine all four courses for ways to work this concept into lesson plans, or perhaps to even develop a course just on this topic. Four of the students reported calling upon this knowledge regularly and almost intuitively, and yet it was largely overlooked by teachers. Prioritizing this topic offers the added benefit of promoting vocabulary expansion, another goal identified by the majority of students. Nation (2012) argues that ability to identify word parts helps students better comprehend words and recognize relationships among them. He documents the widespread occurrence of certain English derivational affixes such as *un-*, *re-*, *in-*, and *dis-* and observes that 60-80% of words containing those prefixes can be understood with knowledge of base word meanings. Additionally, the ability to parse words into roots and affixes functions as a mnemonic device to aid in recall. Factors that contribute to success include word *frequency* (the number of words containing the affix), *regularity* (amount of change to stem or affix imposed by affixation), *productivity* (the likelihood of the affix being used for new

word formation), and *predictability* (the relative frequency of the different meanings the affix may carry). Similar resources most certainly exist for French; in fact, many English prefixes are also highly productive in French.

Student attention to derivation and morphology is an example not just of activating background knowledge but typifies use of a potent language learning strategy. Conscious, systematic, and goal-oriented, such behaviours are used by students to improve language learning or use (Griffiths, 2015). The best-known strategy inventory, Oxford's (1990) *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning* or SILL, classifies them six ways: memory strategies are typified by use of flash cards or identification of L1 cognates; cognitive strategies include note-taking, summarizing, classifying, underlining, guessing from context, and use of repetition; compensation involves offsetting limited knowledge by, for example, gesturing, guessing, or seeking substitutions for unfamiliar words; metacognitive strategies promote planning and monitoring one's learning and reflecting on performance; affective strategies entail positive self-talk and use of rewards to celebrate achievements; and social strategies could involve seeking opportunities for interaction with native speakers (as cited in Griffiths, 2015).

There is growing evidence that student use of strategies “enhance[s] performance in language learning and use, both in general and on specific tasks, and that strategies [...] help make language learning easier, faster, and more enjoyable” (Cohen, 2011). The school administration may well be underestimating the degree to which students proactively use strategies, and it could be instructive for teachers in this program to more closely observe student behaviour to identify and promote strategies that could benefit others. Many resources are available to help: Griffiths (2015) discusses attributes of good language learners and some steps teachers can take to help students expand their strategy repertoires, and an extensive literature review published by Cohen (2011) breaks down student strategies by skills and knowledge areas and investigates measures teachers may take to assess them.

Another matter that merits further consideration is interaction, which all four teachers named as their highest priority when asked about preferred teaching approaches. Importantly, however—in a finding that clearly relates to the teacher-fronted, transmission-oriented instructional model and lack of communicative activity observed overall—almost all the

interaction observed took place between teacher and students, not among students themselves. Such contradictions, in fact, appear quite common: the finding reported here is not unlike results obtained by Mitchell and Lee (2003), who found that teachers who had expressed commitment to the communicative approach in fact exhibited “teacher-led interaction and the mastery of correct language models” (p. 56), or those of Harjanne, Reunamo, and Tella (2015), who also reported a contradiction between teacher intent and instructional practice concerning use of communicative tasks. One way to increase interaction is to introduce small tasks that students can complete together. A helpful resource can be found in Erlam (2016), which analyzes Ellis and Shintani’s (2014) four principal task design criteria in terms of implementation difficulty. Teachers may also wish to reflect on a question raised by Zuniga and Simard (2016):

What are practitioners’ perceptions of collaborative tasks exploiting the gap principle? Are they perceived as valuable, difficult to elaborate, unauthentic, unwieldy in the classroom setting? Answers to such questions would offer insight into how one might go about increasing the level of interactivity of L2 classrooms. (p. 154)

As well, caution regarding the use of humour and gestures is recommended. Cross-cultural communication abounds with pitfalls, and potential for misunderstandings always exists when people of different cultural backgrounds interact (Samovar et al., 2015). Cultural values such as privacy, directness, power relationships, tolerance of uncertainty, and formality are codified differently from country to country (Samovar et al., 2015), and certain gestures—such as the seemingly harmless thumbs-up sign or simply pointing at someone—can offend in other parts of the world. Humour is another mode of communication that is culturally sensitive, making it especially tricky to employ successfully in multicultural settings (Yue et al., 2016). The French style of humour is different than that of North America, let alone that of the Middle East or Asia. Called *le second degré*, it can involve wit, sarcasm, and irony and can sometimes be risqué (“C’est à prendre,” 2013; “L’humour au deuxième degré,” 2017). As Yue et al. (2016) point out, humorous devices such as sarcasm and risqué allusions are not understood in all cultures, and may even be seen as offensive. We saw evidence of this type of humour in some of the classes observed, as well as the bemusement

it generated among students at times. I can only imagine how *second degré* humour may confuse students who lack the cultural referents underlying it.

### c. Challenges Specifically Identified by Teachers

In their individual interviews, teachers identified specific challenges they anticipated encountering in the classroom. Caroline, for example, referred to intercultural issues, “delicate” personalities, and the difficulties introduced by last-minute class assignment; Georges, to anticipating pronunciation challenges and difficulty attracting shy students to theatre; François, to producing translations when English is not the L1; and Nicole, to meeting (sometimes conflicting) student needs within a short course duration. Additional challenges were observed in the course of collecting observation data (see Table 12), and yet more concerns emerged in the focus group, about both individual course outcomes and overall program challenges. The strategies below represent ways that individual teachers and/or the administration can begin to address these concerns:

- **Reflective practice:** Teachers encountering challenges like those described above may find it beneficial to maintain a journal to reflect on their teaching practices. Much research has been done on this topic. Farrell (2016), for example, reviews 116 studies representing five years (2009 to 2014) of research into reflective practice among TESOL teachers. He found a consensus among teachers that reflecting on their practice offers benefits that include increased motivation to explore further and, in some cases, even change existing approaches. This is especially true when teachers encounter tensions between their “philosophy, principles, theory and practice” (sic) in the language classroom (p. 241). Liu (2009) provides a theoretical framework consisting of several sets of questions (e.g., “what is [your method’s] stance toward grammar versus communication” and “how should learner errors be treated” [p. 147]) to assist teachers to more deeply examine their own teaching practice. Ghafarpour (2017) reports on a case study involving use of Walsh’s (2006) *Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk* (SETT) framework to investigate a teacher’s classroom discourse. SETT classifies classroom interactions into four easily identifiable modes (“managerial, materials, skills and systems, and classroom context” [p. 214]) and helps identify recurrent patterns. Such self-

analysis, according to Ghafarpour, can pinpoint problems with “tasks-in-process” (p. 223). She cautions, however, that setting, class size, student proficiency, and institutional constraints must be considered as well.

- **Peer Observation:** François has already evidently observed Caroline teach at some point, as he expresses admiration for her approach to interaction. It could be beneficial for the school’s other teachers to arrange similar opportunities to observe each other’s classes. Peer observation can provide inspiration and a different perspective on language teaching. Bell and Mladenovic (2008) found, for example, that 94% of participants in their study of 32 peer observations considered the exercise valuable. Furthermore, 88% indicated that they would change their teaching approach as a result. Peer observation can be formal or informal; benefits include improvement of teaching practice, increased confidence, development of collegiality, transformation of educational perspectives, and increased respect for approaches used by colleagues (Bell, 2005).
- **Action Research:** Taking this a step further, individual teachers, or even the school as a whole, might want to consider an action research study to address particular challenges that have been encountered such as the student lack of L1 English in François’ class, or Nicole’s need to address sometimes conflicting student needs. Such research involves in-depth examination of one’s beliefs, assumptions, and practices with a goal to enhance student learning by improving one’s own practice. Teachers engaged in an action research plan identify a particular problem or challenge and seek quality improvement through a recursive cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection. Action research connects theory and practice and allows teachers to empirically test a new (or revised) teaching strategy. Challenges inherent in such research can include time constraints, lack of institutional support, and inadequate knowledge of data collection and analysis methods. For more on how to implement research in their own classrooms, teachers are directed to Burns (2011) or to Huang (2012).

