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The language graduate who never reads a professional journal and participates only minimally, if at all, in professional meetings, will stagnate. There is an onus on the profession in all areas to upgrade and keep abreast of current developments in the field.
 — **Peter Heffernan**

Peter J. Heffernan

Linguaculture Teaching for a New Century

In this article, a clarion call is put out to heed the bountiful input of intercultural theory in its relationship to second language acquisition theory and to practice authentic linguaculture teaching in our classrooms.

Introduction

Canadian Census 2001 statistics for language demonstrate that Canadian bilingualism is losing some of its vigour, particularly outside Quebec. While almost 18% of Canadians now declare themselves bilingual, the bilingual torch is still carried more by francophones in all provinces/territories and by Anglophones in Quebec than by any other groups in Canadian society. In Quebec, where French is the official language, 37% of francophones and 66% of Anglophones declare themselves bilingual. Officially bilingual New Brunswick, comparatively, has just over one third of its inhabitants declaring themselves bilingual. For the rest of the provinces/territories, individually declared bilingualism ranges between 3 – 12%.

It is also reported that French immersion enrolments, which peaked over a decade ago, have been merely holding even since, though the Canadian population has grown considerably in the same period. Canada, unlike most other developed nations, has no national policy on language education. Provincial education policies vary, but are generally muted, with respect to languages' importance in the curriculum. As many provinces/territories do as don't have mandatory second language education programs. In its December 11, 2002 issue, the *Globe and Mail* states that most French immersion graduates report that after leaving high school, their French-language skills diminish for want of practice. What a *Lethbridge Herald* editorial reported on Octo-

ber 22, 1991 is as true in 2003 as it was then, though the Internet has probably mitigated some of this effect:

> The reality is in spite of 20 years of bilingualism, significant language differences exist for the majority of Canadians. Add to that the simple problem of finding Quebec's newspapers and magazines on the magazine stands outside Quebec, (or English-language newspapers in small town Quebec), and it's understandable how unbalanced opinions can flourish. What it comes down to once again is that if more Canadians were bilingual, they would not need to rely on symbols or on political interpretations to understand one another.

> *Canada, unlike most other developed nations, has no national policy on language education.*

Indeed, too often politicians obliterate Canadian history and obfuscate its reality. For those Canadians living in the vastness west of the Lakehead, for example, this interpreting is provided mainly by Canadian Official Opposition Alliance (cum Conservative) representatives in Parliament, the same group who, as Reformers a decade ago, declared Ottawa too "French-ified." *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.* More recently, its official languages critic, Scott Reid, is quoted for his opinion regarding, among other things, the free movement of French-Canadians to areas of Canada outside Québec:

> They are no different from any other immigrant [sic] community, therefore, don't deserve any

special treatment *Edmonton Journal*, December 11, 2002.

Lest I be branded a naysayer, one who is inclined to see the cup more as half empty than half full, (Calvé, 1991), I hasten now to add that I am ever optimistic about how we might work our way out of this quagmire. Where there is a will, there is a way. Now more than ever, though indeed it always was the case, the infinitely malleable, arbitrary system of symbols that is language needs embedding in context; needs a cultural mantle in which to wrap itself to put the finishing touch on its garb. Without this, language is without direction and purpose; indeed language is not only lacking in style, it is naked.

Whence linguaculture teaching?

There has been a steady evolution in language teaching's mother discipline, linguistics, and related fields' thinking about the nature of language (Stern, 1983: 146-147). In its fullest sense, language is understood to be something which is highly complex, encompassing much more than an enclosed code with quite narrow parameters and internal rules governing pronunciation, word and sentence structure, and vocabulary.

Making meaning with language is seen as a process that fundamentally arises in dialogue between individuals and across cultures. In our field's most significant, recent paradigm shift, we have moved from the Chomskyan construct of sentence and ideal speaker-hearer extracted from their world to the construct of utterance with its dialogic interaction between real speakers and listeners engaged in meaning-making activities arising from culturally formed motives and embedded in real circumstances. While the psycholinguistic focus with its emphasis on the individual is retained, the field's obsessiveness with this (Nemni, 1992, for example) has given way to a more balanced perspective, inclusive of the sociolinguistic and sociocultural. As Lantolf and Pavlenko (1995: 116-117) suggest, if

> sociocultural theory is [still] very much at the margins of L2 research, ... there is epistemological

value in fostering a multiplicity of views provided, of course, that we allow for the confrontation of the margin with the mainstream.

Given that language exists and functions not in a vacuum but in the sociocultural context in which it is embedded; language and culture are understood to be inextricably linked, whence the increasingly more common use of the term, linguaculture teaching.

In way of illustration of this gradual evolution, the following citations highlight what second language teachers generally recognize as being some of the most significant or key markers along this path:

Nelson Brooks (1966:206): Instruction in a foreign language, even at the start, remains inaccurate and incomplete unless it is complemented by appropriate studies in culture.

Dell Hymes (1972; 1977:169): We have reached, in effect, a study of language that is inseparable from a study of social life . . . Many linguists may say that such a study of language is not linguistics, but some other field, perhaps anthropology, psychology, sociology. Whatever its label, it is beginning to emerge into prominence, and it is the sort of study of language that is fundamental to education.

J.-P. Fichou (1979:35): Il existe en somme une 'civilisation appliquée' comme il existe une 'linguistique appliquée' bénéficiaire du travail des chercheurs.

D. Lepiq (1980; 1983:122): La notion d'acceptabilité revêt une dimension sociolinguistique et socioculturelle. Par conséquent, la notion de communication ne peut se réduire à un message purement linguistique.

Louis Porcher (1986:7): Les aspects culturels et de civilisation sont maintenant trop importants pour qu' on puisse se permettre de les laisser échapper. Impossible de mieux marquer que culture et civilisation font partie du champ de la didactique du français langue étrangère [ou seconde].

Michael Byram (1989:41): Language cannot be used without carrying meaning and referring

beyond itself, even in the most sterile environment of the foreign language class. The meanings of a particular language point to the culture of a particular social grouping, and the analysis of those meanings – their comprehension by teachers and other speakers – involve the analysis and comprehension of that culture.

NCFS Syllabus Culture (1990:1): Un enseignement de la langue seconde qui ferait l'impasse sur la culture ou la réduirait à de simples éléments folklorisants ou aseptisés irait à l'encontre et d'une véritable approche communicative et des objectifs éducationnels globaux que se doit de promouvoir le système d'éducation canadien.

R. Steele (1993:14): People who speak the target language fluently but who offend, confuse or otherwise distress their interlocutors through ignorance of or insensitivity to the cultural elements of the situation, have not achieved true communicative competence.

Given that language exists and functions not in a vacuum but in the sociocultural context in which it is embedded; language and culture are understood to be inextricably linked, whence the increasingly more common use of the term, linguaculture teaching.

Linguaculture is no longer relegated to second class status. Indeed, second language acquisition researchers and teachers no longer consider it a kind of "fad for non-linguists" (Porcher, 1986:7), nor "cultural coquetry" (Bibeau, 1982:12) nor as something "on the margins of real, accredited research in language teaching" (CASLT, 1990:1). Indeed, one would have to be suffering from the Rip Van Winkle-syndrome or pathologically denying reality to have missed the growing body and sophistication of literature in the linguaculture

teaching field pertaining to, for example, evolving sociocultural (Lantolf and Pavlenko, 1995) and intercultural theory (Heffernan, 1996), research into the rapports between language and culture, differing if not necessarily conflicting conceptions of linguaculture curricular content and objectives, tried and tested methodological innovations in linguaculture teaching, and the relationships between the microcosm that is the classroom and the myriad sociopolitical and sociocultural factors impacting on it.

A Case Study of Linguaculture Shunted to the Sidelines

This burgeoning theoretical thinking and activity over the past quarter century seemed to go by unnoticed as French immersion arrived on the scene in Canada.

In its golden age, the 1970's and 1980's, even habitually circumspect researchers described French immersion in such terms as "fascinating" or "singular" pedagogical experiences (Stern, 1981; 1984a), as "immersion phenomenon" (Stern, 1984b), as "trial balloon that flew" (Lapkin, Swain and Argue, 1983), as "the pivotal point of Canada's new bilingualism" (Obadia, 1984), as "the Canadian breakthrough in languages teaching" (Yalden, 1984), as a "model for the rest of the world" (Purdy, 1987:4) and an "idea to be exported" (Manzer, 1993) and, not to be outdone by the others, as "success story" (Genesee, 1988) and as "success story of the century" (Abel, 1987). In this dog-eat-dog age of commercialism of everything and of globalisation of trade, the hype worked; in the area of second languages education, French immersion became Canada's foremost educational export to the USA and elsewhere in the years which followed.

In fairness, it must be observed that the 'wow effect' to which the researchers, alluded to above, seemed to succumb, gave way eventually to more typical sobriety and balance. The quasi-messianic tone characterizing their numerous earlier publications is rarely in evidence today. As French immersion has found its niche and become somewhat regularized in the educa-

tion systems across Canada, program advocates have felt less need to be on its defensive. Even latter-day immersion critics (for example, Lyster, 1987; Heffernan, 1995; Mannavarayan, 2002), not all of whom are against the overall program concept however, following in the footsteps of Bibeau (1982; 1984; 1991) and Hammerly (1989), pioneers and catalysts in researchers' attempting to see both sides of the immersion issue, no longer find themselves feeling cut off or isolated in the community of researchers and scholars studying French immersion in Canadian schools.

