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Notos

The Journal of the Second Languages and Intercultural Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association



Multilingual Essay Mills

Practice-Relevant Research

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

Notos

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Editorial

Megan Sénéchal

It is an exciting time in Alberta for educators. To allow for more flexibility, educators are exploring shifting the focus from knowledge-based to concept-based teaching and learning. This flexibility can allow educators to address the needs of diverse learners, create learning environments that are authentic and engaging, and incorporate Franco-phone and Indigenous perspectives. In this way, educators in Alberta can hope to create learning environments in which all students can see themselves and can engage with. Future issues of *Notos* will hopefully address some of the questions that arise from these new and exciting times in language education.

Some education issues, however, are timeless. This issue of *Notos* contains articles that represent a variety of contemporary and historical issues in education. The idea of cheating looks different for

our students than it did for many teachers, in particular in second languages. Other contemporary issues that require more research include attrition rates in French immersion and the age-old question of the role of spelling tests in the second language classroom, among others. Finally, a republished article from 2014 highlights the dangers of losing Indigenous languages, which is important to consider as we move forward with reconciliation.

I encourage *Notos* readers to become contributors to the journal. If you have unpublished research in second languages that can have an impact on stakeholders in education, feel free to submit a draft by e-mail (megan.senechal@epsb.ca) for peer review. Sharing your experiences can help us all become more effective teachers. My hope as editor is that you will find this journal informative and useful in your practice.

Megan Sénéchal, EdD, is a curriculum consultant with the Edmonton Public School Board. Her greatest research interests revolve around language education, Universal Design for Learning and change management.

President's Message

Diana Boisvert

The Second Language and Intercultural Council (SLIC) is very proud to offer its members this issue of *Notos*. This issue will provide SLIC members with an in-depth look at some current issues in education today. These topics represent perspectives that are important as we move forward with francophone and Indigenous perspectives, and we hope that you find the articles interesting and informative.

As you know, *Notos* is a peer-reviewed academic journal. Without the help of the editorial board, we

would not have the high-quality feedback necessary to ensure that this journal is a trusted research publication. SLIC would like to offer sincere thanks to the editorial board for their time and dedication to this publication.

Your membership and interest in SLIC is what makes it such a strong and vibrant council. Feel free to contact the editor, Megan Sénéchal, if you have second-language research or literature reviews that you would like to share with your colleagues and stakeholders in education.

Multilingual Essay Mills: Implications for Second Language Teaching and Learning

*Sarah Elaine Eaton and
Roswita Dressler*

Considering increased availability of online companies offering academic work in many languages, we conducted a rapid review of websites that might offer online contract cheating (for example, essay mills) to better understand how prevalent these services are in additional languages and to what extent they are available to K–12 students. Our results included 18 online sites offering academic work in 10 languages: Arabic, English, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Mandarin, Portuguese and Welsh. Two-thirds of the websites marketed directly to K–12 students, with one offering explicit services to students in Grades 6 and up. A resulting implication is that K–12 second language teachers must be aware that such online services are available to students and take steps to enhance academic integrity among young and adolescent learners.

As an educator, you have likely heard the term *essay mill*, but as a second language teacher, have you ever wondered if your own students could buy their academic work online? In this study, we investigate online essay mills and other forms of contract cheating in second languages, specifically targeted to K–12 students. Our literature review discusses what contract cheating is and what the research shows about the type and prevalence of suppliers and extent of contract cheating among students. We then explain our particular study and

what we found. We conclude with a call to action for K–12 second language teachers to heighten their awareness and deepen their understanding about what contract cheating is and how it may affect young and adolescent learners.

Literature Review

The term *contract cheating* was coined by Clarke and Lancaster (2006) in a study of students using a web-based service to contract out university assignments. Contract cheating happens “when a third party completes work for a student who then submits it to an education provider as their own, where such input is not permitted” (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education [QAA] 2017, 1). Common examples of contract cheating include essay mills, homework completion services and professional exam takers (impersonators) among others. All forms of contract cheating are considered academic dishonesty, negatively impacting student learning and assessment.

Although some forms of academic dishonesty are unintentional (Adam 2016; Elander et al 2010), contract cheating falls squarely within the category of intentional academic misconduct because it is “covert and duplicitous” (Ellis, Zucker and Randall 2018, 1), and even “morally reprehensible” (Bertram Gallant 2016, 2). Those who engage in this

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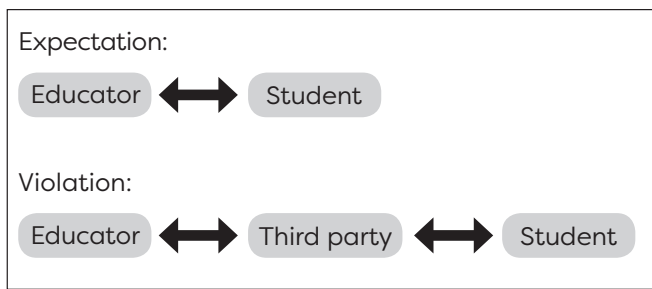


FIGURE 1. How contract cheating violates the expectation of the educator–student relationship.

type of dishonesty deliberately contract a third party to complete work on their behalf. By introducing a third party into the equation, students violate an unwritten contract of integrity between themselves and their teacher, in which there is an expectation that students submit work they have completed themselves for assessment.

The point of this figure is that the introduction of a third party, which is almost always done without the knowledge or consent of the educator, violates the rules of educational engagement in which students are expected to submit their own work for assessment. This figure offers a simplified version of which there are numerous permutations, (see Lancaster and Clarke 2009), all of which involve a third party, unbeknown to the educator.