- **Feedback Elicitation:** The use of post-course satisfaction surveys remains controversial for many reasons (Ching, 2018; Hornstein, 2017; Richardson, 2005; Wachtel, 1998). Among these is the postponement of potentially useful student input until after a course terminates. On the other hand, collecting feedback (formally or informally) from students early in the program—and periodically as a course progresses—offers the benefit of identifying students who may be experiencing difficulty, flagging topics that may need more time or greater emphasis, and providing an opportunity to make small adjustments to the syllabus as soon as issues are identified.
- **Intake Enhancement:** Finally, an issue identified by all four teachers in the post-course focus group concerned lower-than-expected student French proficiency, resulting in inaccurate assignment to the CEFR levels under which course offerings are organized. This issue especially affected Nicole and Georges, whose courses were designated “Advanced” (CEFR B2/C1) and “Intermediate” (B1 and up), respectively. Because students enrolled in these courses did not possess the abilities needed to succeed, both instructors had to spend extra time reviewing basics normally taught at lower levels and/or providing additional support. The provision of recommendations to address this issue is beyond the scope of this research and, in any event, I am aware that some changes have been made since data collection was completed. However, two changes to the intake procedure merit immediate consideration: the day-one written exam appears to provide inadequate results for accurate assessment purposes; the online pre-registration self-assessment, consisting of a choice between four levels (“Novice,” “Beginner,” “Intermediate,” and “Advanced”), is likewise inadequate. These terms are not defined, and the tendency of people to overestimate their ability on subjective scales like this is well documented, particularly at lower proficiency levels (Edele et al., 2015; Huang, 2010; Ross, 1998; Trofimovich et al., 2016). It would perhaps be more helpful to have students complete a short diagnostic assessment tied to target CEFR levels after having selected an option. This could be completed online or on the first day of class prior to goal-setting. A quick assessment the first day of the grammar

class, for example, could identify students unprepared for the advanced level of French needed in this class and help Nicole prioritize topics and time allocation. The same process could be utilized in François' class, but for L2 English as well as French, since lack of sufficient English was a major concern both for François and his two students. A quick up-front English assessment would confirm that everyone had sufficient English to translate successfully. It would identify students who might need to move to a lower CEFR level as well as those with high L2 English proficiency who could then be paired with students needing extra support via peer mentoring. This would also mitigate the tendency for students to cluster instinctively by nationality. I realize that teachers are concerned about losing instructional time, but taking this time up front could provide immeasurable benefits.

### **5.3. Limitations and Future Research Directions**

A major limitation of this study was the short timeframe over which data were collected, as well as the small number of observations conducted per teacher. It should be kept in mind that the results presented here are based on (at the most) three out of 19 classes per teacher. This was unavoidable because data collection necessarily coincided with the program's four-week duration. The fact that the first week was lost to logistical complications and the program's primary excursion introduced an additional, unanticipated limitation. This short timeframe not only impacted the number of observations completed, it limited the number of student weekly logs that were collected.

Another limitation lay in the small number ( $n=6$ ) of student participants. To adhere to the study's participant selection criteria, we had to decline several potential participants either because they were too young, they were enrolled for too short a time, or they lacked adequate French or English to interact with us. Even the originally intended eight student participants would have produced a small number of weekly reflective logs. This difficulty in recruiting student participants also made random selection impossible in two cases, leading to the inclusion of a person with lower French proficiency than desired (Klara), the consequences of which were evident in her short responses to questions.

Another limitation lay in the handling of field notes. As mentioned earlier, the large scope of work, short timeframe, and complex logistics involved in coordinating multiple data collection instruments and procedures resulted in notes being kept hastily and in a variety of locations, particularly in the data collection phase. Both observers made notes during the observations, for later review against the video record. My own developing ideas were recorded in a *Notes* app, and later in a spreadsheet, and project activities were tracked in NVivo throughout. The field notes were viewed not as a data source but were used for verification purposes, and thus were not coded.

The self-reported nature of some of the data has the potential to impact the reliability of this study. Surveys, interviews, and weekly student logs all reflect each individual's perceptions of his/her approach to teaching or learning, but it is very possible that their responses could be influenced by *social desirability bias* (Krumpal, 2013; Shulruf et al., 2008). According to Krumpal (2013), people completing surveys or participating in interviews may experience a need for social approval that results in the under-reporting of certain beliefs or behaviours they think are likely to be judged negatively and the over-reporting of others deemed more desirable. Although Krumpal's arguments are specific to "sensitive" information, it is quite possible that this unconscious bias affected students, teachers, or both groups in this study.

As well, survey design can introduce issues. Likert scales, for example, are subjective in nature and can impact reliability, especially given the multicultural nature of the student population. There is growing evidence that cultural attributes such as collectivism and individualism can affect responses; even the order of the statements on a Likert-style questionnaire can influence responses to subsequent questions (Shulruf et al., 2008). Selection of a particular option may be influenced by factors such as mood; time of day; even how busy, tired, or motivated participants happen to be (Krosnick, 1991; Moum, 1988). The neutral option (4) on seven-point scales like the one used in this study is known to produce a central tendency bias (Shulruf et al., 2008). Choosing this option may have offered certain people a way to avoid committing to a response. Moreover, choices on Likert scales are not truly equidistant and their use can introduce ambiguity: the frequency measure "sometimes," for example, may denote different things to different people (Huang, 2010).

Another limitation resides in the fact that certain cultural factors may have been at play, given that the language teaching discussed here has been observed through a Canadian anglophone lens. For example, despite our best efforts, cultural bias may have been introduced in the coding and analysis of the qualitative data by L1 English speakers. However, both people speak French fluently; share a keen interest in French culture; have attended courses at the school investigated in this research; and have lived, worked, and travelled in France. In addition, we lodged together for the six-week duration of the data collection, during which time our respective experiences of cultural differences between France and Canada were regular topics of conversation. This helped in coding instances such as the use of humour and sarcasm where culture may have been a factor.

These limitations notwithstanding, this research has gathered rich qualitative data about the nature of French foreign language teaching at the university level to provide several possible directions for future research. The most obvious next step would be to repeat the investigation reported here with more than three observations per class and with more student participants. It would also be edifying to determine if similar patterns exist in other classes in the school, or to replicate the study with other schools. Comparison of pre- and post-course test results could provide insights in terms of which courses produce the best proficiency gains and which may need review, especially if analyzed longitudinally and filtered by teacher or by various student attributes such as L1, CEFR level, age, or gender. Alternatively, outcomes could be analyzed by teaching approach taken, although logistically this could be challenging as the school's instructors are likely to utilize varied approaches.

## 6. Conclusion

The qualitative research study discussed here has utilized an embedded multiple case study to investigate four courses in a month-long L2 French summer immersion program located in France and attended by students from around the world. My goal was to identify teacher perspectives and behaviour regarding learning objectives, anticipated challenges, and preferred teaching approaches; map them to similar information collected from student participants; and determine how well teacher and student perspectives align. Each of the teachers instructs a specific FSL-integrated subject (theatre, translation, French culture, and grammar), and the research would provide a basis for comparison of approaches as well as student responses to instruction.