> *As French immersion has found its niche and become somewhat regularized in the education systems across Canada, program advocates have felt less need to be on its defensive.*

Early French immersion program proponents also acknowledge that, at its inception in the mid-1960's in Canada, this curricular innovation was, for most intents and purposes, atheoretical. The end of the "Grande noirceur" of the Duplessis period and the dramatic arrival on the scene of the "Révolution tranquille" in Québec, in large part unheralded for the vast majority of previously unobservant Anglophones, including their federal government, spawned knee-jerk reactions, including striking the Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission and, eventually, among other things, school systems adopting French immersion programs for majority Anglophone youngsters. Accordingly, French immersion was introduced as a second language education program alternative in Canada as an educational response to the perceived problem of sociopolitical cleavages apparently moving towards tearing the country apart at its seams. Except for its disparate links to so-called direct methods of language teaching, it really had no theoretical bases in language didactics at its origins.

This atheoretical state of affairs alluded to could not and did not last for long.

Informed by the burgeoning research emanating from sociolinguistics (especially Hymes, 1972) and the communicative revolution in second-languages education, highly credible researchers at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at Canada's foremost research centre on immersion education, came forward in the early 1980's with a seminal article (Canale and Swain, 1980) in which they proposed theoretical foundations which, effectively, came to represent the theoretical underpinnings of communicative, including French immersion, teaching and learning, with the sociolinguistic specifically being understood and analyzed in its most restrictive sense.

Its authors, like most other immersion researchers and theoreticians at that time, were particularly mindful of the need for reassurance for parents about immersion program outcomes and academic results of students enrolled in immersion. Rightly or wrongly, they also appeared, in an apparently overcompensating manner, to hear and give credence only to the voices of Anglophone parents who, allegedly, wanted their children to learn the French language, but not to the detriment of their self-identity as Anglophones. Reassurance that there would be no "threat" to their children's identity as Anglophones was provided over and over, became a kind of mantra and permanent subtext in the pertinent literature, and eventually became subsumed in the theoretical foundations underpinning the French immersion program.

In putting forward such a foundational theoretical and curricular premise, Swain and Lapkin (1982) positioned themselves squarely with those curricularists working towards social modification or adaptation (tinkering) as opposed to social transformation (according to the Eisner and Vallance classification, 1974), within an ideological paradigm of social equilibrium rather than social conflict (according to Paulston's classification, 1980) favoring then, both ideologically and theoretically, social repro-

duction, as it is referred to in the related curriculum literature (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1964; Bernstein, 1975; Masemann, 1983; Apple, 1990). This apparently well-intentioned, happy-go-lucky, shucks-we're-all- the same approach represents a position taken that linguistic curricular content is essentially neutral and a-ideological, a position evidently supporting the status quo and protecting the well-being of the majority or dominant in society, while at the same time glossing over the internal contradictions inherent in Canadian and in all societies. In their own words, Lapkin and Swain (*idem*: 2,3,4) state:

> we reassured people in the majority group that there was little risk that learning a second language would threaten the personal and cultural identity [of their children] ... Students in the immersion program are exposed to exactly the same curricular content as those in the regular English program ... Instruction delivered to students in immersion should be exactly the same as that offered to students in the regular English program with the only difference being the language in which the teacher and students communicate in class.

> *French immersion was introduced as a second language education program alternative in Canada as an educational response to the perceived problem of sociopolitical cleavages apparently moving towards tearing the country apart at its seams.*

This is in keeping with Canale and Swain's elucidation of theoretical foundations underpinning French immersion:

> One may have an adequate level of sociolinguistic [and sociocultural] competence in Canadian French just from having developed such a competence in Canadian English (1980:5).

Evidently, notwithstanding more recent nuancing of this take (Swain

and Lapkin, 1990; Tarone and Swain, 1995), in which a small number of baseline aspects of immersion students' sociolinguistic performance is evaluated, still in large measure it is suggested that to live and learn and make sense of one's world and communicate, whether in English or in French in Canada, is essentially all one and the same.

This ideology of conformity, sameness and oneness, perceived by the French in Canada (and other North American linguistic-cultural minorities) as a kind of "steamroller effect", downplaying the importance of sociocultural appropriateness in authentic communication and minimizing the need for recognition of cultural and sociopolitical differences for the eventual attainment of genuine, negotiated harmony in a pluralistic society is the diametric opposite of what French-language culture-bearers, who are also curricular theoreticians (Lepiq, 1980, 1983:122; de Byser, 1981:14; de Grève, 1983:45), along with Hall (1977:54) and Hymes (1972; 1984: 93), among others, have articulated as their positions for what one might adopt and use for curriculum renewal in languages education. Laforge (1984: 41) appears to be right when he suggests:

> The English want to learn French but only on the condition that it is they who control the means and the message, according to their evaluation of the situation and within their own structures of sociocultural and political thought (translation mine).

Though no single theoretical position accounts for all consequences, it is clear that, along with other factors, generally culturally weak thinking about immersion has had practical consequences. We will cite only a few here:

1. Immersion students' and graduates' general inattention to sociolinguistically precise and appropriate language usage is well documented (Lepiq, 1983; Bibeau, 1984; Lyster, 1987; Hammerly, 1989; Mannavarayan, 2002).

2. After years in immersion programs, students have changed neither their ethnolinguistic identity nor their perceptions, notwithstanding the development of a few more positive attitudes towards Francophones, particularly among immersion students in their early grades (Cziko et al., 1980; Cleghorn, 1981; Cleghorn and Genesee, 1984; Carey, 1984, Genesee, 1987, Heffernan, 2002a).

3. In areas of the curriculum (e.g., Social Studies) where the linguistic and cultural content to which the students are exposed could maximize intercultural understanding, instead such content is generally inappropriate, wanting or even inexact, though periodically well informed, bilingual, bicultural teachers mitigate its impact through their broadened interpretation and implementation of same (Heffernan, 1995).

4. Though French immersion (and other French second language) teachers thirst for French-language professional literature and professional development activities, the English language and its cultural perspectives/premises dominate professional reviews and forums thereby leaving teachers in a kind of cultural wasteland professionally with respect to the language they are teaching (Blanco, 1981; Heffernan, 2002b).

What is Linguaculture Teaching?

In a brief overview, where have we come to so far in linguaculture teaching? This overview will touch upon – definitions, the emerging status of intercultural theory, diverging conceptions of linguaculture curricular content/objectives and the burgeoning body of available linguaculture teaching methodology. We will conclude with some tentative recommendations.

Definitions

Everything begins with definitions, whether they are implicit or articulated explicitly. One has to have a sense of what something is in order to be able to do it or to work towards its attainment.

Actually, easier said than done,

because there has been considerable debate even about these fundamentals, it can now be said that we have developed over the years a number of useful operational or functional definitions for key notions such as culture, linguaculture and sociocultural competence.

Regarding culture per se, particularly useful has been the late H. Ned Seelye's (1974, 1984, 1994) distinction made between so-called Culture à la Matthew Arnold (namely, culture as cultivation, education, exposure to the highest and best produced by humankind – its arts, literature, music and so forth) and culture à la Claude Lévi-Strauss, the sense of which is perhaps most succinctly captured in the anthropological aphorism: "Culture is just the way we do things around here." There is general, though not unanimous, agreement today that the culture one introduces in one's teaching is not the one or the other, but both, with an emphasis on culture.

Researchers were particularly mindful of the need for reassurance for parents about immersion program outcomes and academic results of students enrolled in immersion.

Since Hymes (1972), the notion of sociocultural competence has been accepted fully as a *sine qua non* of global L2/C2 competence. While definitions for cultural competence abound, and have been refined and become more encompassing and sophisticated over the years, the following from the AATF (1989) is perhaps most useful. For the AATF, sociocultural competence is defined as a combination of three interrelated parts: the sociolinguistic skill of appropriate use and authentic communication, certain areas of 'must-have' knowledge without which communication is in a vacuum and without coherence and devoid of understanding of or reference to sociocultural and historical context, and, finally, certain informed attitudes which take into account both one's native and the

target linguistic/cultural worldview.

As for the term linguaculture, coined by Claire Kramsch (1991), it is clearly derived from melding two words, language and culture, into one. Linguaculture represents essentially two things:

- *defensively*, it is a kind of reaction against the so-called 'conduit' metaphor, coined by Michael Reddy (1979), which expresses the restricted, if not also distorted notion that language is a mere conduit for informational content, itself neutral, and is a closed and culturally-neutral system of linguistic forms and structures and
- *constructively*, it represents the view that language incorporates within it the linguistic community which uses its shared, or, at least, "complicit" understandings of the world as it unfolds and how that is represented and valued (Alvarez, 1986), what Galisson (1987) has referred to as the "CPP" or "charge culturelle partagée" of words and ideas, without exaggeratedly distorting or misconstruing Whorf's original premises, as we have been warned against so effectively by Martin (1986).

Inherent in this notion of linguaculture is a repudiation of perceptions of literacy, or one might propose, of biliteracy, which are so

> narrow if not distorted by the pervasive tendency, in education as well as in language theory and research [in particular, as] to regard language solely as a means by which information is shunted from one person to another (Smith, 1985:95)

to an approach which

> takes discourse as the integrating moment where culture is viewed, not merely as behaviours to be acquired or facts to be learned, but as a worldview to be discovered in the language itself and in the interaction of interlocutors [who] use that language (Kramsch, 1991: 237).