There is some debate about what counts as contract cheating. Some definitions include a monetary transaction between the student and third party (Rigby et al 2015). Others include third parties who complete work for the student but do not receive payment (Ellis, Zucker and Randall 2018; Lancaster and Clarke 2008; Rogerson 2017; Walker and Townley 2012). In the section that follows, we offer an explanation of both types of third parties to enrich conceptual understandings and pedagogical discourses among Canadian second language teachers.

Types and Prevalence of Suppliers

Contracting for Money

The existence of suppliers who are paid to provide contract cheating services is not new, with examples dating back to the 1950s (Lancaster and Clarke 2016). However, the number of suppliers has proliferated in the Internet age, from independent freelancers to corporations with sophisticated marketing campaigns (Lancaster and Clarke 2016;

Newton and Lang 2016, Owings and Nelson 2014). This increase of numbers and sophistication are of concern to educators in all settings.

Clarke and Lancaster (2006) first discovered contract cheating among university computer science students who used online services originally designed for companies to hire an individual to write computer code. The students began hiring coders to complete assignments on their behalf, which evolved their use of the service to contract cheating. Other contract cheating services include essay mills, where students can buy a prewritten essay on a topic, and custom-writing services, in which writers are contracted to compose papers for a specific assignment (Newton and Lang 2016). Additional forms of “online labour markets” (Newton and Lang 2016), such as homework services, allow students to pay a fee for the completion of other kinds of assignments. With the availability of these services, students have access to contract cheating at almost every stage of the course.

Yet another form of contract cheating involves paid exam-takers, who impersonate students and take an exam on the student’s behalf. Similarly, course-takers can be hired to take an entire course on a student’s behalf (Wolverton 2016). These services exist for both local and online students, with businesses dropping off flyers or business cards on campuses, or in schools to catch the attention of students (Lancaster and Clarke 2016). Thus, it may be that a student profits from contract cheating without ever having set foot in the course or exam.

The Business of Contract Cheating

Even though there are independent freelancers, including those who offer writing services through online marketplaces, such as Kijiji and eLance .com, most of what we know about contract cheating is larger scale businesses dedicated to helping students cheat (Ellis, Zucker and Randall 2018). These businesses might include a parent company with various kinds of spinoffs that compose sites to recruit potential writers as well as multiple website storefronts with 24-hour live chat to solicit students’ business (Ellis, Zucker and Randall 2018). These storefronts can disappear and reappear again quickly under a different name and

website address, making it even harder for educators or administrators to track them down (Ellis, Zucker and Randall 2018). (Case in point: Between the time we conducted our study and submitted this article, which was only about two months, one of the websites had been taken down.) The contract cheating industry is sophisticated, well established and well organized even if the exact number of suppliers remains elusive.

One business model involves having a set price for a particular output, such as a page rate, though those are often negotiable. Another model involves auction sites where students post an assignment and writers bid on the job (Mahmood 2009; Newton and Lang 2016). Factors that affect the price include the discipline, the length of the paper, the academic level and the urgency (Ellis, Zucker and Randall 2018; Newton and Lang 2016; Owings and Nelson 2014). The turnaround time for the completion of work ranges from 0 to 24 days with an average of 5 days (Newton and Lang 2016). About one-quarter of all orders are filled within a day or less (Newton and Lang 2016). The cost can be less than CA\$100 (£48 GBP) for a short paper (Newton and Lang 2016). While these prices may seem steep to some, for high-stakes testing and coursework situations, they may appeal to the students.

It is not yet known how big the contract cheating industry is, but it is a significant and lucrative business in some countries. Although many of the services operate as online storefronts and their market is global, the scale of the global market is difficult to determine. To understand the overall size of the industry, researchers started by investigating the size and scope of the market in local contexts. This is important because it gives researchers and educators an idea of how many students in a particular country may be buying academic work online. Owings and Nelson (2014) found the essay mill industry in the United States alone to be valued at a minimum US\$100 million, with half of that being profit. In the United Kingdom in 2017, one company alone reported a turnover of £5 million GBP (Yorke 2017). There is little evidence about how large Canada's contract cheating industry is or how many companies exist in the country; however, given the similarities between Canada and the US or UK, there is reason to believe it may be lucrative in this country as well.

Contracting for Love or Loyalty

While the business of contract cheating thrives, there is a smaller category of enablers who are motivated by love or loyalty instead of money (Clarke and Lancaster 2006; Lancaster and Clarke 2016; Mahmood 2009; Owings and Nelson 2014, Turnitin 2013). These enablers (as opposed to suppliers) include groups of students who collude to share their assignments with each other or those with a close personal relationship with the student, including family members or friends who complete academic work on the individual's behalf. This enabling is also considered a form of contract cheating (Lancaster and Clarke 2016; Mahmood 2009).

When examining the work of enablers, the challenge is deciding where the line is between help and cheating. While this fine line may be apparent to educators, it is often less clear to students. For the purposes of our research, we focus on contracts where money is exchanged, but we acknowledge that there are also informal contracts with individuals who complete work on students' behalf where no money is exchanged.

Legal Aspects

Suppliers of contract cheating services can be highly organized, sophisticated businesses. Some jurisdictions have turned their gaze toward providers, making it a criminal offence to supply contract cheating services to students. Legislation is sparse (Newton and Lang 2016), and the matter can be legally complicated because it may be difficult to prove intent on the part of companies since they often post disclaimers on their sites that materials are offered for research or referencing purposes only (Draper and Newton 2017, Owings and Nelson 2014). Jurisdiction can also complicate matters when it comes to pursuing legal action against suppliers because they are sometimes located offshore or incorporated elsewhere with individual providers working from unknown locations (Owings and Nelson 2014). The legal challenges to pursuing suppliers of contract cheating are considerable.