A secondary goal of the research was to investigate instruction at the school in question for signs of the pedagogical schism between “modern” and “foreign” language instruction that Whyte (2011) maintains predominates in French universities. This phenomenon, according to Whyte, leads to over-emphasis on explicit instruction at the expense of cognitively oriented and socio-constructivist learning theories and leads some students to fail to attain communicative competency. According to Whyte, graduates of modern languages programs are responsible for all language instruction in the French education system, including the training of language teaching professionals, spreading the consequences well beyond academia. On reading this statement, I speculated that the schism Whyte identifies may also affect international students who attend L2 French programs at these universities. If her arguments were pertinent to the teaching approaches used at the school discussed in this study, one could expect a predominance of explicit teaching. To find out, I designed a study to conduct classroom observations for each of the four courses, supplemented by pre-course interviews and surveys for both teachers and students, a post-course teacher focus group, and weekly student reflective logs.

Results suggest that no single teaching approach predominates at this school. Nor did any teacher show a wholesale commitment to a single approach. Rather, each course observed

displayed a mix of characteristics drawn from several methods, with each teacher clearly establishing his or her own unique approach according to given circumstances. This scenario aligns with what has become known as the *Eclectic Method*, an approach that has grown in popularity in recent years.

The findings also revealed moderate alignment between teachers and their respective students. Improved pronunciation and fluency, vocabulary expansion, translation techniques, and greater speaking comfort were goals shared by both teachers and students. Teaching strategies most valued by both groups included prioritization of pronunciation, tolerance of errors, encouragement of teacher-student interaction, use of humour, and provision of examples and practice activities.

Finally, this study has shown mixed support for Whyte (2011). Positive evidence was seen in the presence, in most of the courses, of the strong cultural orientation characterizing French “modern” language programs. Parallels were also found in the consistently teacher-fronted, transmission-oriented instructional format observed, particularly in the grammar course. Counter-evidence appeared in the fact that some implicit instruction was observed in two of the classrooms (Translation and French Culture), in the form of frequent elicitation.

This study has shone a spotlight on L2 teaching approaches used at a particular university in France. It has implications both for the school involved and for similar short-term intensive French immersion programs, whether in France or Canada. The arduous process of collecting and analyzing the data presented here has proven ultimately rewarding in not just confirming my own instincts as an L2 French learner, but in providing me with a richer understanding of language teaching pedagogy and the delicate balance between explicit and implicit teaching.

Documentation of the varied teaching approaches observed among the four courses involved in this research offers potential benefits to both the school and individual teachers involved, should they choose to take advantage of it. Peer observations would provide an opportunity to further explore the differences among the four teachers and identify strategies most deserving of encouraging and/or emulating school-wide.

These results also contribute to the small body of literature that exists in English on the nature of university foreign language instruction in France. The possibility that the apparent emphasis on explicit instruction found at this institution could affect international FLS/FLE learners in addition to the school's regular student body could provide insights for similar programs and also has the potential to inform FSL teaching in Canada.

## Appendix A: Teacher and Student Survey Forms

### TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE AND ATTITUDE SURVEY

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Languages spoken: \_\_\_\_\_

Courses taught: \_\_\_\_\_

Foreign language teaching experience (years): \_\_\_\_\_

Foreign language teacher training (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_ Type of FLS Teaching qualification: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree program:  Langues Vivantes  Langues Étrangères  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please read each statement below and tick the box in the columns at right that best reflects your view.

1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Somewhat disagree; 4=Neutral; 5=Somewhat agree; 6=Agree; 7=Strongly agree; N/A= Not applicable. Choose only one.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
1) French is a difficult language to learn.								
2) Anyone can learn to speak French.								
3) Students should speak French whenever possible outside of class.								
4) It is important to speak with a native-like French accent.								
5) Fluency is more important than accuracy.								
6) Errors in writing should always be corrected.								
7) Pronunciation errors should always be corrected.								
8) Building vocabulary quickly is the key to learning French.								
9) Daily practice and memorization is the key to learning French.								
10) Translation to/from the first language should be encouraged.								
11) A good understanding of grammar is necessary to learn French.								
12) Teachers—not students—should control the classroom.								
13) Classes should provide lots of opportunities for student interaction.								
14) No one teaching method works for everybody.								

Please rank on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is maximum and 4 is minimum	Core Language Skills			
	Speaking	Listening	Reading	Writing
Skills in order of importance				
Skills in order of difficulty				

- 1) What do you hope to accomplish in this course over the next four weeks?
  
- 2) What challenges or difficulties, if any, do you expect?
  
- 3) What teaching approach do you use? Why? How does it promote language learning?

### STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE AND ATTITUDE SURVEY

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Class:  Grammar  Theatre  Literature  Translation  
 First language(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Languages spoken: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Years of French study: \_\_\_\_\_ Age of 1<sup>st</sup> contact with French: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Level assigned by school (A1-C2): \_\_\_\_\_ Country of origin: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Highest education completed: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Please read each statement below and tick the box in the columns at right that best reflects your view.  
**1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Somewhat disagree; 4=Neutral; 5=Somewhat agree; 6=Agree; 7=Strongly agree; N/A= Not applicable. Choose only one.**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
1) French is a difficult language to learn.								
2) Anyone can learn to speak French.								
3) Students should speak French whenever possible outside of class.								
4) It is important to speak with a native-like French accent.								
5) Fluency is more important to me than accuracy.								
6) Errors in writing should always be corrected.								
7) Pronunciation errors should always be corrected.								
8) Building vocabulary quickly is the key to learning French.								
9) Daily practice and memorization is the key to learning French.								
10) Translation to/from the first language should be encouraged.								
11) A good understanding of grammar is necessary to learn French.								
12) Teachers—not students—should control the classroom.								
13) Classes should provide lots of opportunities for student interaction.								
14) No one teaching method works for everybody.								

Please rank on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is maximum and 4 is minimum	Core Language Skills			
	Speaking	Listening	Reading	Writing
Skills in order of importance				
Skills in order of difficulty				

- 1) What do you hope to accomplish in this course over the next four weeks?
- 2) What challenges or difficulties, if any, do you expect?
- 3) What is your preferred way of learning languages? Why? How does it help you learn?

## Appendix B: Pre-Course Interview Questions

### TEACHERS

- 1) What is unique about your course? Why should students choose it over others?
- 2) What goals do you hope to accomplish with this course?
- 3) Have you modified these goals over time? How?
- 4) What challenges do you anticipate?
- 5) How have you dealt with challenges you have encountered teaching this course before?
- 6) What teaching approach do you use? Why? How does it facilitate language learning?
- 7) What other approaches have you used in teaching this course? What guides your decisions about approach?
- 8) What are your thoughts regarding the Communicative Language Teaching method? How and when do you use it in your class?
- 9) What importance do you place on grammar in your class? How do you integrate grammar topics into your teaching?
- 10) Should students be allowed to use dictionaries as they read a text, or should they be encouraged to guess meanings from context?
- 11) How does your course help students to develop their vocabulary? How can it help with vocabulary retention?
- 12) Is student French proficiency a factor? Which students (CEFR level) gain the most from participating in your class? How do they benefit?
- 13) What is your approach to student use of the first language in class?
- 14) What are your thoughts about the LLCE modern language programs taught in many French universities? How does this type of program compare to the LANSAD courses?