The Emerging Status of Intercultural Theory

The language teaching field has been repudiated for its dearth of theory pertaining to linguaculture and intercultural approaches to language teaching. Once a valid criticism or concern, it is now believed that this charge indicates only a want of awareness of multiple contributions over the past quarter century to an evolving intercultural theory. Just as, over time, the field has developed a theory and theories of language and of language acquisition, so too has there evolved intercultural theory to inform our practice in linguaculture teaching.

This theoretical tradition or orientation has its epistemological origins in a number of disciplines – philosophy (especially hermeneutics), anthropology, linguistics (sociolinguistics and pragmatics) and sociology, to name only the most significant influences. It has clearly distanced itself from the heuristic narrowness of traditional Cartesian rationalism and the related positivism so prevalent particularly in the 19th century so as to widen its frame of reference, thereby allowing it to address broader issues pertaining to the interactions between language and culture.

Researchers and theoreticians who have remained slaves of positivist theories and approaches carry on in two readily identifiable ways today:

- they ignore any research issues or paths of theoretical inquiry simply because of the difficulty incurred in trying to reduce the proposed object of study to ostensibly scientifically quantifiable units of analysis and/or
- they ridicule the efforts of researchers and theoreticians who are using heuristic models with epistemological foundations different from their own (for example, Nemni, 1992).

Research inspired by intercultural theory has resulted in our gleaning otherwise unattainable cross-cultural insights (Kramsch, 1988; Swaffar, 1992; Heffernan, 1995), quite simply because such researchers have refused to focus on the so-called cultural "me," which focus can be traced back to the regrettably excessive psychologism of the "me generation" of the 1980s. As Murphy-Lejeune (1988:161), pointed out, in spite of challenges inherent in the intercultural approach, "very few researchers would accept today the idea of doing nothing."

This theoretical tradition recognizes that humans' self-identity is clarified for them in light of their relationships established with others both on the level of individuals and on the level of the "identity groups" to which they belong. Derrida (cited in Kearney, 1984:116; 117) has already suggested, in this vein, that: "L'identité présuppose l'altér- ité" and, with respect to one's group identity associations: "Toute culture est hantée par son autre." Knowing oneself and understanding one's culture are built on the foundation of one's capacity to acknowledge and accept difference so as not to confuse and see as alike what is not really the same (Porcher, 1986:13). Hall (1977:54) is thinking similarly:

> Any time you hear someone say, 'Why, they are no different than the folks back home — they are just like I am,' even though you may understand the reasons behind these remarks, you also know that the speaker is living in a single-context world (his own) and is incapable of describing either his world or the foreign one.

Clearly, no one evolves as an individual outside a social context which influences and shapes him/her.

> Individuals live in society: there is a truism which must sometimes be recollected given just how great our solitude sometimes seems (Deslauriers, 1991:16).

In contradistinction to the Cartesian rationalist tradition of "cogito" and the pretension of subjects to apprehend themselves immediately and intuitively, intercultural theorists (along with phenomenologists in the hermeutician tradition) propose that one knows oneself only by the long and circuitous path of coming to apprehend the signs of humanity embedded in the myriad cultures influencing each of us.

As Charaudeau (1983a:9) states:

> Every enunciation is made by a particular individual who is at one and the same time an indi-

vidual and a collective subject, whether the individual is producing or receiving a message.

The art of enunciation is never simple and straightforward; there is always nuance, implicit and explicit meaning, what is stated and what is unstated. The speech of all is influenced by their sociocultural origins, and is also variable, polyphonic, ritualized and externalized in keeping with their psycho-social identity groups in such a way that, indelible marks of group identity, they are internalized often unconsciously and become individual markers characterizing them and their personal style of speech. The sub-text in linguistic exchanges one interprets, for example, uncovers voices behind or in those speech acts which are never exclusively those of the interlocutors. The interlocutors' voices incorporate and integrate in their own speech the traces of other voices of other persons living here or elsewhere, now or from the past and even anticipating the future.

Thus Nemni (1992:931), for example, while adopting the style and the tone of the polemicist refuting intercultural theory and its contributions, identifies herself as "university professor." Unconsciously, she has thereby demonstrated her cultural conditioning as one from the Western world, a clear sign of her collective belonging, where adult individuals most typically identify themselves first according to their profession or trade. She only identifies herself secondarily as a woman, and next as a mature person of a specific age group, belonging to a particular socio-economic group, and so forth. In many cultures, anthropologists tell us, identifying oneself first according to how one earns one's living is contextually irrelevant, even inappropriate. Obviously, in addressing her socio-culturally well educated, diverse colleagues, in the context of an article published in a professional review, Nemni was not behaving linguistically inappropriately; all the same, how she identified herself in the context of the West does mark her culturally.

Before analyzing any speech act, intercultural theorists state that interpreters must avoid seeing language in isolation as the end point of the analysis. Rather, they suggest a focus on those indicators of sociocultural organisation in which the speech act being studied is embedded. As Charaudeau (1983b:8) states:

> In a given social community, there exist language conventions and contracts, that is to say, psycho-social practices shared and understood by members of that community.

All speech is marked by its sociocultural origins.

Intercultural theorists would observe then that one obscures or distorts language meaning when there is no recognition of the cultural perspective underlying its expression. Many examples can be cited bearing witness to the need for cultural keys in order to be able to fully access an interlocutor's meaning, without which, much is lost. Valdes (1986:1.3) mentions in way of examples not fulfilling this criterion Esperanto, which has experienced only mitigated success as a result of its want of cultural referents, and the study of languages for specific purposes (for example, technical English), which leads to a grasp of only partial truths of language on account of the apparent cultural neutrality of this approach.

The objective of intercultural teaching is to sensitize participants to the variety of biases, innocent and other, which are present in all discourse. It is important to be able to situate and understand these "biases" (cultural prisms) through which speech acts are mediated. If individuals are unmindful of the fact that they see the world and express their worldview through cultural prisms, one is naturally led to think that those who see the world differently or hold alternative worldviews are wrong. There is a tendency then to think that they (the others) cannot see what to us is clear as crystal and to ignore the fact that, instead, they (the others) are simply interpreting the world around them using their cultural prisms. In intercultural teaching, there is an effort to get beyond this ethnocentrism, this sociocentrism,

this egocentrism, this thick-headedness. As Porcher (1986:124) states, linguaculture teaching informed by intercultural theory is a "pedagogy of decentering."

Intercultural theorists would add that this is essentially critical and relativist teaching, as opposed to teaching that is acritical and normative. They point out that one experiences one's first culture principally as a kind of conditioning. As Margaret Mead, cited in Thévenin (1980:21), asks:

> Is not all learning, of necessity, conditioned and reinforced through the cultural development set in which one is immersed?

Such learning is, by nature, subjective. The individual generally only comes to objectify this learning through contrasting it with points of view expressed by other cultures. Obviously, it can still be decided to present a nonconflictual, and falsely unitary, vision of one's own and other cultures. Unfortunately, though, as Apple (1990), Bernstein (1995), Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), and Contenta (1993), among others, point out, this fails to prepare students for the realities of life. Differences and alternative points of view spring up, in spite of us, which are often the source of misunderstandings and conflicts. Mutual understanding atrophies. For interculturalists, there is a desire then to avoid at all cost what is all too common in second language classes, where students depend on their native cultural competence as they go from one language to the other in the manner of $L_2 + C_1 = L_2$, producing and interpreting what Besse (1984:99) calls "a simple coding over of forms from their mother tongue." As Murphy-Lejeune (1988: 158) points out:

> The real novelty and strength of the intercultural approach reside in its analysis of the perceptual relations existing between C_1 and C_2.

In contradistinction to "multiculturalism," which according to Lamy and Rosseel (1982) represents a situation of co-existence of cultures where, while the two cultures are perforce in contact with one another but do not arrive at dialogue,

indeed refuse dialogue with one another, there is "interculturalité." By its very method and practice, in lieu of monologues,

> ces rencontres manquées de propos contradictoires ou de solitudes parallèles (Thévenin, 1980: 131),

the intercultural approach imposes dialogue.

Following such an approach, in getting to really know the "Other" in his/her "Other-ness", one also finally arrives at a fuller, truer understanding of oneself. This calls to mind the following poetic expression of T. S. Elliot:

> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And to know the place for the first time.

Intercultural theory also points out that deeper knowledge of oneself and others is not limited to a kind of accumulation of facts. Intercultural competence also depends on the development of what Zarate (1984:115) has referred to as "interpretative know-how" ("savoir-faire interprétatif"). This methodology forces learners to seize upon the assumptions underlying their own and others' perspectives. There is no objectifying the other (e.g., "aren't they quaint?"; "all Frenchmen do this") nor themselves nor is there mutual trivializing through superficial, stereotypical and folkoric descriptions of one another. It is instead a matter of interpreting and being interpreted by the "other." There is an effort made not to dwell on characteristics presented out of context as definitive or objective; instead, there is a focus on the practices which structure and define the relations between the two. As Abdallah-Pretceille (1986:78) has stated:

> There is no such thing as linguistic content that is neutral or a-ideological; all linguistic exchanges are embedded in a context marked by a historical, sociological and political period in time and by a specific place.