Despite these challenges, New Zealand introduced legislation in 2011 that "makes it an offence to provide or advertise cheating services" (Draper and Newton 2017, 4). It is also illegal in 17 US states, and there is discussion in the UK about how to take legal action against suppliers (Draper and Newton 2017). Thus, there are examples of

jurisdictions which actively advocate against and even pursue contract cheating suppliers.

However, it is not currently illegal in Canada for suppliers to operate. Draper and Newton (2017) have pointed out that Canada's anticorruption laws include "principles of extraterritoriality" (p 8) that might allow for the creation of legislation that would facilitate the pursuit of legal action against such companies, even if they operated offshore. Currently, it is up to teachers and educational administrators to address contract cheating at the local level.

Extent of Contract Cheating Among Students

Understanding the extent to which contract cheating occurs can be useful for teachers in terms of knowing what to look for and how to address the issue in student work (Curtis and Clare 2017). However, because contract cheating transactions take place mostly online and both students and suppliers can be from anywhere in the world, it is difficult to determine with precision the prevalence of this form of academic dishonesty among students.

Much of the data about how much students engage in contract cheating comes from self-reported data at the postsecondary level with significant differences in results. A survey conducted in 2009 of 120 Australian undergraduates revealed that 3.5 per cent of students reported having had someone else ghostwrite papers on their behalf, which was an increase from 1.1 per cent of self-reported instances in 2004 (Curtis and Popal 2011). One study found that nearly 7 per cent of students reported purchasing at least one paper online, and 2 per cent admitted to buying five or more papers online (Turnitin 2013). Research conducted with nursing students in Saudi Arabia found that up to 22 per cent of students paid someone to do academic work on their behalf (Hosney and Fatima 2014). A more recent meta-analysis drawing from 1,378 data sets, aggregated from five studies focusing on higher education contexts, found that, on average, 3.5 per cent of students reported having engaged in contract cheating, with variance among sampled groups ranging from 0.3 to 7.9 per cent (Curtis and Clare 2017). Newton (2018) contends that the number may be even higher, estimating that one in seven postsecondary students buy academic work online.

These inconsistent results make it difficult to draw a complete picture of contract cheating globally.

In Canada, over 71,000 postsecondary students engage in contract cheating (Eaton 2018). In 2006, Canada was among the top four nations where students bought academic work online (Clarke and Lancaster 2006). That has risen dramatically, and Canada is now tied with the UK for second place, after the USA (Lancaster 2018). The increase in availability and the lack of legislation are providing a fertile ground for contract cheating in Canada.

Multiple Offenders or Multiple Offenses?

A study conducted by Turnitin (2013) found that up to 20 per cent of 38.3 million papers included text matches to online cheating sites. The study did not go into details about how many of those papers may have been submitted by the same student, which is an important factor to consider. Lancaster and Clarke (2008) reported that more than 50 per cent of students who had used contract cheating services had placed multiple orders. About a decade later, Curtis and Clare (2017) found that over 62 per cent of those who engaged in contract cheating did so more than once. Because data on the extent of "repeat offenders" (Clarke and Lancaster 2006) is sparse, it cannot be concluded that the reported difference in rates between these two studies constitutes an increase over time. However, "a small number of offenders are responsible for a very large amount of the crime" (Curtis and Clare 2017, 117). Considering that "there is a growing concern ... that the number of instances being detected is considerably smaller than the volume of work being procured, produced and submitted to institutions for assessment" (Ellis, Zucker and Randall 2018, 1), it is not yet clear whether the problem is one of multiple offenders or multiple offenses by a small number of offenders.

Contract Cheating Among K-12 Students

While the existence of contract cheating in higher education contexts has been known for some time, current online providers are actively marketing to K-12 students with a particular focus on junior high and high school students. In 2018, the BBC exposed a large-scale marketing campaign, active on more than 250 channels, in which YouTube stars (some as

young as 12 years old, with tens of thousands of subscribers) were paid to promote contract cheating services to their viewers (Jeffreys and Main 2018). Paid promotions received more than an estimated 70 million views from “very young” viewers (Jeffreys and Main 2018). Growing evidence suggests that contract cheating is an issue at the K–12 levels.

Most of the research that has been conducted has focused on services delivered in English, and scholarship about academic integrity conducted in Canada has been almost exclusively in English (Eaton and Edino 2018). Francophone research in Canada is beginning to emerge (Peters 2017), but more research into other language contexts is needed to gain an understanding of the prevalence of contract cheating (Eaton and Edino 2018). This need for research in other language contexts led us to the questions that framed our study: What evidence exists that online providers offer academic work in languages other than English? To what degree are K–12 students targeted by these online providers?

Conceptual Framework

Academic integrity research is framed within a number of discourses including moralist, proceduralist, developmental, pedagogical and policy (Adam 2016; Kaposi and Dell 2012). This research is situated within the pedagogical discourse framework, which advocates for educational approaches to integrity, including educator development.

Method

We employed a rapid review process for our search, a method involving the rapid collection of sources for the purposes of understanding the breadth of existing evidence to address a specific topic (Hartling et al 2017). We conducted an Internet search using Google, starting with search terms “Write my essay” + (language). Our explicit language search terms included French, Spanish, German, Mandarin and Italian. Our rationale for choosing these search terms was that we imagined ourselves being in the position of second language students who might go online to find out about the existence and nature of such online services.