#### Teacher-Specific

##### *Georges*

- 1) How does drama facilitate language learning?
- 2) What teaching approaches do you use in your theatre workshop?
- 3) What kinds of activities do you use in the workshop?
- 4) What role does improvisation play? What does this teach students?
- 5) How does drama help students with pronunciation?
- 6) How important is oral practice?
- 7) How does drama help students who are shy, anxious, or inhibited? What do you do to put these students at ease?

##### *François*

- 1) How does translation facilitate language learning?
- 2) What are the advantages and drawbacks of using translation as a language teaching method?
- 3) Do you feel that direction of translation is important? Which direction is more conducive to language learning, and why?

##### *Caroline*

- 1) How does studying literature and/or culture facilitate language learning?
- 2) How do you address the differences between written and spoken French? (E.g., simple past)

##### *Nicole*

- 1) Reflecting on your own experience, what do you believe is the best approach for teaching grammar? (Possible prompts: inductive versus deductive, noticing, focus on form, etc.)

- 2) How would you describe student attitudes toward grammar, in general?
- 3) What do you do to make it more engaging for your students?
- 4) How can students be helped to improve retention of, for example, the many verb conjugations and noun genders they must learn?
- 5) Spoken and written grammar can be quite different in French (dropping part of the negative, for example, in spoken French). Should this be covered in a grammar class? If so, how do you address it?

## **STUDENTS**

- 1) Why did you sign up for this particular course?
- 2) What goals do you hope to achieve over the next four weeks?
- 3) How can you tell when you are making progress toward your goals?
- 4) What challenges or difficulties do you anticipate?
- 5) How might you deal with challenges you encounter in your chosen course?
- 6) What can your teachers do to help you succeed?
- 7) What do you do outside of class to help reach your language learning goals?
- 8) Do you think French is more difficult than your first language? Why or why not?
- 9) How do you feel about grammar? Is it important to your language learning? Why or why not?
- 10) What strategies most help you to broaden your vocabulary? What helps you to remember the new words you encounter?
- 11) Do you tend to use a dictionary as you read a text, or do you prefer to guess meanings from context?
- 12) What are your thoughts about the use of your first language in class? Should it be encouraged?
- 13) Do you like working in pairs or groups with other students? Why or why not?
- 14) What is your perception of the teacher's role in a second language class?

## Appendix C: Focus Group Agenda

1. Welcome and thank you
  - a. Introductions
  - b. Explain purpose of focus group
  - c. Review agenda and ground rules

*Emphasize need to speak one at a time, confidentiality, permission to tape.*

Read ongoing consent paragraph out loud.
2. Discuss language teaching in general
  - a. Does the school embrace a particular language teaching methodology? What is it?
    - i. What role does the short duration of the program play?
    - ii. What role does the study abroad aspect play?
3. Debrief individual results
  - a. Why did you choose the approach you use in your course?
    - i. What advantages/disadvantages does it offer over other methods?
    - ii. What are your priorities as an instructor? How do you feel they might differ from student priorities?
  - b. Did you feel your learning objectives for this session were met? How so or how not?
    - i. What did not go as you had expected? What did go as expected?
    - ii. What challenges did you encounter?
    - iii. How might you change your course next time around?
4. Debrief the research activities
  - a. What worked? What didn't?
  - b. How did the presence of observers in the classroom affect your lessons?
  - c. Would you do this again? Why? Why not?
  - d. What would you want to change next time around?
5. Next steps and follow-up.

## Appendix D: Weekly Student Reflective Log Form

### WEEKLY STUDENT REFLECTIVE LOG

Week #: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Course Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Please rate the statements below by ticking a box. 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Somewhat disagree; 4=Neutral; 5=Somewhat agree; 6=Agree; 7=Strongly agree; N/A= Not applicable. Choose only one.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
The level of difficulty of this class is appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The class helped me make progress toward my goals this week.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The <b>subject</b> of this class helps me learn.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The <b>way the class is taught</b> helps me learn.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never			
I spoke French outside of class this week.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 1) The most important thing I learned this week in class was ...
  
- 2) Some things I learned about my strengths this week include ...
  
- 3) The biggest obstacles I faced this week were ...
  
- 4) I can overcome these obstacles by ... *(Be specific!)*
  
- 5) The way the material was taught helped (or hindered) my learning by ...
  
- 6) Additional thoughts about my learning this week ...

## Appendix E: Complete Codebook

The codebook shown in Table 14 has been exported from NVivo and contains both autocoded and manually coded references organized by type of data collection instrument used. In full, 2,468 references were coded, although the autocoded questions have been removed from this table in the interests of space (they may be found in the instruments shown in Appendices A through D).

Table 14

### *Complete Codebook from NVivo*

Name	Description	Refs
<b>FOCUS GROUP</b>		75
<b>Questions (1 to 7 autocoded)</b>	<i>Please see Appendix C for (teacher) focus group agenda/questions</i>	7
<b>Themes (manual)</b>		68
Factors that contribute to speaking success	Discussion of factors that impact teacher efforts to encourage speaking and speaking success, including the role the student's nationality plays	10
Effect of student nationality on speaking	Discussion of the impact of cultural factors on teacher efforts to encourage speaking	7
Asian students	Asian students and willingness to speak	1
Eastern European students	Eastern European students and willingness to speak	1
Mixed populations	Challenges of teaching a culturally mixed group	1
Russian students	Russian students and willingness to speak	1
Perceived program planning challenges	Challenges encountered during the 2018 program, including students not meeting anticipated CEFR levels and student passivity and inattention	6
CEFR levels and program planning	The effect of lower-than-usual student proficiency test results on program planning and the unpredictability of this factor from year to year	3
Student passivity and inattention	Discussion of student tendency toward passivity, particularly in theatre class, and inability to focus and comprehend simple instructions	3
Qualities needed for language learning success	Qualities needed to succeed at language learning, including motivation and natural aptitude	5
Learners' awareness (The Click)	The Aha! moment when students become conscious of their learning	4
Socio-affective factors	Student affective/emotional states and/or social interaction	6
Change in student confidence over course	Changes in student confidence in speaking and interacting throughout the program	1
Fear and inhibition	How fear and inhibition impact student learning	5
Teaching approaches, methods & techniques	Pedagogy and teaching strategies and techniques used in the classroom	41
Attitude toward errors	The role that errors play in language learning and when correction is appropriate	3
Choice of text	Thoughts on importance, appropriateness, and use of selected text	4