The 1990s have witnessed publication of works bringing to culmi-

nation for now and to a kind of synthesis intercultural theory as it informs linguaculture teaching practices (e.g., Byram and Buttjes, 1991; Kramsch, 1995; and Heffernan, 1996).

Diverging Conceptions of Linguaculture Curricular Content/Objectives

Since Eisner and Vallance (1974), it has been understood that there are widely varying conceptions of curriculum content and objectives. This is just as true for linguaculture content and objectives.

Two predominant dichotomies emerge from a review of the literature to this point in time.

On the one hand, linguaculture content is seen to be the accumulated knowledge gleaned from lists of facts and catalogues of behaviours. In this vein, one can identify add-on tid-bits to make the class more interesting (Standards for Foreign Language Learning, 1996:131),

- filling Freddie Farkle full of fickle facts: the learning of facts for their own sake" (Seelye, 1994: 28),
- the "Frankenstein approach – a taco from here, a flamenco dancer from there, a gaucho from here, a bullfighter from there,"
- the "4-F approach – folk dances, festivals, facts and food,"
- the "by-the-way approach – the identification of monuments, rivers and cities" (from Galloway, 1985, cited in Omaggio, 1993: 360).

On the other, which the intercultural approach would favor more, one finds linguaculture content seen as maieutic or heuristic or discovery process (for which tools for deciphering and strategies of discovery are taught as keys to opening the door into another culture, while simultaneously reflecting back on one's own culture).

Linguaculture content is also seen as a means to an end (e.g., building of literacy vocabulary, avoiding cultural faux pas) or as a process of the gradual gleaning of insights through ever more sophisticated, informed exploration of authentic oral and written texts from the maternal and the target cultures.

The Burgeoning Body of Available Linguaculture Methodology

Most mainline L_2 teaching textbooks over the years have included at least a chapter on culture teaching (Allen and Valette, 1977; Rivers, 1981; Hammerly, 1986; and so forth). As well, numerous specialized linguaculture texts have been published (Seelye, 1974; 1984; 1994; Fichou, 1979; Porcher, 1986; ThŽvenin, 1980; Beacco and Lieutaud, 1981; Valdes, 1986; Zarate, 1986; Damen, 1987; CASLT, 1990; Kramsch, 1995), which are literally filled with strategies for linguaculture teaching.

In reviewing the past decade's (1994-2003) literature in such professional journals as the *Canadian Modern Language Review*, *Foreign Language Annals*, *The Modern Language Journal* and *Le français dans le monde*, many articles appear reporting on linguaculture teaching strategies. As well, numerous special issues of these reviews have been dedicated exclusively to linguaculture teaching (e.g., issues 16, 78, 181 and 188 of *Le français dans le monde* on the themes of "L'enseignement de la civilisation française," "Fondements théoriques d'un enseignement de la civilisation," "D'une culture à l'autre" and "Civilisation encore" or *The Modern Language Journal*, 78(4) special issue on sociocultural theory and second language learning).

Arries (1994) has provided one particularly useable breakdown of broad categories of linguaculture teaching approaches:

- activity approaches and
- anthropology – process approaches.

Activity approaches include such linguaculture teaching/learning strategies as culture assimilators, mini-dramas, field trips, visits to class by native speakers/culture bearers, and using authentic materials (e.g., radio broadcasts, newspapers, popular reviews).

In anthropology-process approaches, there is a recognition that cultural behaviour changes and even authentic materials can quickly become outdated. In these approaches, instead of viewing culture and language as distinct com-

ponents, where the study of culture is for enrichment, extra credit or a kind of motivational additive, in keeping with the tradition of linguaculture teaching, units are planned in which students simultaneously use the L_2 as well as anthropological techniques to test hypotheses about the L_2 in relation to the L_1. In this context, Arries suggests, there is an avowed need for linking cultural teaching practices to a theory of language acquisition. Further, I now suggest, there needs to be a melding of intercultural theory and language acquisition theory.

Some examples of anthropology – process approaches are beginning to appear in the literature (Robinson, 1993; Robinson and Nocon, 1996; Jourdain, 1998).

There is actually quite a lot of available information for language teachers/applied linguists interested in expanding their repertoire of linguaculture teaching strategies.

Some Tentative Recommendations

The beginning of a new century is an appropriate time for taking a Janus look at linguaculture teaching. As we have seen, there have been both forward and backward steps in this area in the course of the past quarter century. We have also seen that change in the classroom in linguaculture teaching is incorporated in a broader set of considerations and will accelerate as these are also addressed – the sociopolitical climate, language policies (and want of same), our professional practices, and so forth. In looking forward, the following tentative recommendations are made, with a view both to provoking debate and dialogue and to inspiring action in this sphere:

1. Modelling is everything. Practice what we preach. Attribute greater importance to sociolinguistic precision and appropriateness in our classrooms to help make it come about in our students' performance. Revisit our underlying theoretical premises in the area of linguaculture teaching. Increase our use of languages other than English in the professional discourse in our reviews and in our professional activities, thereby also ensuring our exposure to alternate perspectives and paradigms relative to linguaculture in (and other aspects of) language teaching.

2. As culture is still most frequently neglected, without overlooking the other components of a multidimensional curriculum, experiment more when planning with starting with culture and working back to language. A 23-year old immersion graduate using: "Je suis 23 ans," and such related formulations, is making an egregiously wanting cultural error while also using faculty grammar.

3. For those teachers wishing to look more into linguaculture teaching, get your hands on those special issues on linguaculture teaching of pertinent reviews cited in this article.

4. Keep creating more authentic dialogic opportunities (e.g., Internet, pen pal clubs, exchanges).

5. Lobby for the articulation of a federal language policy, negotiated collaboratively with the provinces/territories, which is mindful of language in its relation to culture.

6. Lobby for at least some of the money promised by the Canadian Federal Government in its late 2002 throne speech, to promote doubling the number of Canadian bilingual high school graduates by the year 2013, to be allocated to more exchange opportunities for youngsters in all second language programs.

7. Lobby in the United States for legislators in what is now the majority of American States to abrogate English-only laws so that the children will see the adults are serious about something other than unilingualism and its concomitant one world view.

Concluding remarks

Without this becoming a new bandwagon, it is suggested that now is the time for a renewed focus on language and culture in their dynamic relationship to one another. Now is the time to give authentic linguaculture pride of place in our classrooms.

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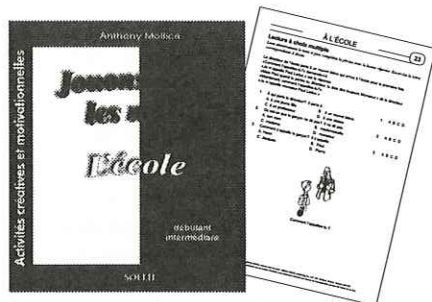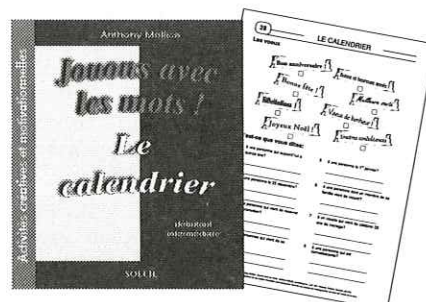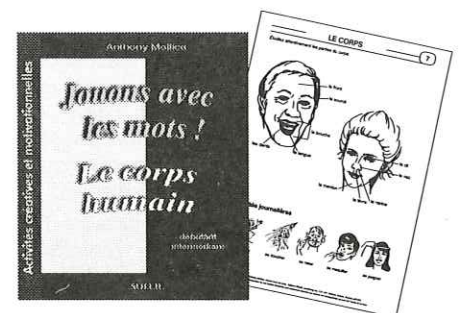
Joan Netten, and Claude Germain

A New Look at Core French: Intensive French in Newfoundland and Labrador

Intensive French was originally a three-year project (1997-2000), which was undertaken in two school districts, one rural and one urban of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is a new approach aimed at improving the communicative competence of the regular core French student. Today, it is an approach to second language teaching/learning which has expanded widely in Canada. This article reports on the project's origins.

Intensive French: How did it begin?

There is a considerable contrast between the communicative ability of immersion students and those in core French, yet 94 percent of the students studying French in Newfoundland and Labrador, and in Canada for that matter, are in the core French program. Therefore, throughout Canada people have been looking for ways to improve the teaching of core French. The introduction of the communicative approach and the multidimensional curriculum has done much to help core French become more effective, but French in the core classroom for the majority of students does not really become a language of communication. Research has indicated that, in order to learn to communicate in French, students have to use French in authentic communicative exchanges and use it in this way for extended periods of time. These two factors, authentic language use and extended language use, are the essential conditions for learning to communicate in French. They are present in the French immersion program; the challenge is to find a way to bring them into the core French program.

Definition of Intensive French

Intensive Core French, then, is defined as an enrichment of the core French program by the creation of a period of intensive exposure to French enabling students to receive three to four times the number of hours of instruction normally devoted to French in the school year in which the program is offered. Until now, in the Newfoundland and Labrador context, this enrichment occurs at grade six.

Necessary Conditions

In order to create the conditions for Intensive French, three major adjustments had to be made to the curriculum: a reorganization of the instructional time, a reorientation of the curriculum, and the adoption of an interactive pedagogy.