In addition, we engaged in an exploratory snowball search, using a company’s main URL to browse its site to find what additional languages were

offered. We conducted our search over three days in September 2018.

Analysis

We employed an analysis similar to that of Tauginienė and Jurkevičius (2017), who examined legal documents and social media articles pertaining to contract cheating. They analyzed publicly available information about three civil cases in Lithuania related to contract cheating. Because official court documents did not disclose some details, the authors analyzed social media articles to gather additional insights into each case. Their method of consulting web-based content relating to contract cheating was innovative and unique, and their argument for doing so was sound, given that many of the transactions related to contract cheating occur in online environments (Tauginienė and Jurkevičius 2017).

Similarly, we looked in web-based content for such key phrases as “write my essay,” “write my paper” and “assignment help,” which were indicative of paying for academic work. Our data sources included screenshots from actual websites, along with the URL and date the image was captured. Since contract cheating online storefronts can appear and disappear frequently, and a parent company may take down a website quickly only to buy another (often similar) domain and the service pops up again under a different name (Ellis et al 2018), some of the links we have included could result in an error or “not found” response if searched a second time. Therefore, the date of each search was included with each screenshot.

Results

Using our indicated search terms, supported with additional exploratory snowball searching, we found 18 online sites offering academic work in the following languages: Arabic, English, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Mandarin, Portuguese and Welsh. The types of services offered by these online storefronts varied, and some included more than one type of service. Although all 18 sites offered custom-written essays, many also offered other types of “homework help,” though the wording was often vague, and we were unable to determine with clarity what percentage of the sites offered explicit assignment completion services beyond custom-written

essays. We noted, however, that 89 per cent of the websites offered a real-time live chat option for prospective customers to get more information about services and prices. Two-thirds of the results included explicit indications that their services were available to high school students, and one website offered academic work from Grades 6 and up. Table 1 offers a summary of our results:

TABLE 1. Summary Results for Contract Cheating Websites Offering Services in Languages Other Than English

Description	Total	Percentage*
Number of websites (for example, online storefronts)	18	100
Number of websites with a live chat option for customers	16	89
Number of online storefronts marketing explicitly to high school students	12	67
Number of languages in which services were offered across websites (including English)	10	N/A

*Rounded to the nearest whole number.

To illustrate our results, we offer screenshots of some websites we found during our search. We share these with a caveat. Many of the sites include disclaimers stating that the products they sell are to be used as “sample” work only and not to be submitted for grades. One website even included an “honour code” insisting that customers not submit any items purchased from their site for academic credit. We

recognize that the sites we found may merely offer “exemplar” products which are not to be submitted for grades. We have no way of knowing with certainty that these companies represent companies that actually sell contract cheating products to students. Their inclusion indicates that these companies meet the criteria of those providing some form of academic work (for example, model essays, exemplars and so on) in other languages. The screenshots below are offered merely as examples of the results of our search.

Typical of custom-writing services, the online marketplace in Figure 2 provides “custom essays” in French. In cases like this, students upload their essay instructions to the website and a third party (for example, “ghost-writer”) completes the essay to the assignment specifications.

In the next example, the company name, Homework Help Canada, indicated that this online storefront had been designed to market specifically to Canadian students. This particular company also offered services (for example, sample essays) in a variety of additional languages (Arabic, German, Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Mandarin and Welsh). Figure 3 shows a screenshot of that company’s services for Mandarin.

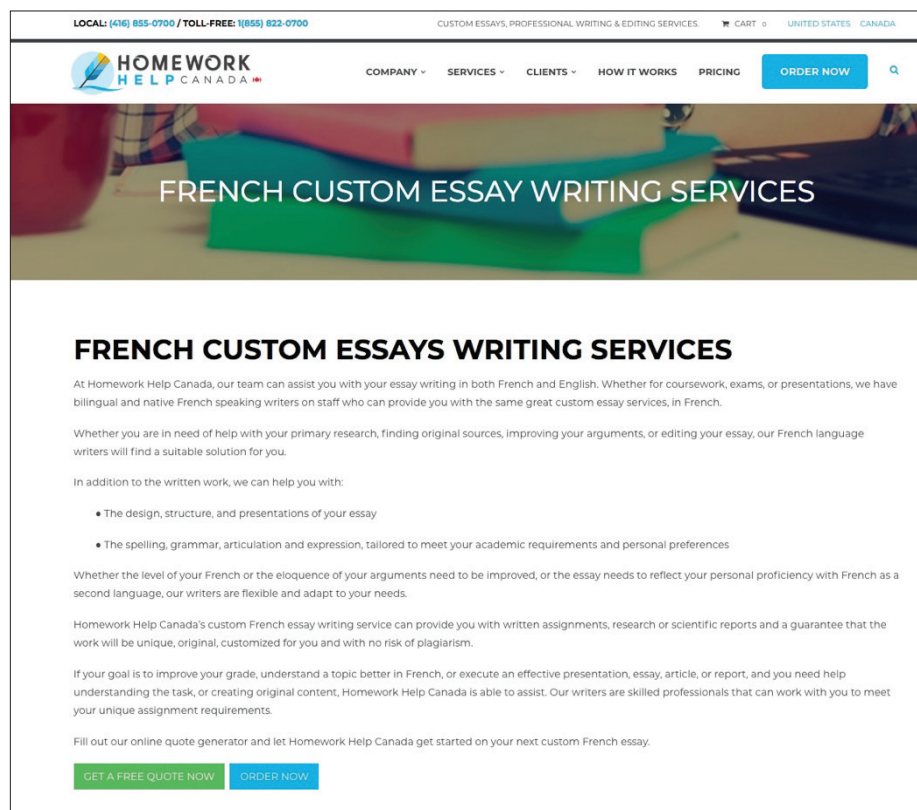


FIGURE 2: www.homeworkhelpglobal.com/ca/our-services/french-custom-essays/ (screenshot date: September 10, 2018).