Communicative activities	Teacher awareness of CLT and cultural factors that affect student receptiveness to activities such as pair work or group work.	7
The role of student nationality	Cultural factors that affect student receptiveness to activities such as pair work and group work	2
Understanding of CLT	Teacher awareness of differences between Communicative Language Teaching methods and traditional instruction	5
Grammar teaching	Grammar-related topics, including the challenges encountered in grammar teaching, the use of Focus on Form in two classrooms, and personal philosophy of teaching grammar	8
Challenges of teaching grammar	The delicate interplay between the perceived need to emphasize rules, differences between oral and written expression, and student attitude toward errors	5
Emphasis on rules	Discussion of the perceived need to focus on the rules	2
Oral versus written expression	Formality differences between French oral and written expression	1
Student attitude toward errors	Challenges inherent in dealing with student concern about making errors	2
Focus on Form	Planned and actual use of Focus on Form techniques	2
French culture class	Discussion of the way Focus on Form was used in class activities	1
Grammar class	Discussion of the divergence between planned use of Focus on Form and actual lesson treatments	1
Philosophy of grammar teaching	Personal philosophy of grammar instruction	1
How teaching priorities guide stage direction	A discussion of the balance needed between teaching and stage direction type instructions in ensuring successful language learning and a good performance	3
Importance of memorization	The importance of memorization in the theatre class	2
Learning objectives	Teacher learning objectives for their respective courses, and those of the school overall.	6
Individual teacher objectives	Teacher objectives for their respective courses	5
School objectives	The school's overarching learning objectives	1
Teacher roles	The perceived multiple roles that teachers play	1
Ways to put students at ease	Factors that help reduce stress and put students at ease, such as use of humour, de-emphasis of errors, and guided interaction with local culture and people.	9
De-emphasis of errors	The relationship between errors and student confidence and when errors can be overlooked	5
Interaction with local culture & people	The benefits of getting out of the classroom and interacting with locals	2
Use of humour	How humour can alleviate anxiety and put students at ease	1
<b>INTERVIEWS</b>		464
<b>Questions</b>	<i>Please see Appendix B for student and teacher interview questions</i>	148
<b>Students (1 to 14 autocoded)</b>	Student responses to pre-interview questions	94
<b>Teachers (1 to 14 autocoded)</b>	Teacher responses to pre-interview questions	54
<b>Themes (manual)</b>		316
<b>Students</b>	Student thoughts and expectations gathered during one-on-one interviews	100
Anticipated challenges	Challenges that students anticipate encountering in the classroom, including difficulties with reading, listening, and writing and lacking L1 English in the translation classroom	30

Listening & comprehension	Discussion of listening and student challenges in comprehending spoken French	8
Reading challenges	Discussion of the challenges of reading and its connection to vocabulary.	6
When English is not the L1	Discussion of the challenges of translating from French to English, or creating such lessons, when English is not the L1	13
Writing challenges	Importance of written expression and writing style and challenges students face	3
Socio-affective factors	Discussion that relates to affective/emotional states and/or social interaction	5
Confidence	Thoughts re lack of confidence, and how the course can help build it	3
Embarrassment	Student concern about being embarrassed in class	2
Strategies helpful in language learning	Student discussions of strategies they find helpful when learning a foreign language	65
Communicative activities	Student thoughts on using language in the classroom, including pair and group work and ways in which movement facilitates student interaction	7
Classroom Interaction	Discussion of teacher-student and student-student interaction in the classroom	3
Pair or group work	Perspectives on value of pair and/or group work (outside Q8)	4
Elicitation techniques	Comments on a particular teacher's elicitation method	1
Exposure to French culture	Student thoughts about how interaction with local French culture helps their learning	7
Feedback	Discussion of ways that teachers check for understanding and draw attention to errors	9
Checking for understanding	Importance of teacher confirming that student has understood a teaching point or text	3
Error correction	Perspectives on the importance of errors and when it's appropriate to correct them	6
Grammar	Student thoughts on the importance of grammar	2
Homework	Expression of a personal need for more homework assignments	1
How teacher use of student L1 helps	Description of how a teacher's use of the student's L1 (Polish) eases communication	2
Importance of fun	The importance of having fun for creating engagement in the language classroom	5
Knowledge reinforcement and retention	Thoughts on ways to reinforce knowledge within and beyond the classroom, including memorization and repetition	11
Memorization	Perspectives on memorization as an important strategy for language learning, and ways to facilitate it	5
Repetition	Importance of repetition for cementing intake	6
Speaking and pronunciation	Discussion of student goals and concerns re speaking and pronunciation	11
Test and exams	Comments on the role and effectiveness of test-taking	2
Use of imagery	How learning was helped by teacher use of images in a student's home country	1
Using morphology strategically	Students discuss use of knowledge of word forms and word families to build vocabulary	6
Teachers	Teacher thoughts and expectations gathered during one-on-one interviews	216

Anticipated challenges	Challenges that teachers anticipate encountering in the classroom, including the lack of L1 English in the Translation classroom; student immaturity; difficulties with reading, listening, and writing; and a perceived need to cater to the majority	23
ENG to FR Translation Challenges	Considerations in devising an English to French translation activity	7
Listening & comprehension	Discussion of listening and student challenges in comprehending spoken French	2
Reading challenges	Discussion of the challenges of reading and its connection to vocabulary.	1
Student immaturity	Other challenges encountered by teachers, including having to deal with very young learners and needing to cater to the majority	3
When English is not the L1	Discussion of the challenges of translating from French to English, or creating such lessons, when English is not the L1	5
Writing challenges	Importance of written expression and writing style and challenges students face in this context	5
Course objectives	Teacher mention of objectives within responses to questions about other topics, i.e. outside Q2 and Q3.	15
Preferred teaching approaches	Discussion of teaching approaches and strategies that teachers find helpful	141
Accommodating student needs	Discussion of the need for teachers to accommodate different student learning styles and priorities and helpfulness of teacher use of the student's L1	9
Recognizing different learning styles	The need for language teaching to accommodate different student learning styles	3
Understanding student priorities	The need for teachers to tailor their lesson plans as much as possible to student priorities and competencies	6
Communicative activities	Discussion concerning using language in the classroom, including pair and group work, improvisation, student role-playing, and ways in which movement facilitates student interaction	32
Classroom Interaction	Discussion of teacher-student and student-student interaction in the classroom	25
Group dynamics	Thoughts on optimal group size and how group dynamics affect language learning	3
Movement and interaction	The importance of getting students up and moving around and how it is connected to language learning and facilitating student interaction	6
Improvisation	The importance of improvisation as a language learning method	3
Pair or Group Work	Perspectives on value of pair and/or group work (outside Q8)	3
Role-playing	Importance of role-playing in American second language teaching	1
Creating engagement	Ways to arouse interest and involve students in their L2 learning, including the importance of fun and humour, varying activities, and providing opportunities for improvisation	17
Fun	The importance of having fun in the language classroom	11
Humour	Instructors comment on their use of humour to put students at ease	5
Singing	Singing as a way to make lessons engaging	1
Exposure to French culture	Discussion of the reasons for and benefits of including cultural topics in class activities and encouraging students to interact with local culture	12
Feedback	Discussion of ways that teachers check for understanding and draw attention to errors	6
Checking for understanding	Importance of teacher confirming that student has understood a teaching point or text	1

Error Correction	Perspectives on the importance of errors and when it's appropriate to correct them	5
Grammar teaching	Various grammar topics, including selection of topics to teach, importance of register, conveying nuance and probability, use of FFI, and student reactions to grammar teaching	17
Choosing grammar topics	Thoughts on how teachers select grammar topics for their classes	4
Form-Focused Instruction	Instructor thoughts on opportunities for noticing and form-focused instruction within a text or classroom activity	4
Importance of register	Teacher thoughts on difference between spoken and written French and when it is important to talk about the familiar register	1
Nuance and probability	Teacher thoughts on how certain grammatical constructions help convey subtle nuances of probability and supposition in French	2
Student reactions to grammar teaching	Teachers discuss student reactions to the teaching of grammar	6
Knowledge reinforcement & retention	Thoughts on ways to reinforce knowledge within and beyond the classroom, including memorization, repetition, and how gestures activate mind-body connections that aid retention	8
Gesture and the mind-body connection	Thoughts on the connection between the body and the mind, and how being in touch with one's physicality facilitates learning	1
Memorization	Perspectives on memorization as an important strategy for language learning, and ways to facilitate it	5
Repetition	Importance of repetition for cementing intake	2
Speaking and pronunciation	Discussion of teacher priorities and strategies in helping students with speaking and pronunciation	15
Translation as a teaching method	Teacher use of translation in various classes and considerations in planning the translation course, including its benefits to students, choice of appropriate texts, the role of vocabulary in translation, and implications for L2 French beginners	25
Appropriateness and benefits	The role and/or appropriateness of translating between the L1 and L2 during class	9
Choice of texts	Factors influencing choice and use of texts for translation class	11
Role of vocab in Translation course	Role of vocabulary in the Translation course	3
Translation at beginner level	Appropriateness of the Translation course for L2 French beginners	2
Proficiency assessment	Thoughts on initial assessment of student proficiency and subsequent class assignment, as well as thoughts about tests and exams	10
Intake & class assignment	Discussion of initial student intake process and conditions governing assignment to classes.	9
Test and exams	Comments on the role and effectiveness of test-taking	1
Socio-affective factors	Discussion that relates to affective/emotional states and/or social interaction	10
Confidence	Thoughts re awareness of growing student confidence and how the teacher's course contributes to it	4
Fear, shyness, anxiety	Teacher thoughts on how their course can help students overcome fear, shyness or anxiety	6
Thoughts on L2 teaching theory	Discussion of theory, specifically concerning various historic L2 teaching methods and approaches	17
Approaches (Legacy)	Teacher thoughts on various legacy language teaching methods from Audiolingualism, Direct Method, and Grammar Translation to CLT and TBI.	14
Audiolingualism	Discussion of training in the Audiolingualism method in the 1970s	3
Communicative Language Teaching	Discussion of the appropriateness of the Communicative Language Teaching method, its relationship to task-based instruction, and the	5