> *Intensive French was conceived as a program which would enable a wide spectrum of students to profit from the advantages of a communicative experience in French, particularly students in rural areas where immersion programs cannot be implemented.*

Reorganization of instructional time

This is achieved by compacting the regular English curriculum and creating a concentrated block of time in one semester of the school year devoted primarily to the learning of French. In general, two types of arrangements have been developed in order to respond to the constraints of different school situations; either 80% (the greater part of the school day) or 50% (approximately half of the school day) is devoted to Intensive French. The total amount of time devoted to French is increased from the normal 90 hours for grade 6 to from 200 to 400 hours. Thus, intensity in the Newfoundland school situation has three organizational components: an increase in instructional time, a concentration of instructional time in one semester and, as far as possible, uninterrupted time, that is a block of time for French activities uninterrupted by time devoted to other subject areas each school day.

In order to achieve the amount of time required for Intensive French, the regular curriculum had to be compressed. To this end the amount of time spent on certain subject areas was reduced, or the subject eliminated altogether for the five month period when Intensive French is being offered. In most schools the English language arts curriculum was considerably reduced. The choice of other subjects and the amount of instructional time depended upon the priorities of the school involved; in general, subject areas compressed included science, social studies, health and religion. Mathematics was not compacted in any of the participating schools. In the other semester, the regular curriculum was followed, with the usual time allotments; core French formed a part of that curriculum, as is normally the case.

Intensive French was conceived as a program which would enable a wide spectrum of students to profit from the advantages of a communicative experience in French, particularly students in rural areas where immersion programs cannot be implemented. Therefore, it was not deemed appropriate that the entire regular curriculum should be taught in the second semester, and therefore, faster than would normally be the case. Nor was it considered desirable to increase the amount of homework which would be given to students in order to assist them to complete the regular curriculum more quickly. Consequently, it was decided to compact the regular cur-

riculum; in compacting the curriculum the subject matter goals for all affected subject areas for grade 6 were maintained, but the number of resources used to achieve these goals were reduced. Thus, students follow the regular curriculum at a rate that would be normal for grade 6 pupils, but by using a smaller number of resources.

There is a theoretical basis for this compacting of the curriculum. This theoretical basis may be called a transdisciplinary approach to second language instruction (Netten and Germain, submitted). The approach integrates three main components: Cummins's (1979) hypothesis of the interdependence of languages, Vygotsky's (1962) conception of the relationship between instruction and intellectual development and the neo-piagetan view of the relationship between social and intellectual development (Mugny and Carugati, 1989).

Enriching the French curriculum

It was not possible to use the regular core French texts, as they are conceived for teaching periods of approximately 40 minutes per day; teachers needed a sequence of activities that would last for three to five hours in a day and keep students actively using French in authentic communicative situations. Nor could lessons be developed from resources used at the higher grade levels because they were not suited to the level of cognitive, social and personal development of grade 6 pupils. Therefore, a new curriculum was developed by the participating teachers with experience teaching both the regular curriculum and core French at grade 6.[2] The curriculum which they developed is based on the core French goals for grade 9, but activities are adjusted to the cognitive and social level of grade 6 students. A theme approach that enables teachers to explore and develop areas of interest to particular pupils, or groups of pupils, thus implicating them in their learning to a greater degree than is often the case in a regular core French classroom and increasing their motivation to use French was adopted. The curriculum is cognitively demanding, and increases in complexity of language use, tasks and knowledge base during the five months. It integrates some information from other subject areas; however, it is to be remembered that, unlike French immersion, the goals of all teaching activities are linguistic ones related to communication; no subject matter goals are specified. In addition, because the linguistic goals are communicative, no, specific vocabulary or grammatical sequences are specified; this aspect is developed by the teacher according to the needs of the students.

In addition, the curriculum was conceptualised as a language arts experience for the pupils. A whole, or integrated, approach to language learning was adopted, and all activities were based on authentic language use. All four skills are integrated in the program from the beginning. The use of a whole language approach to learning French provides considerable language enrichment beyond that of a regular core French classroom. In particular, reading activities, both in class and independently at home, are undertaken right from the beginning. Writing also is an integral part of the curriculum; students keep a personal journal, as well as engaging in various types of writing activities to complete their tasks.

> *Anecdotal evidence from teachers and parents also suggests that students who were considered to be weak in English language skills have, in many cases, not only learned to communicate in French, but have also improved their ability to write in English.*

Teaching strategies

Regular use of an interactive pedagogy, such as cooperative learning (work in pairs and small groups) and *la pédagogie du projet* is an essential part of Intensive Core French as conceived for Newfoundland and Labrador. Through projects, students are able to work cooperatively, assisting each other in their learning as well as undertaking tasks that are of particular interest to them or congruent with their particular skills and abilities in the second language. Projects also permit students to use language in many different contexts, enabling them to use more types of language functions (explaining, gathering information, asking questions, negotiating meaning) as well as integrating knowledge from different sources using complex language structures (scaffolding). The use of this type of pedagogy is crucial not only because of the frequency and complexity of language use but also because of the increased possibilities for the development of cognitive, social and personal capacities, and the organizational skills of the learner. In recommending to teachers the frequent use of more complex interactional types of activities we believe that teachers contribute to the development of the cognitive capacities of the students. Thus, the adoption of an interactive pedagogy related to the accomplishment of intellectually interesting and complex tasks through social interaction with peers enables students to enhance both the linguistic aspects (knowledge) of the teaming of a second language as well as the cognitive aspects (capacities) of learning to use it. In addition, it is our, belief that the use of this interactive pedagogy enhances the development of other cognitive, social and personal capacities and organizational skills which are transdisciplinary and which contribute to the overall development of the individual. The effective use of this pedagogy, however, is based on the teacher's ability to develop tasks that are carefully sequenced linguistically.

What are the Results of Intensive French?

Eighty percent of the students in the Intensive French program were able to attain at least Level 3 of the French 3200 oral interview, that is "to show some spontaneity in language production and to initiate and sustain simple dialogue (Level 3 descriptor, French 3200 oral interview protocol developed by the Department of Education of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1992).

Results for written production indicated that students were able to write in French at the same average level as native francophones in Quebec in grade 3. In addition, students demonstrated a high degree of accuracy as well as fluency. Thus, all students benefited from the program whatever their ability level.

At this point no quantitative measures of the effect of the Intensive French program on the development of English language skills has been undertaken. However, anecdotal evidence from teachers and principals suggests that no negative effects are indicated. A comparison of year end marks in English language arts for grade 6 for the Intensive French students with their year end marks in grade 5 does not show any noticeable deviation. Anecdotal evidence from teachers and parents also suggests that students who were considered to be weak in English language skills have, in many cases, not only learned to communicate in French, but have also improved their ability to write in English.

No empirical study of the effects of Intensive French on the learning of other subjects has been undertaken, but anecdotal evidence from teachers, suggests that no negative effects have been perceived. A comparison of year end marks in other subject areas for the Intensive French students does not indicate any major differences in subject matter attainment.

Furthermore, principals, parents and teachers have commented on the increased self-esteem and confidence of students. Principals have also commented on the increased initiative and responsibility of students participating in the program. Teachers have also commented that students are more willing to use dictionaries, reference works and the Internet to find information, and that they are more autonomous, undertaking more work than would be expected for the completion of the regular curriculum.

Overall, the effects of Intensive Core French appear to, be more positive than anticipated. It is our hope that this experience will revitalize the core French program, not only in Newfoundland and Labrador, but in the rest of Canada as well as it is envisaged that Intensive French will eventually expand to some other provinces in Canada.

Notes

1. A longer version of this paper was presented at the Conference of the Modern Language Council of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, October 2000.

The project been undertaken with the support of the provincial Department of Education and is funded by the federal Department of Canadian Heritage. Participants in the urban school district are volunteers, but represent a wide variety of ability levels; those in the rural district include all the students in the class.

Since 2000, when this paper was first submitted, this project has expanded widely in Canada and has been reported upon in a range of publications and at a wide variety of venues.

2. We would like to thank the teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador for being the pioneers in this experiment.

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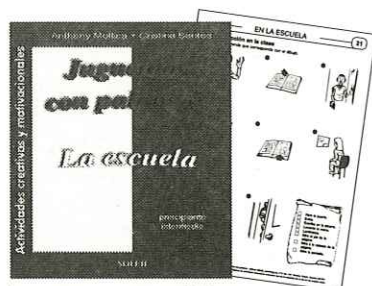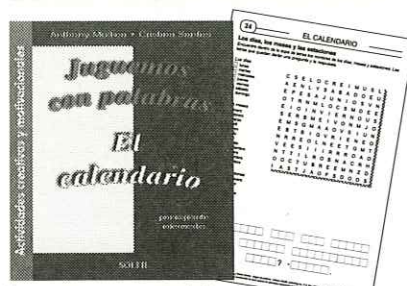
Norman R. Diffey

Exploring Learners' Perspectives in a "Post-methods Age"

This article goes to the source - students themselves - to report on their thinking about and strategies used in language learning. Trying to understand students' satisfaction and want of same in language learning is one means to teachers getting a better grasp on student motivation.