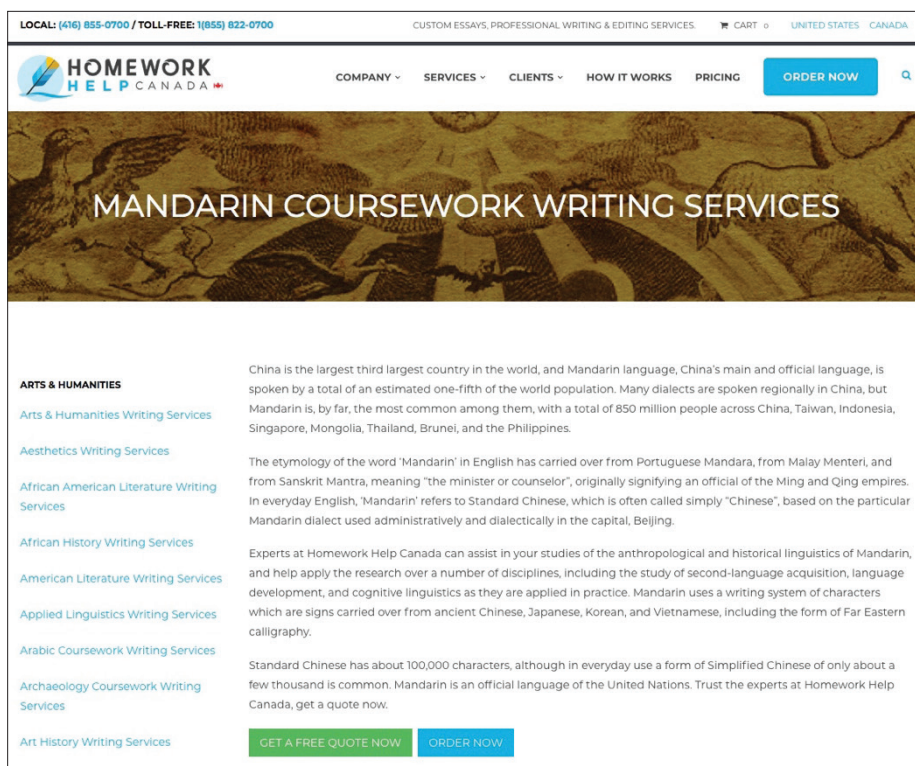


FIGURE 3. www.homeworkhelpglobal.com/ca/our-services/arts-humanities/mandarin/ (screenshot date: September 10, 2018).

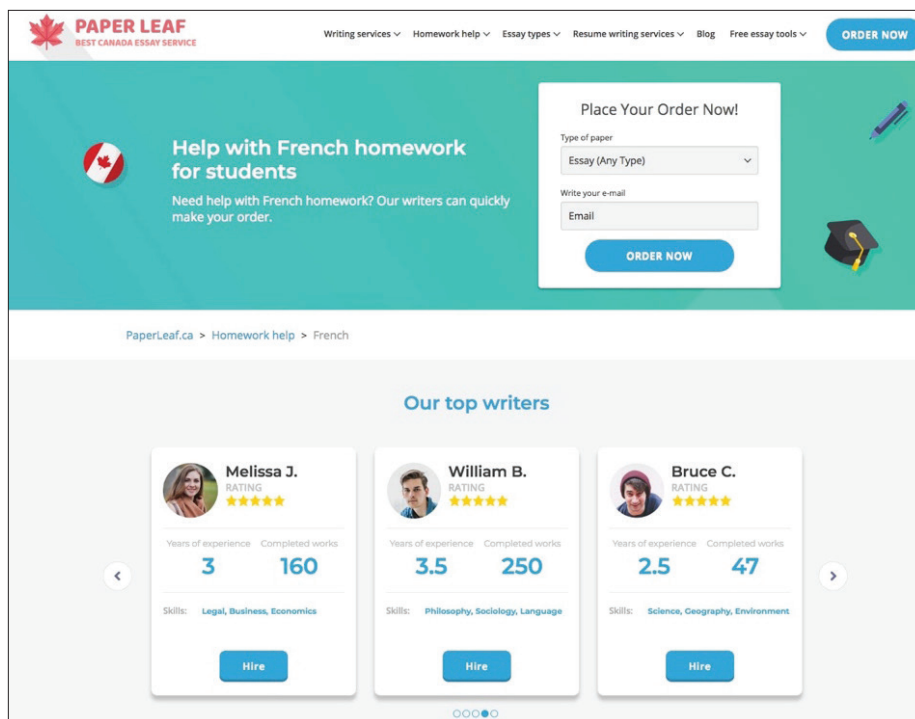


FIGURE 4. <https://paperleaf.ca/French/> (screenshot date: September 10, 2018).

The company in Figure 4 offers homework completion services in French. Similar to the custom-writing services, students upload their assignment instructions to an online portal and the third party can complete the assignment (or a product to be used as a model for the student to work from) for a fee. This was the second of the services we found that appeared to market directly to Canadian students.