	need to balance it with grammar teaching. Comments fall within responses to questions about other topics, i.e. outside Q8.	
Direct Method	Drawbacks of the Direct Method	2
France vs USA	The L2 teaching approach used in the United States	1
Misperceptions about Grammar Translation	A misperception that the Direct Method is the same as Grammar Translation	1
Task-based Approach	The connection between TBI and CLT and how tasks can facilitate language learning	2
Common Sense Pedagogy	One teacher's personal philosophy of teaching explained	3
<b>OBSERVATIONS (MANUAL)</b>	<i>Please see Appendix F for codes presented in the results chapter</i>	1588
Challenges	Examples of some of the challenges encountered in the classroom or discussed by teachers	45
Potential semantic pitfalls of French	Examples of potential semantic pitfalls for students, ranging from confusable words and multiple possible translations to pejoratives and plays on words	45
Confusable words	Lengthy discourse by a teacher about when to use the root nouns <i>matin</i> , <i>jour</i> , <i>an</i> , <i>soir</i> , <i>nuit</i> , etc. vs appending the <i>-ée</i> endings. Also <i>nombre</i> , <i>numero</i> , and <i>chiffre</i>	5
Multiple translations possible	Dialogs between teachers and their students concerning possible varied interpretations of material in a text	30
Pejorative or subtle	Examples of subtle pejorative meanings	5
Play on words	Examples of wordplay from two courses	3
Savoir vs connaître	Lecture on the difference between these two French verbs meaning "to know"	2
Classroom aids and resources	Collection of nodes concerning aids, props, and other resources used in classrooms and in the Theatre class	20
Calculators	Examples of a teacher encouraging classroom use of calculators	4
Dictionaries	Examples of a teacher encouraging dictionary use	2
Handouts	Examples of instructors sharing documents with students	3
Props	Use of various objects in the classroom and dialog concerning props used in the Theatre class' performance of Cinderella	9
Reading	Description of the text used in a reading lesson	1
Classroom management	Instances of teacher attempts to silence student chatter and/or respond to student reluctance to read aloud	11
Time monitoring	Examples of teacher attempts to prod students toward completion of an activity	4
Course content	A collection of nodes for major categories of topics addressed in class, such as French culture, grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and the production of Cinderella prepared by the Theatre class	394
Cinderella	A collection of nodes concerning the play produced by the Theatre students. Contains a sub-folder with cases for each student and the teacher	280
Actors	Lines broken out by each student participant. Created to easily identify individual student contributions and their interaction with the teacher	196
GiStudent 1 A-H	This student played the principal character, Cinderella.	52
GiStudent 2 Stefan	This student played the fairy godmother. He was the focus of the most teacher error correction interventions.	38
Animator 1 (Lih)	Dialog and comments by Lih, the stage technician. This person interacted with both the students and the teacher, and provided prompts when students forgot their lines.	23

Error correction	This node contains all the student errors made in practicing their lines, including missed or forgotten lines, and/or script mismatches. Some errors were corrected; others were ignored	15
Cues for missed lines	Examples of interventions for missed or forgotten lines	6
Script conflict	Examples of mismatches with the script (mostly uncorrected)	8
Stage direction	Stage direction remarks of Theatre teacher	46
French culture	Collection of nodes referring to various aspects of French culture introduced by instructors, such as art, cuisine, geography, history, literature, and general life in France	114
Art	References to French art history	13
Cuisine	References to French cuisine	14
Geography and places	References to French local and regional place names. Includes cities, local landmarks, regions, and departments	15
History	References to French historical events	4
Life in France	Set of nodes describing various aspects of daily life in France	64
Acronyms and organizations	Discussions of the meaning of common acronyms for French organizations	12
Current events	References made to current events in texts used by instructors	10
Finance and economy	References to French economic conditions such as salary levels, income tax rates, and cost of living	15
L1 French speaker challenges	Peculiarities of spoken French, semantic confusion, common grammatical errors and mispronunciations by the French themselves	13
Social norms	References to unspoken rules governing social interaction such as greetings, holidays, and rules governing daily activity such as meals	13
Literature and publishing	References to important French literary figures and/or modern publications	4
Observed teaching approaches	Collection of nodes concerning teaching strategies observed in the classroom	1118
Explaining learning objectives	Examples of teachers explaining the objectives for lesson activities	13
Form-focused instruction and noticing	Instances involving students noticing parts of a text or instructors using noticing and FFI to draw student attention to a form	17
Grammar	A set of nodes relating to French grammar, broken out by abstract concepts and parts of speech categories	83
Abstract concepts	A set of nodes for concepts ranging from definiteness and uncertainty to gender, time, register, and discourse markers	18
Definiteness and Uncertainty	Explicit mentions of the concept of definiteness	6
Discourse marker	Discussion of the use of particles as discourse markers	3
Gender	Discussion of morphological clues to noun gender	3
Register	Discussions of differences between formal written French and spoken, familiar French, including the Verlan argot	4
Time	Discussion of ways to reference the past	2
Parts of speech	Specific references to parts of speech, organized into major categories	65
Adjectives	Discussion of word order with French nouns and adjectives	1
Articles and determiners	Examples of instances where student attention is drawn to definite, indefinite, and partitive articles as well as possessive adjectives	19
Conjunctions	A set of nodes concerning the two types of conjunctions	3
Co-ordinating	The content of a lecture on French co-ordinating conjunctions	1