Introduction

Since at least the late nineteen-sixties researchers have sought connections between language learning and language teaching, between what we know, or think we know, about "second language acquisition" and the practical issues of teaching methodologies, pedagogical resources, and the actual shape and content of programs. There are some indications that an unstated belief driving much of this work is now a spent force, namely that the improvement of language teaching as measured by indicators such as learner achievement or rates of attrition is dependent on finding the "right" application of the "right" method. There are no doubt many reasons for our loss of faith in designer approaches to language teaching. In fact voices were raised in skepticism at the height of the "age of methods" (Richards 1984). In Canada we seem to have arrived at a realistic assessment that, despite the heavy investment in commercially produced, integrated programs reflecting various models of second-language (L2) learning processes and despite the truly impressive contribution of the National Core French Study (CASLT 1990), our core French classrooms have not succeeded in producing a generation of bilingual graduates. There are also signs of waning enthusiasm and a corresponding decrease in funding on the part of policy-makers. In Ontario, new funding formulas and curricula are not supportive of the long established K-3 French programs. Within boards even such a mun-dane issue as the elimination of the French classroom as a cost-saving measure can contribute to the perception that the other national language is no longer an educational priority, leading one teacher surveyed on this issue to write:

> French is the most maligned subject in the elementary curriculum. All of my efforts are directed at developing a positive attitude towards French — and it is an uphill battle. The single most significant factor is having a space of your own where you can create a French ambiance. (Castagna 1997: 57).

> *Within boards even such a mundane issue as the elimination of the French classroom as a cost-saving measure can contribute to the perception that the other national language is no longer an educational priority.*

We may be entering a new phase of declining external support in which success or otherwise in the French classroom reverts to a locus of responsibility where it has always truly belonged, that of the teacher. At the same time many teachers may by now have come to the conclusion that the most refined methodologies and commercial kits, even the best equipped classrooms, will be ineffective without the sustained cooperation of engaged and respected learners.

From this perspective recent research by myself and graduate students has been conducted with a view to seeing whether the learners themselves can offer any useful insights into what goes on, beneath the surface so to speak, in typical FSL classrooms. The studies are in seemingly unrelated areas, namely

1. target language encounters in primary (K-1) French immersion classes
2. motivation among core and immersion French students in the middle grades
3. learning strategies of intermediate (grades 7 and 8) core French students

Despite their diversity they provide a view of the learner who is actively engaged with the target language, has thoughts and feelings on the learning experience, and whose social and academic behaviours cannot be judged negatively simply because they do not match "official" expectations. Rather than asking "How can I move the greatest number of my students to a satisfactory level of achievement ?" the reflective language teacher may choose a different kind of question, such as "How can I enable my students to explore the richness of another language and the experience of learning it in an atmosphere of enjoyment and mutual respect?"

Can Beginners' Enthusiasm be Maintained?

The evidence of early immersion suggests that these ecological factors can play a role from the very beginning. In the course of observing and audio-recording classroom interactions in K-I immersion classrooms (Diffey 1993, Cervini 1995) we found that, although these youngsters were not yet equipped for the conscious analysis of the language they were hearing and attempting to produce, they were very much alive to the novelty and the challenge of the second-language environment. Combined with a kind of wide-eyed wonder, their speech with each other and with the teacher displays an awareness that

- they are discovering a new lexis to describe their immediate or familiar environment;
- the new language requires certain morpho-syntactical adjustments not found in their own, while its sounds and prosodic features are

acoustically different from their own;

- certain ready-made utterances enable them to do important things like request permission or seek assistance;
- the other language is to be accepted rather than avoided, which is best done by attending,
- imitating, seeking help, encouraging each other to speak French, or helping each other to find the right word;
- the other language can be a source of enjoyment rather than anxiety, a means of play rather than an obstacle to communication.

Here are two students eating Fruit Loops whilst making Christmas garlands. The teacher is nowhere to be seen, yet they willingly incorporate what Ellis (1988: 53) calls "formulaic speech" into their play:

> Student A: Pas toucher, Michael. Pas toucher.
>
> Student B: (Joining in). Pas toucher, Michael. Pas toucher, you.
>
> Student A: Pas toucher this. (Giggles) This is gonna be pas toucher. This is pas toucher.

On another occasion on one child is praising another's reading. A second one intervenes with some advice:

> Student C: You did it right.
>
> Student D: Dis: "C'est bravo."

It is a well-known complaint among elementary French teachers that by the middle grades the bloom is off the rose and that enthusiasm for learning and progressing in the language has died in some mysterious way. This phenomenon, sometimes referred to as "plateauing," surfaces in other countries and with other grade levels. In Scotland, for example, modem language learning begins at age eleven, continuing for four compulsory years. Teachers interviewed (Diffey 1995a: 9) spoke of the "enthusiasm" and "first flush" of interest on the part of first year students, who are "still childish enough to play and to be willing to listen." However, by the third year their "priorities change and language is certainly not one of them."

These teachers, as no doubt countless colleagues around the world, saw motivation as their biggest challenge.

Many practitioners are familiar with the two kinds of language learner motivation, or orientation," which have been identified and refined by Gardner and his associates over the last thirty years, namely the "instrumental" and the "integrative" (Gardner 1985). The former can be understood as an awareness of the practical advantages, whether for career or travel purposes, of learning another language, while the latter is more affective in nature, an underlying empathy with target-language speakers and a wish to share their cultural experiences. More recent research, of which an excellent summary is provided by Dörnyei (1998), has confirmed the validity of the orientation model, but has also sought to expand it by including measures of how learners feel about what actually occurs in the language classroom.

> *More communicative kinds of activities were preferred over the less communicative ones.*

A number of our studies have utilized the Gardner model and various adaptations of the instrument, the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) which measures the orientations. Taraborrelli (1994) found that among 93 students in a south-western Ontario secondary school those who opted to continue FSL beyond the compulsory Grade 9 had higher levels of integrative motivation than those who wished to discontinue. Lemieux (1997) conducted a study with 95 Grade 8 immersion students in the same region and found that of the 11 variables measured by the AMTB positive attitudes towards learning French seemed to be the most important predictor of the wish to continue in secondary immersion. Adding a new dimension to the topic of language learner profile the study also found that on locus of control measures the less motivated were more apt to attribute their achievement in French to luck rather than to their own effort or ability.

Classroom Activities and the Learning Environment

Quantitative research, then, continues to reveal more and more about L2 learners and the personal factors likely to affect their achievement and their persistence. Additional factors that have recently entered the research agenda include such constructs as "self-efficacy" and "autonomy," which are variations of the same basic question: How do learners feel about themselves and their experiences in the L2 classroom? In an ongoing study with grade 9 and 10 students in an Ontario high school and an age equivalent group in Scotland we have found that these learners are more than willing to vocalize their likes and dislikes about the French class. The words "fun" and "enjoyment" tended to surface regularly in group interviews in both countries. According to a somewhat similar type of study comparing middle-school learners in the USA and France, Colville-Hall (2000) found that the former are more apt to cite "fun" as a significant motivational factor in the L2 classroom. In our own study a quantitative survey of French class activity preferences revealed considerable similarity between the Canadian and the Scottish groups, with activities such as games, group work, and cultural contacts scoring noticeably higher than more formal types of language focussed activities. It is tempting to conclude that the more communicative kinds of activities were preferred over the less communicative ones. More revealing perhaps are some of the actual reasons given in the interviews for specific preferences. Thus on the topic of grammar, a grade 9 student complains about "a lot of writing and not really hearing the language, just copying notes and having the teacher explain in English why these verbs, we have to use them, et cetera, et cetera," while a grade 10 student, who according to other data from the study scores high in motivational intensity and likes his teacher, nevertheless remarks that

> She'll give us ten verbs, -ER verbs or so, and then we'll have to con-

jugate them all when you know she can only give us two, 'cause they're all basically the same, so why do we have to conjugate them all?

Two broad issues of potential interest to teachers seemed to emerge from these discussions, namely that the language environment should be (1) comprehensible and (2) authentic.

1. There seems to be general acceptance that the teacher should speak French in the classroom, even though teachers often report resistance to this. Two Canadian (grade 10) students shared the following:

   Student A: I like it when the teacher speaks French more than she speaks English, because if I don't understand something or don't know something it just makes me learn more, makes me want to know what she's saying, so it makes me work harder. [...]

   Student B: Yeah, I feel the same way. When I don't do well, after awhile, when she starts talking more French and stuff, I want to focus more too and I want to listen.

At the same time, speakers in both groups seemed to dread the moments of feeling foolish due to incomprehension, as when the teacher says something funny in French and others "are laughing their heads off." An ability to make the language comprehensible to all emerged as one of the hallmarks of a good teacher. In a related vein a Scottish student wanted only, in the course of class assignments, to be able to keep pace, if you don't understand something, and you've got to just try to understand to keep up, say you were slower than the rest of the class, it's not like the teacher would, well our teacher anyway, would slow (down).

The ability to comprehend the proceedings was evidently linked with these adolescent learners with the sense of feeling and appearing competent in the classroom.

If you understand you feel proud of yourself, 'cause you understand the concept and you can go on and do the work by yourself independently. [...] That way it shows you

that you do know what you're doing, and then it kind of boosts your self-esteem a little bit. (Grade 10 student)

There is considerable research on the topic of "language classroom anxiety" (Ellis 1994: 479-483). In the case of adolescent learners in particular, it may well manifest itself as a form of social anxiety, to which effective teachers will be open and sensitive.

2. The desire for authenticity showed itself, particularly with the Scottish group, criticism of classroom resources as well as in the aversion to formal grammar noted earlier. An interesting finding was that the experience or prospect of using another language in real-life situations clearly had appeal for some of the students interviewed.