We also found evidence of online storefronts marketing services in specific languages. In Figure 5, we offer another example of custom-writing services in French. Note the URL, which indicates marketing targeted to students of French:

Similarly, another website marketed services to students of Spanish. We note that this particular site offers “writing help,” rather than explicit assignment completion.

We were unable to determine if these online services we included here were marketing to second language learners or native speakers. Though what was evident from our rapid review method is that there are ample opportunities for K–12 students studying in additional languages to access online services offering academic work. Even if they are marketed as sample work only, these companies claim no control over what happens to the products customers purchase. Disclaimers and honour codes may not prevent students from submitting work purchased online for academic credit.

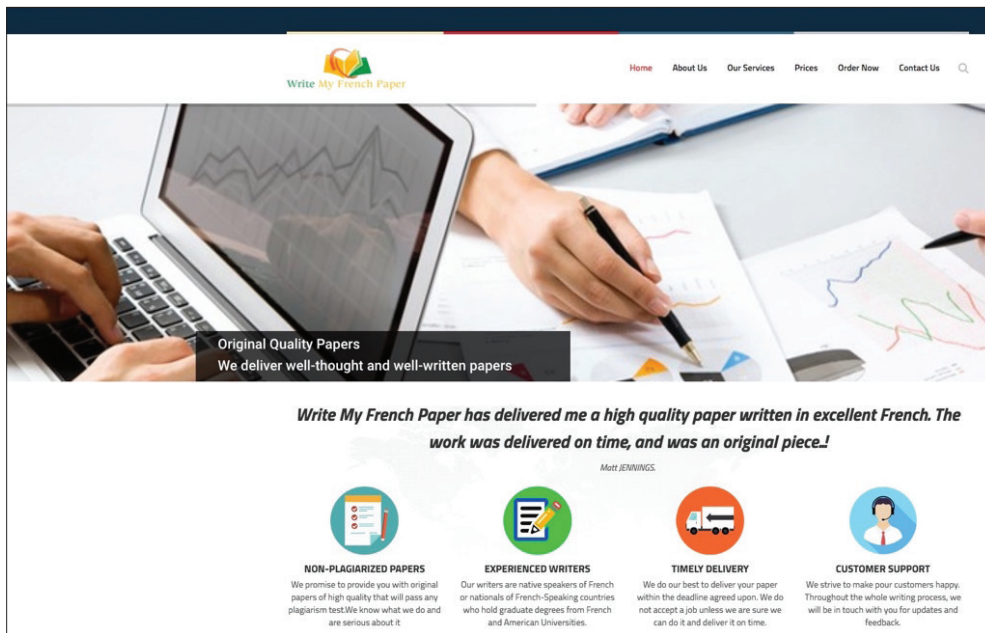


FIGURE 5: WriteMyFrenchPaper.com (screenshot date: September 11, 2018).



FIGURE 6: www.spanishessays.org (screenshot date: September 11, 2018).

Discussion

In this study, we first looked for evidence that online providers offer academic work in languages other than English. Of the websites we found, services were offered in 10 languages including French, Spanish, German and Mandarin. Whether these services were targeting native speakers or second language learners is unclear, but the live chat option in 89 per cent of the websites, suggests the eagerness of the online providers to supply services to potential clients.

We also investigated the degree to which these online providers target K–12 students. We discovered that one-third (12/18) of the websites explicitly target high school students, confirming the availability of these services for K–12 students. Since the services are readily available online and offer products in languages that are taught as second or foreign languages in the Canadian school system, these target K–12 students could include second language learners of French, German, Spanish or Mandarin.

One point worth discussing is the extent to which online services would work for second language learners. If a contract cheating service produced an error-free assignment, it could almost certainly raise teachers' suspicions. However, work purchased from such sites is notoriously poorly written, as the contractors work quickly in order to complete as many assignments as possible to increase their earnings (Turnitin 2013). In fact, it can be difficult to differentiate between genuine writing errors and "purposeful misrepresentation of authorship" (Rogerson 2017, 2). As such, some contract cheating assignment quality may be difficult to differentiate from poor academic performance (Rogerson 2017). Therefore, second language teachers trying to detect if an assignment was purchased online may find the task less straightforward than watching out for flawless assignments. For contract cheating for second language learners to be a profitable endeavour, online providers would need to create plausible-quality assignments.

We recognize the limitations of a small-scale rapid review study, which may only result in preliminary findings (Hartling et al 2017). We conducted our search in English, but we acknowledge that a more robust study is needed to

search in multiple languages using a wider variety of search engines. Such a study would also look for evidence that the providers are targeting second language learners. Recognizing these limitations, we intend to expand our study beyond this exploratory search to include different search engines and searches worded in other languages.

Recommendations

Deterring contract cheating can be difficult. However, there are ways teachers can reduce the likelihood of cheating occurring in their classrooms. First, teachers should avoid reusing previous assignments. Instead consider asking students to relate a writing assessment to material addressed in class, making the possibility of a generic response less credible (Walker and Townley 2012). Although staged or scaffolded assignments might help to prevent contract cheating (Walker and Townley 2012), teachers need to understand there is no guarantee as some students can simply pass on feedback from each phase of the project to a third party (Lancaster and Clarke 2016). Even the shortening of submission deadlines provides little assurance, as students can order custom-work online with a very short turnaround time provided they are prepared to pay extra (Newton and Lang 2016; QAA 2017). However, assessments "that allow students to demonstrate their learning practically, in a face-to-face format where possible" (QAA 2017, 12) may be most helpful in preventing contract cheating. Examples include oral presentations, personalized assessments and video presentations narrated by students (Newton and Lang 2016; QAA 2017). Assessments completed in class and supervised by the teacher also make cheating less likely (Australian Government 2017). When teachers are familiar with a student's writing style and abilities, work done by others but handed in by that student stands out. As a caveat to those who point out that traditional examinations may be resilient to contract cheating, they are still susceptible to other forms of cheating and may not accurately reflect student learning (QAA 2017). Employing a variety of authentic performance assessments can mitigate the prospect of contract cheating.