Subordinate	The content of a lecture on circumstantial subordinate conjunctions versus co-ordinate conjunctions, conditions governing their use, and proper sentence construction	2
Prepositions	The content of a long lecture on prepositions plus examples of preposition instruction from other classes	12
Pronouns	Examples of teacher attempts to draw student attention to the "difficult" pronouns <i>en</i> , <i>y</i> , and <i>lui</i> , and a lecture on "en" from the grammar class	7
Verbs	A collection of nodes relating to various aspects of verbs	23
Agreement	Concordance of time	2
Auxiliaries	Discussions of use of <i>être</i> versus <i>avoir</i> as an auxiliary verb	2
Imperative	Mentions of the imperative	2
Nominalizations	Discussion of the reason for use of a nominalization	1
Past, Present & Future	Discussion of use of the primary three verb tenses	9
Subjunctive	Discussions of the use of the subjunctive in French	2
Humour, jokes, wisecracks	Examples of teacher utterances meant to provide levity and/or lighten the mood	58
Illustrating teaching points	A variety of nodes about techniques teachers use to illustrate teaching points, including board work, derivation and morphology, gesture, miming, rule explanation, and use of images and/or video	253
Board work	Instances that illustrate how various teachers make use of the blackboard or whiteboard	53
Derivation and morphology	Examples of ways teachers draw student attention to French morphological processes such as derivation, affixation, and clipping	12
Gestures and miming	Examples of teachers using gestures, miming, and sometimes voice variation (pitch change, whisper) to illustrate teaching points	152
Rule explanation	Instances of teachers explaining grammatical and phonological rules	8
Use of imagery	Instances of instructors using an image to stage an activity or dialog concerning its contents	26
Video	References to the video used a teacher to set up a lesson	2
Memorization	Examples of instructions involving the need for students to memorize	2
Practice activity	Set of topics relating to various types of practice	71
Group and pairs discussion	Examples of staging, including timings, for pairs discussion preparatory to translating in the Translation class	26
Oral drill in grammar class	A quick drill on time and number words conducted orally in the Grammar class	2
The painting tableaux lesson	Three nodes containing the activities from the painting tableaux lesson, broken apart by participant and function	43
Instructor stage direction	Stage direction type direction given by the instructor during the painting tableaux lesson	19
Learning objectives	The instructor explains her objectives for each of the six tableaux that the students will present	7
Student enactments	Six complete student enactments of historic French paintings	7
Teacher-student interactions	Collection of nodes concerning teacher interaction with students	520
Eliciting and instructions	Dialogs whereby the teacher elicited answers from students with a variety of techniques, including straightforward prompts, questions, recasts of student answers, silently waiting, and intonation suggesting anticipation	178

Feedback	Set of nodes illustrating the ways teachers provide feedback to students, including acknowledging and encouraging them, checking for comprehension, and various responses to errors	279
Acknowledgment and encouragement	Teacher-student dialogs in which the teacher acknowledges the student contribution and/or offers encouragement	158
Round of applause	Specific encouragement from one instructor in the form of eliciting a round of applause for student contributions	8
Checking for comprehension	Dialogs that illustrate various methods teachers use to check that students have understood a teaching point	40
Responding to errors	A group of nodes concerning various ways that teachers address student errors	81
Mockery	Exchanges where the teacher laughs at, mocks, or imitates a student. Including "oh la la" here when not used positively	21
Recasts and instructor modelling	Examples from all four courses of instructors offering corrections via recasts or modelling correct pronunciation	22
Liaison	Examples of correction that involve liaison between French words	8
Segments	Examples of corrections and recasts that involve individual segments	39
Singling out a student	Examples of teachers singling out a specific student for questioning, making use of student L1, or soliciting international differences by singling out people	23
L1 use	Examples of a teacher using a student's L1 (Polish and Russian)	3
Soliciting international differences	Dialogs in certain classes whereby the instructor singled out students to identify international differences	2
Student questions and guessing	Examples of students asking questions and/or volunteering uncertain answers	40
Vocabulary	A variety of vocabulary-related topics, from individual words and expressions to potential semantic pitfalls	101
Counting	Dialog between a teacher and a student re the illogic of French numbering system	1
Expressions	Discussion of various French idioms and expressions	22
Individual Words	Teachers provide and/or elicit definitions of individual words	75
Verbs	Discussions of verb meanings	3
Verlan	A teacher describes the morphological process used to derive Verlan words	1
<b>STUDENT WEEKLY REFLECTIVE LOGS</b>		274
<b>Questions (1 to 6 autocoded)</b>	<i>Please see Appendix D for the student log form</i>	102
<b>Themes (manual)</b>		172
Benefits of pair or group work	Identification of the benefits of pair or group work	3
Perceived benefits of error correction	Discussion of the important role teachers play in correcting students or helping them to self-correct	4
Practice strategies	Discussion of student strategies for practicing or reinforcing skills or demonstrating acquired knowledge	46
Exposure to French culture	Descriptions of student interactions with the local culture in shops, restaurants, etc.	9
Reading as practice	Discussion of reading as a practice strategy and the challenges encountered in reading	8
Repetition and review	The merits of review and the value of repetition both in-class and via homework. A commonly shared sentiment.	14

Skills and knowledge	Discussion of progress toward goals, particularly regarding listening, speaking, grammar, and vocabulary	68
Grammar	Discussion of learning acquired and challenges encountered in understanding French grammar	21
Register	Recognition of the importance of register in spoken and academic French discourse	2
Listening and comprehension	Student comments about listening	2
Speaking and pronunciation	Discussion of student struggles to speak French and strategies for gaining confidence.	15
Vocab	Students describe challenges in their struggle to expand their French vocabulary	30
Socio-affective considerations	Comments that relate to affective/emotional states and/or social interaction	9
Theatre class	Students discuss how the theatre class has aided their language learning	13
Translation class	Students discuss how the translation class has aided their language learning	29
When English is not the L1	Student concerns regarding ability to translate to/from English when it is not the student's L1, or even L2	4
<b>ATTITUDE SURVEY</b>		67
<b>Questions</b>	<i>Please see Appendix A for the student and teacher survey forms</i>	30
<b>Students (1 to 3 autocoded)</b>	Student responses to open-ended survey questions	18
<b>Teachers (1 to 3 autocoded)</b>	Teacher responses to open-ended survey questions	12
<b>Themes (manual, students only)</b>		37
Goals	Discussion of student goals and concerns about various aspects of their anticipated program of study, including grammar, vocab, listening, and speaking	27
Grammar	Student goals and preferences with respect to learning or improving their knowledge of French grammar.	5
Register	Mention of the need to understand the register or ordinary speech or spoken French	0
Listening and Comprehension	Discussion of student goals and concerns re listening and ability to comprehend spoken French	6
Speaking and Pronunciation	Discussion of student goals and concerns re speaking and pronunciation	5
Translation	Discussion of student aspirations regarding the Translation class	4
When English is not the L1	Concern regarding ability to translate to/from English when it is not the student's L1, or even L2.	1
Vocab	Expressions of student desire to acquire larger or more sophisticated French vocabulary.	7
Practice strategies	Discussion of student strategies for practicing or reinforcing skills or demonstrating acquired knowledge	9
Exposure to French culture	Discussion of interaction with the local French culture in shops and restaurants and connection to learning	2
Group and pair work	Identification of the benefits of pair or group work	1
Reading	Discussion of student strategies concerning reading for practice	2
Socio-affective considerations	Comments that relate to affective/emotional states and/or social interaction	1
<b>FOLLOW-UP NEEDED</b>		10
<b>QUOTABLE</b>		28

## Appendix F: Consolidated Observation Coding

Table 15 provides an at-a-glance comparison of the topics most frequently coded to each of the four teachers. See the codebook in Appendix E for descriptions and the full list of codes.