We travel quite a bit so when we went into Quebec it was good because I could communicate with its people, and I remember going to Disneyland, I was only in grade 5, and these people were there from Quebec, and they're all like confused, and they're looking around, and they look so distraught, and me and my friend were talking to them and stuff in French, and they just seem so happy that somebody knew how to talk to them. (Grade 10 student)

Among the Scottish students there was evidence that a taste of the "real thing" can lead to irritation with the artificiality of the classroom. One had stayed with a French family and used a word found in his textbook which his guests found "kinda ridiculous." Another advanced the interesting theory that "when you're there (in France) you think that you've got it (the language) sorted (out), so when you come back you don't have to try so hard."

Language Learning as a Social and Collaborative Venture

A factor that seemed to link both these desiderata, the wish to understand and the wish to learn language applicable to real situations, is the social dimension of the language learning experience, in and out of the classroom. The social as-

pect was noticeable also in the case of learning strategies, the rich and often very personal and idiosyncratic diversity of thoughts and behaviours which learners develop by chance, insight or instruction to help them achieve understanding and control of the other language.

Mastronardi (1999) chose to examine the preferred learning strategies of 108 Grade 7 and 8 core French students using a modified version of Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). When it came to the types of learning strategies the students reported using (and by implication, recognizing), of interest was the strong showing for Oxford's "social" strategies, such as asking questions, cooperating with others, and empathizing with others. This was the only set (the others being cognitive, metacognitive and affective) in which the most popular response on a five-point frequency scale was as high as #4 ("I often do that"). This study also included a background questionnaire on target language knowledge and experience including the open-ended question "What has been your favorite experience in learning French?" Tabulating these answers proved easier than anticipated and showed a somewhat similar pattern to the Scottish/Canadian study above, with interactive and communicative kinds of activities heading the list and more formal, language-focused ones much less popular. Most favorite activity (37.7%) was "group projects," followed by "presentations" and "playing games," with "learning grammar" (2.8%) at the bottom. Beyond the feedback of potential interest for pedagogical planning and methodology, we found that these kinds of studies can yield a wealth of information about the human dynamics of L2 teaching and learning. Thus in the motivation study, a Canadian (Grade 10) student reflects on the human aspect of the teacher-student relationship and how, because of the peculiar "intimidating" nature of the subject, this is of greater importance in French than in other subjects:

My favorite subjects are English and history, and if I don't like the

teacher I'm still gonna push myself to do well, you know, regardless of how I feel about them, but French? I think you have to have a good relationship with your teacher, because it's a lot harder for me to pick up, so if I'm having problems or something, I have to feel I should be able to go to the teacher, and so if I didn't like our teacher I probably wouldn't be doing as well.

This same student's teacher when interviewed was willing to share her belief in a collaborative, learner-centered classroom. The following statements reflect some of its key components:

- Today's students "have been broadened through computers and the media" and are "more aware of the existence of other cultures" and that "it's a big world."
- "When we expect them to perform at our level, we're going to frustrate them and turn them off. That is not to say you have to sacrifice the integrity of the course," "but you have to look at them as individuals."
- If a student makes a mistake "there's more chance to be laughed at, so it's important to set the right tone in class."
- "If I make a mistake on the board, I let them know, or if they ask me something and I'm not 100% sure, we look it up together."
- "I don't think that a student has to get an A in order to enjoy the second language."

The value of looking at students as individuals has long been known intuitively by many language teachers, perhaps those most likely to declare themselves perplexed by some of the claims of L2 learning theory. They see learners in all their personal diversity and unpredictability as the intended beneficiaries of the vast concerted efforts of researchers, curriculum writers and publishers, who can achieve high levels of ownership of the learning process, within a social setting which must fulfill the same needs as other such settings, such as the need to feel competent, or the need for occasional "time-out."

Meanwhile teachers may consider adopting a range of learner-centred measures suggested in the literature, such as:

- Encouraging students to develop and share their own language learning strategies (Ellis 1994: 529-560). In this connection some of the literature associated with "language awareness" in L2 teaching programs (Diffey 1995b), particularly in relation to core French (CASLT 1990) indicates the classroom potential of opportunities to reflect on the nature and "differentness" of other languages and cultures.
- Viewing learning styles as essential learner profile information comparable in importance to ability. An interesting "first" for differentiating programs of instruction on the basis of learning style rather than levels of achievement is provided by the new Ontario curriculum for secondary FSL, with its distinction between Academic and Applied courses (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training 1999).
- Experimenting with some of the suggested strategies for motivating learners in the classroom. Dörnyei (1994) offers over thirty such strategies "including several involving autonomy: adapting tasks to student interest, involving students in the choice of teaching materials, encouraging students to set their own goals, allowing choice in goal attainment, sharing responsibility for organizing time, effort and learning, inviting them to design and prepare activities themselves, focussing on individual improvement, basing curriculum on a needs analysis and promoting self-efficacy by teaching students learning strategies" (Lemieux 1997: 34).

The framework for applying these and other such learner-centred suggestions for the French class is provided by an attitude of mind that views the ultimate goals of linguistic and cultural proficiency as outcomes of a protracted process which is "psycho-dynamic" as well as psycholinguistic in nature, which needs to be grounded in the teacher's personal belief in the primacy of the learner, such as the one articulated by the teacher interviewed above:

I believe in putting the subject to the side for even one or two minutes at the beginning of class and focusing on the student. Then when they see that, oh, she knows me, she knows my name, or you talk about their interests and things in English, because if you start popping out with it in French right away and they don't understand, well you've turned them off. [...] If you can focus on them as an individual, like their personal interests, let's put the discipline to the side for a minute or two and let them know that you know they're there and they're an interesting young human being, I find that that works; or saying "Hi" to them down the hall and using their first name, making an effort especially in grade 9 because they're walking down those halls and they don't know anybody, and when they see that Miss so-and-so remembered me the first week of school and said hi to me and not making a big deal out of it makes them feel at home, it makes them feel like they're accepted.

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Frank Nuessel

Mnemonic Acronyms: A Memory Aid for Teaching and Learning Spanish Grammar

Mnemonic devices are very useful to summarize and simplify grammatical rules especially when applied to many verb tenses and forms.

Introduction

The *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (Morris 1979: 842) defines "mnemonic" as "a device, such as a formula or rhyme, used as an aid in remembering." We advocate the use of mnemonics, where possible, as a simple way to help students to learn particular grammatical structures.

For a history of mnemonics, there are several interesting studies. Moreover, various studies exist on mnemonics for second-language education, and Spanish languages in general. (see references)

At the elementary and intermediate level such devices can be quite useful for students who may find that certain aspects of the grammar of Spanish are overwhelming. In these instances, a mnemonic device is often a blessing for students. Tuttle (1981) is perhaps the first person to write about this notion for Spanish in his article "Mnemonics in Spanish Class." In that essay, he talks about visual mnemonic devices such as the "shoe" verb concept for illustrating where stem changes occur in the present tense verbs. These changes occur in the first, second, and third person singular and third person plural, and when a line is drawn around these forms, they form the approximate outline of a shoe. Another sort of mnemonic device is the acronym. Morris (1979: 12) defines this notion as "a word formed from the initial letters of a name, as *WAC* for *W*omen's *A*rmy *C*orps, or by combining initial letters or parts of a series of words, as *radar* from *radio de*tecting *a*nd *ranging*."

Danesi (1983: 73; see also Mollica 1981: 620) notes that the visual component of any second-language learning tactic is very important. In his discussion of pedagogical graphics, or device intended to assist the student to understand and retain grammatical aspects of a second-language, Danesi (1983: 73-74) states that

> [a] pedagogical graphic is any symbol, figure, schema, diagram or chart (dots, lines arrows, circles, braces, etc.) that can be used to enrich the presentation of a grammatical point; i.e., it is a visual device that can be utilized in conjunction with, or superimposed upon, target language data in order to highlight some structural feature, relationship or process.

Fig. 2. **LND** (Adjective Position)

Limiting Adjective

Noun

Descriptive Adjective

In the case of mnemonic acronyms, it is best to arrange the key letters of the acronym vertically and place the initial letter in capital letters and in boldface type.

Mnemonic Acronyms

In this section, mnemonic acronyms for the following discrete grammar points in Spanish will be exemplified: (1) *Estar*; (2) adjective position; (3) imperfect tense; (4) *para*; (5) object pronouns; and (6) the subjunctive.

Estar

Mason (1990: 506) suggests the use of the acronym **PLACE** as a way to remember the use of *estar* reproduced here as Fig. 1.

Adjective Position

The entire question of adjective position in Spanish is complex because many factors enter into the relationship of meaning and placement Contreras 1976). Tuttle (1981: 582) provides a very useful mnemonic device for remembering the usual position of adjectives in Spanish. It is **LND** (pronounced 'land'). Its meaning follows: Limiting adjectives precede the Noun while Descriptive adjectives follow it. Stiehm's (1978) article on teaching Spanish word order for a comprehensive overview of this complex question is an excellent study on this topic.