Educator professional development is an essential element of building teachers' understanding of contract cheating. Detection is only the first step (Australian Government 2017). Teachers need to be made aware of what supports exist for them in terms of addressing suspected or confirmed cases of contract cheating. Ongoing training and professional development are needed if for no other reason than teachers may not have been exposed to Internet-based contract cheating when they were students. In the case of second language teachers, there is an ever greater need to generate awareness and provide training and support to teachers to refute the myth that essay mills operate only in English.

Most important, a discussion of multilingual essay mills and other forms of contract cheating raises awareness of the importance of the promotion of academic integrity among students. These discussions begin with fostering a safe climate of risk taking and tolerance of ambiguity within the classroom. This climate is especially important in second language classrooms where students are asked to take risks in speaking and writing, which may give rise to uncertainty and a lack of confidence. If the classroom climate is overly focused on perfection and grades, the temptation to cheat might be higher than a classroom climate focused on learning, improving and personal growth. Investigating contract cheating can be time-consuming and frustrating as the availability is high and barriers are low, but the influence that a teacher has over attitudes toward language learning are greater and, in the end, possibly more effective.

Conclusions

Through this rapid review study, we have demonstrated that multilingual essay mills exist and are easily found online. We have determined that a number of these online providers target K–12 students and offer services in languages that are taught as second languages in the school system. As such, we call on teachers and administrators to dialogue more deeply about the development of guidelines to assist K–12 educators to address contract cheating, noting the particular need for support for second language teaching and learning. We invite teachers interested in this topic to contact us for more information or to engage in deeper dialogue.

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Practice-Relevant Research in the Canadian L2 Classroom: A Summary

Peter Peltekov, Neha Bhatia, Berenice Cancino, Samantha Carron, M Caroline Daigle, Joty Das, Shuo Kang, Qing Li and Mary O'Brien

In direct response to questions raised by classroom language teachers, eight students enrolled in a second language pedagogy course reviewed recent literature on a range of topics. These include the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and the action-oriented approach, approaches to grammar teaching, the effectiveness of dictation, the role of images and types of dictionaries in vocabulary learning, language learning by students with autism spectrum disorder as well as by adults who are not fully literate, and attrition in immersion programs. The results of the reviewed research have the potential to affect classroom practice.

Introduction

We teachers often make pedagogical decisions “based on perceptions of successful practice, with little or no reference to research findings” (Derwing and Munro 2005, 383). While teachers’ practical experience should not be underestimated, empirical research should also inform practice. The present project was born as an attempt to connect teaching practitioners with researchers in the field of second language pedagogy. Language teachers from Edmonton Public Schools identified a series of questions relevant to their teaching context. As a direct response to these questions, eight students from the University of Calgary enrolled in a graduate-level second language (L2) pedagogy class conducted the present literature review, which addresses some of these issues. The first topic presented in this article is the use

of an action-oriented approach as part of communicative language teaching. Section 2 deals with grammar teaching and suggests some effective grammar teaching methods that can be implemented in ESL classes. Section 3 investigates whether dictation is an effective method to teach spelling. The next two topics are related to vocabulary instruction: Section 4 explores whether images can facilitate vocabulary acquisition, and Section 5 is dedicated to the effectiveness of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries. The following two topics are important for learners with special needs: students with autism spectrum disorder (Section 6) and adult learners with first language (L1) literacy difficulties (Section 7). Finally, the last section explores the academic and social factors that cause students to leave immersion programs. Although this literature review is by no means comprehensive, it attempts to present a range of research on each of the topics that is relevant to the L2 classroom context.

1. Integrating an Action-Oriented Approach in L2 Learning

The CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), as the name suggests, is a set of guidelines that lays out language learning goals for learners at various proficiency levels. The CEFR suggests an action-oriented approach to L2 teaching and “views users and learners of a

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language primarily as ‘social agents,’ i.e. members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to complete in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action” (Kaliska 2016, 31). Therefore, in L2 learning, the purpose of an action-oriented approach is to provide a social context and to enable learners to use the target language for real-world purposes. It should be noted that the CEFR’s action-oriented approach relies on task-based instruction because learners are engaged in authentic, goal-oriented tasks that resemble real-world activities. The present section of this review will focus on the following research questions: How do instructors in various countries

perceive the implementation of CEFR, which is primarily based on an action-oriented approach? How do action-oriented tasks boost learners’ confidence and enhance student engagement and proficiency? In order to respond to these questions, the researcher has looked for studies on the implementation of the CEFR’s action-oriented approach and its learning outcomes in several countries including Canada, Japan and Turkey. As such, the research presented here compares the diverse concerns of instructors toward task-based pedagogy.