Table 15

### *Consolidated Observation Coding*

	<u>Georges</u>	<u>François</u>	<u>Caroline</u>	<u>Nicole</u>	<u>Total</u>
Explaining learning objectives	0	7	4	2	13
Classroom management	0	3	6	0	9
Vocabulary	2	68	27	2	91
Form-focused instruction and noticing	0	10	7	0	17
French Culture	0	25	62	15	102
Grammar					
Abstract concepts	0	1	4	13	18
Parts of speech	0	9	40	7	56
Humour, jokes, wisecracks	0	19	37	2	58
Illustrating Teaching Points					
Board work	0	14	23	16	53
Derivation and morphology	0	7	2	3	12
Gestures and miming	0	46	70	36	152
Rule explanation	0	5	3	0	8
Use of imagery	0	7	19	0	26
Memorization	0	2	0	0	2
Practice					
Oral drill in grammar class	0	0	0	2	2
Group and pairs discussion	0	20	6	0	26
Teacher-Student Interaction					
Eliciting and instructions	0	85	81	12	178
Stage direction	46	0	19	0	65
Acknowledgment and encouragement	21	55	42	36	154
Checking for comprehension	0	11	19	10	40
Mockery	0	12	9	0	21
Recasts and instructor modelling	10	6	52	1	69
Total	79	412	532	157	1,180

*Note.* Figures represent counts of instances coded to a behaviour.

## Appendix G: Student and Teacher Perspectives Compared

Table 16 compares student and teacher perspectives regarding expectations, anticipated challenges, and preferred teaching approaches. The information is drawn from interview and survey responses done prior to the start of the course, as well as from weekly student logs.

Table 16

### *Student and Teacher Perspectives Compared*

<b>GOALS</b>			
<u>Georges</u>	<u>François</u>	<u>Caroline</u>	<u>Nicole</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase student confidence</li> <li>• Overcome shyness and inhibition</li> <li>• Help students feel at ease</li> <li>• Produce a successful performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase student comfort with language, reduce stress</li> <li>• Provide fun and humour</li> <li>• Produce successful translations</li> <li>• <b>Enrich vocabulary</b></li> <li>• Learn about French culture</li> <li>• Student needs drive agenda</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increase lexical comfort</b></li> <li>• <b>Increase grammatical comfort</b></li> <li>• Facilitate interaction with locals</li> <li>• Overcome fear and have fun</li> <li>• Student needs drive agenda</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help students achieve DALF B2/C1</li> <li>• <b>Give students ability to communicate in French</b></li> <li>• Student needs drive agenda</li> </ul>
<p><i>Astrid</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve oral skills, especially pronunciation and fluency</li> <li>• Converse with native speakers</li> </ul>	<p><i>Emma</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Expand vocabulary</b></li> <li>• Gain more advanced translation techniques</li> <li>• Improve speaking fluency, reading, writing</li> </ul>	<p><i>Klara</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak more fluently</li> <li>• Improve listening comprehension</li> <li>• <b>Improve grammar</b></li> <li>• <b>Expand vocabulary</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>Wen Xiang</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve mastery of verb tenses</li> <li>• <b>Produce “more precise and clear” French</b></li> <li>• Interact with others</li> <li>• Improve speaking</li> </ul>
<p><i>Stefan</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve oral skills, especially pronunciation and fluency</li> <li>• Receive regular correction</li> <li>• Grow vocabulary</li> <li>• Improve listening</li> </ul>	<p><i>Paulina</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Expand vocabulary</b></li> <li>• Acquire more advanced translation techniques</li> <li>• Translate variety of articles</li> <li>• Translate more “fluently”</li> <li>• Consider different perspectives</li> <li>• Understand metaphor</li> </ul>		

*Note.* **Boldface** indicates items of agreement between a teacher and their students.

Table 16 (Continued)

*Student and Teacher Perspectives Compared*

<b>CHALLENGES</b>			
<u>Georges</u>	<u>François</u>	<u>Caroline</u>	<u>Nicole</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Identification of possible pronunciation difficulties</b></li> <li>• Determination of appropriate remedial exercises</li> <li>• Difficulty attracting shy students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students hesitant to interact</li> <li>• Students cluster by nationality</li> <li>• <b>English not the L1 for most</b></li> <li>• No context for material to be translated</li> <li>• <b>Concept of nuance hard to teach</b></li> <li>• No one “perfect” translation</li> <li>• Degree of adherence to style of original</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large classes</li> <li>• Intercultural difficulties</li> <li>• Socio-affective factors</li> <li>• Formation of groups at last moment</li> <li>• Inaccurate information about proficiency level</li> <li>• Teaching approach intimidating for some students</li> <li>• Appropriateness for youth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty meeting student needs within short course duration</li> <li>• Student needs can sometimes conflict</li> </ul>
<p><i>Astrid</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Speaking and pronunciation</b></li> <li>• Difficulty memorizing lines</li> <li>• Embarrassment and fear</li> <li>• Dealing with students who didn’t know their lines</li> </ul> <p><i>Stefan</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Speaking and pronunciation</b></li> <li>• Understanding spoken French</li> </ul>	<p><i>Emma</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lack of L1 English</b></li> <li>• Small English and French vocabularies</li> <li>• Dependence on dictionaries</li> <li>• Listening comprehension</li> </ul> <p><i>Paulina</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lack of L1 English</b></li> <li>• <b>Problem understanding idioms</b></li> <li>• Time pressure</li> </ul>	<p><i>Klara</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening comprehension</li> <li>• Vocabulary inadequate to participate</li> <li>• Fast pacing of class</li> </ul>	<p><i>Wen Xiang</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening ability poor; thus might have trouble understanding teacher</li> <li>• Used to French taught in L1 at home</li> <li>• Conjugation of simple past</li> </ul>

*Note.* **Boldface** indicates items of agreement between a teacher and their students.

Table 16 (Continued)

*Student and Teacher Perspectives Compared*

<b>PREFERRED TEACHING APPROACHES</b>			
<u>Georges</u>	<u>François</u>	<u>Caroline</u>	<u>Nicole</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Facilitation of interaction</b></li> <li>• <b>Prioritization of fun</b></li> <li>• Encouragement of self-expression</li> <li>• Breathing, improvisation, gesture</li> <li>• Contact and physicality (games, <b>exercises</b>)</li> <li>• <b>Repetition, memorization</b></li> <li>• <b>Minimal error correction</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Facilitation of interaction</b></li> <li>• Prioritization of fun</li> <li>• <b>Provision of vocabulary lists</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitation of interaction</li> <li>• <b>Prioritization of fun</b></li> <li>• Acknowledgment of student needs</li> <li>• Accommodation of individual learning styles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitation of interaction</li> <li>• Prioritization of fun</li> <li>• Acknowledgment of student needs</li> <li>• Accommodation of individual learning styles</li> <li>• Task-based approach with supports</li> <li>• Avoidance of lectures</li> </ul>
<p><i>Astrid</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fun</b>, variety</li> <li>• Non-threatening, encouraging</li> <li>• Pronunciation <b>exercises</b> and <b>correction</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Stefan</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small groups of two to three people</li> <li>• Dedicated native-speaking teacher</li> <li>• Provision of homework</li> <li>• <b>Intensive interaction</b></li> <li>• Pronunciation exercises</li> <li>• <b>Frequent correction</b></li> <li>• <b>Repetition and memorization</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>Emma</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lots of eliciting</li> <li>• <b>Vocabulary in advance to aid preparation</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Paulina</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lots of discussion</li> <li>• <b>Speaking opportunities through interaction</b></li> <li>• Repeat exposure to target words</li> <li>• Tolerant and supportive teacher</li> </ul>	<p><i>Klara</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fun and humour</b></li> <li>• Supportive, non-threatening approach</li> <li>• Frequent checks for comprehension</li> </ul>	<p><i>Wen Xiang</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of examples, games, activities</li> <li>• Classroom discussion</li> <li>• Regular practice exercises and homework</li> </ul>

*Note.* **Boldface** indicates items of agreement between a teacher and their students.

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