Imperfect

Mason (1996: 16) suggests a mnemonic device for helping students to remember under what circumstances they should use the imperfect tense. The acronym is

Fig. 1. **PLACE** for Estar

Position:	Expresses the physical position or posture of a person or thing: *estar sentado, levantado*, etc.
Location:	Expresses where places, people, or things are located (*Estoy en Nuevo York; El libro está en la mesa*).
Action:	Expresses the result of an action or progressive (*El hombre está muerto; Estoy comiendo ahora*).
Condition:	Expresses health and other changeable states (*estar enfermo, sucio, lleno*, etc.).
Emotion:	Expresses emotions such as (*estar contento, triste, deprimido*) but one must remember that *alegre, melancólico* and *feliz* are considered inherent character traits and not simply experienced emotions that may change.

CHEATED reproduced here as Fig. 3.

Fig. 3. **CHEATED** (Imperfect)

C ontinuous Actions

´H abitual Actions

E motions

A ge

T ime

E ndless Actions

D escriptions

Para

While we can offer no simple and foolproof strategy for differentiating por and para, it may be easier to show students the uses of para, with its fewer and less complicated uses, and then explain that por is used elsewhere. To this end, Mason (1992) suggests a mnemonic device to assist students in recalling when to use either por or para. The mnemonic acronym for the use of para is PERFECT. Mason's acronym (1992: 198). Is reproduced here as Fig. 4.

Object Pronouns

At least two mnemonic strategies help students to remember where to place object pronouns in Spanish. The first is IGA (= Infinitives, Gerunds, Affirmative Commands; Quirk 2002: 903; see Fig. 5.) In the case of IGA, however, the student must keep in mind that the IG part of IGA is optional while the A part is not. The second mnemonic device is RID (=Reflexive Indirect Direct; Quirk 2002: 904; see Fig. 6) that helps the student to recall the order of object pronouns.

Subjunctive

The subjunctive mood, its forms and its uses, can be difficult to present to students conceptually. There are a few acronyms that help students to remember certain aspects of its formation and its uses.

Subjunctive Verb Formation

The materials in this section derive from a session at annual meeting of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (www.aatsp.org) held in Chicago August 4, 2003.

Stickles and Schwartz (2003: 1)

Fig. 4. **PERFECT** (for PARA)

P urpose:	Indicates the purpose of an action (*Lo hizo para ganar dinero*)
E ffect:	Indicates the effect that something or someone has on something or someone else (*Estudia para maestro*)
R ecipient:	Indicates the person or entity that receives something (*el regalo es para mamá; el dinero es para el fondo especial*)
F uture:	Projects to a future date or event (*la tarea es para el lunes*)
E mployment:	Indicates both what something is used for or job employment (*las tijeras son para cortar; Carlos trabaja para IBM*)
C omparison:	Indicates a comparison of person or thing with others in a class (*Para un gato es muy inteligente*)
T oward:	Indicates movement toward in terms of direction (*Pablo camina para el parque*)

Fig. 5. **IGA** (Object Pronouns Placement)

I nfinitive (optional before, after)

G erund (optional before, after)

A ffirmative Command (obligatory after)

Fig. 7. **DISHES**
(Irregular Present Subjunctive Forms)

Verb Present Subjunctive

D ar	→	dé
I r	→	vaya
S er	→	sea
H aber	→	haya
E star	→	esté
S aber	→	sepa

use the acronym DISHES to summarize those verbs whose present subjunctive is not based on the yo form of the present indicative reproduced as Fig. 7.

W ill

E motion

D esire

D oubt

I mpersonal expression

N egative

G eneralized Characteristics

Subjunctive in Noun Clauses

Tuttle (1981: 582; see Knop 1971: 340) suggests the acronym WEDDING as a way to remember which meaning classes of verbs take the subjunctive. WEDDING stands

Fig. 6. **RID** (Order of Object Pronouns)

R eflexive → **I** ndirect → **D** irect

for the following predicates.

The WEDDING acronym thus covers noun clauses introduced by verbs of volition, emotion, desire, doubt and impersonal expressions. Likewise, it covers the use of the subjunctive in relative clauses when there is a negative antecedent or an unspecified antecedent. This acronymic mnemonic does not, however, cover instances of the subjunctive in adverbial clauses (for discussion see below).

The following chart shows some typical examples of the subjunctive as found in the WEDDING acronym (see Fig. 8).

Impersonal Expressions

Chandler (1996) uses the acronym VOCES to indicate when to use the indicative after impersonal expressions. His (Chandler 1996: 127) mnemonic device is reproduced here as Fig. 9.

The Use of **Que**

Wakefield (1992) employs a travel analogy as a way to help students remember when to use the subjunctive in noun clauses. She (Wakefield 1992: 200) states that "... sentence must contain a trigger verb [see Fig. 8] indicating influence, emotion, or doubt. Two other conditions must also be made clear. There must be two clauses in the sentence indicated by a QUE, as well as a change of subject." Wakefield then pro-

Fig. 8. **WEDDING** (Use of Subjunctive in Spanish Noun Clauses)

WEDDING Acronym:	
Will (verbs of volition such as *preferir* and so forth)	
Prefiero que Jorge llegue a tiempo.	I prefer that Jorge arrive on time.
Emotion (verbs and verbal expressions of emotion such as *sentir, estar alegre (de)*	
Siento que María esté enferma.	I regret that María is sick.
Estoy alegre de que puedas visitarnos.	I am happy that you can visit us.
Desire (verbs such as *querer, desear,* and so forth)	
Quiero que Juan escriba la carta.	I want Juan to write the letter.
Doubt (verbs such as *dudar,* and so forth)	
Dudo que llueva hoy.	I doubt that it will rain today.
Impersonal expression (verbal expressions such as *es importante, es posible,* and so forth)	
Es posible qu haya mucha gente allí.	It is possible that there will be a lot of people there.
Negative (relative clauses with negative antecedents such as *nadie, nada,* and so forth)	
No hay nadie que pueda trabajar el domingo.	
There is no one that can work on Sunday.	
Generalized characteristics (relative clauses with unspecified antecedents)	
¿Hay alguien que tenga la tarea de hoy?	
Is there someone who has today's homework?	

Fig. 9. **VOCES** (Impersonal Expressions for the Indicative)

Es	+ VOCES	+ *que*	→ *INDICATIVO*
Es	**V**erdad	que	*Es verdad que te quiero mucho.* It is true that I love you a lot.
Es	**O**bvio	que	*Es obvio que me quieres también.* It is obvious that you love me too.
Es	**C**ierto/**C**laro	que	*Es cierto que te quiero más todos los días.* It is certain that I love you more every day.
Es	**e**vidente	que	*Es evidente que él no te quiere como yo.* It is evident that he does not love you like I do.
Es	**S**eguro	que	*Es seguro que nos queremos muchísimo.* It is certain that we love each other very much.

Fig. 10. **PASSPORT**

Pasaporte Oficial
1. *Trigger*   2. *Que*   3. *Cambio de sujeto*   *Sin las condiciones de arriba, no se puede pasar a la tierra del subjuntivo*

poses a visual mnemonic namely the "pasaporte oficial" which has the following form reproduced here as Fig. 10.

Adverbial Clause

Stickels and Schwartz (2003) provide several acronyms to address the use of the subjunctive in adverbial clauses – one of the more complex aspects of Spanish grammar.

Conjunctions which always require the subjunctive.

Stickels and Schwartz (2003: 19) use the acronym ESCAPA to refer to conjunctions which always require the subjunctive. They note with these conjunctions that you cannot escape the subjunctive reproduced here as Fig. 11.

Conjunctions for indefinite future time or uncertainty

Adverbial conjunctions that take the subjunctive when there is an unspecified or indefinite future time, or when certainty is implied constitute another category. Stickels and Schwartz (2003: 19) use the acronym LATCHED to refer to conjunctions that take the subjective when an event has not yet taken place. These forms are not used with the past subjunctive reproduced here as Fig. 12.

Additional Conjunctions

Stickels and Schwartz (2003: 19) use the acronym MA to refer to conjunctions that take the subjunctive when an event has not yet taken place reproduced here as Fig. 13.

Concluding Remarks

The above are a few very useful acronyms for teaching selected problematic grammatical points of Spanish grammar. A useful exercise involves trying to create other mnemonic acronyms for such problematic grammatical items and structures such as: por, ser, and the preterite, to name but a few. Teacher workshops provide a good opportunity to "brainstorm" other possibilities. These memory strategies really help students to recall when and how to use challenging aspects of Spanish grammar. Very often my students tell me that they still recall these memory aids years later, and they even use them to help their own children their siblings.

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Fig. 11. **ESCAPA** (Conjunctions That Require the Subjunctive)

Main Clause	Conjunctions	Dependent Clause
ANY TENSE	**E** - *en caso de que* **S** - *sin que* **C** - *con tal de que* **A** - *antes de que* **P** - *para que* **A** - *a memos que*	SUBJUNCTIVE

Fig. 12. **LATCHED**
(Conjunctions That Use Subjunctive With Indefinite Time and Uncertainty)

Main Clause	Conjunctions	Dependent Clause
PRESENT FUTURE, COMMANDS ALL OTHER TENSES	**L** - *luego que* **A** - *así que* **T** - *tan pronto como* **C** - *cuando* **H** - *hasta que* **E** - *en cuanto* **D** - *después de que*	INDICATIVE - certainty SUBJUNCTIVE - uncertainty SUBJUNCTIVE INDICATIVE

Fig. 13. **MA** (Indicative or Subjunctive)

Main Clause	Conjunctions	Dependent Clause
ALL TENSES	**M** - *mientras (que)* **A** - *Aunque*	INDICATIVE - certainty SUBJUNCTIVE - uncertainty

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