A summary of the research reviewed is provided in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Implementation of the CEFR’s Action-Oriented Approach

Author (Date)	Participants	Goal of the Study	Key Findings
Faez et al (2011)	CEFR trained teachers ($n = 93$), students in CF and FI programs from Grades 1, 4, 7, 9 and 12: CF students ($n = 466$), FI students ($n = 477$).	To capture teachers’ attitudes on the role of CEFR with the objective of improving language learning outcomes.	The CEFR’s action-oriented approach promotes French language use and student engagement in FSL classrooms.
Faez (2011)	CF teachers ($n = 50$), FI teachers ($n = 43$), students in Grades 1, 4, 7, 9 and 12 ($n = 943$).	To examine teachers’ perspectives of the role of the CEFR for FSL education programs in Ontario.	Learners’ autonomy and confidence increased. There were better learning outcomes through the use of authentic tasks.
Takada (2012)	Third year JHS students ($n = 447$).	To study the implementation of CEFR-J (Japanese version of CEFR) in JHSs in Japan.	The CEFR-J is compatible with the pre-existing syllabus. Teachers elicited more language output in the form of genuine communication instead of classroom assignments.
Sibel and Gürocak (2016)	Private university instructors ($n = 18$), state university instructors ($n = 36$).	To determine instructors’ knowledge and perception of CEFR in Turkish universities.	Teachers at both private and state universities wished to integrate aspects of the CEFR into training and curriculum.
Rehner (2017)	CF teachers ($n = 38$), FI teachers ($n = 35$).	To investigate the implementation of the CEFR among FSL teachers and learners in Ontario through professional training.	After CEFR-related professional training, instructors increased the use of authentic documents. Students’ communicative skills increased by 85 per cent.

Note: Core French (CF), French immersion (FI), junior high school (JHS), French as a second language (FSL)

Perception of Instructors Toward CEFR's Action-Oriented Approach for Language Learning in Canada, Japan and Turkey

The CEFR has been introduced in various ways and to various extents in 44 countries (Piccardo 2010). It has been widely accepted that the CEFR is innovative in its promotion of an action-oriented approach to pedagogy and its focus on learning, teaching and assessment as interdependent and interwoven (Coste 2007; Little 2006). In 2011, a survey conducted by Faez et al revealed that FSL teachers' attitudes in Ontario changed from a preference for grammar-oriented teaching to a preference for communicative language teaching as a result of CEFR training. An action-oriented approach includes accomplishment of authentic tasks, and Faez (2011) found that learners' autonomy and confidence increased since the realization of authentic tasks led to better learning outcomes. There was a sense of accomplishment among students as they realized they were able to complete certain tasks in French, and therefore their level of confidence increased.

Furthermore, Rehner (2017) stressed the importance of task-based pedagogy, which emphasizes meaning over isolated grammatical structures. His survey demonstrates that the proficiency of learners increased through task-based, communicative tasks. In 2005 and 2006 the Council of Europe conducted two surveys to investigate the use of the CEFR at institutional and national levels, respectively, and showed positive influences on L2 learning.

The impact of the CEFR has also been viewed internationally, including in Taiwan and in Japan (Zou and Zhang 2017). Takada (2012) dealt with the implementation of CEFR's action-oriented approach for school use in Japan, which has always been a concern since it clashes with traditional teacher-centred learning. The results indicated that the CEFR's action-oriented approach for language learning can be compatible with a pre-existing syllabus under the right conditions. The author hinted toward the difficulty of creating syllabi due to the mismatch between CEFR's task-based approach and textbooks' grammar-oriented foci.

Sibel and Gürocak (2016) demonstrated that the reach of the CEFR also extends to Turkey. Most instructors working at a state university there indicated knowledge of the CEFR, but they had not been trained (through a program or a course) to familiarize themselves with the CEFR curriculum. On the other hand, instructors at private universities in Turkey did receive education in the CEFR, and they agreed on the usefulness of task-based learning. Nevertheless, both groups expressed the need to see more of the CEFR's influence in the curriculum and pedagogical training.

Classroom Implications and Future Research

The literature outlined in section 1 above summarizes instructors' perceptions of the integration of an action-oriented approach in L2 learning and teaching. It highlights the feasibility of combining grammar-oriented teaching with task-based instruction in a language classroom in order to enhance learners' autonomy, engagement and confidence. Therefore, it might be beneficial for instructors to adapt grammar-based textbook activities into action-oriented tasks, which provide a clear sense of purpose and a meaningful social context. Further research may investigate the effects of integrating an action-oriented approach in stimulating instructor/learner dynamics in a second language classroom.

2. Teaching Grammar in the Classroom

According to Cullen (2012), "the teaching of grammar has always been a subject of controversy in the TESOL profession, both with respect to the most effective methodological procedures to use and to the extent to which we should focus on it at all" (p 258). Although in previous studies unplanned grammar lessons took place in classes (which Ellis [1995] refers to as a "zero portion" of grammar teaching [as cited in Cullen (2012, 258)]), and there was some focus on grammar in language classrooms (Cullen 2012, 258), no universal teaching method can be relied on to guide grammar teaching in ESL classrooms. This may be because there are various influencing factors to

consider, and it is language teachers' responsibility to choose the most efficient method. This section of the review focuses on the following research question: What is the best method to teach English grammar effectively in ESL classrooms? Although the review focuses specifically on ESL classrooms, the results may extend to other classroom environments. Table 2 provides a summary of the research.

Teachers' Attitudes Toward Grammar Teaching

Teachers' choice of teaching methods and their attitudes toward grammar teaching in ESL classrooms are influenced by the importance they place on grammar. According to Polat (2017), although age, experience and degree obtained (that is, BA or MA in education or in applied linguistics) were all

TABLE 2. Empirical Studies About English Grammar Teaching in ESL Classes

Author (Date)	Participants	Goal of the Study	Key Findings
Abdulmajeed and Hameed (2017)	Second-year university students ($n = 38$), from the Department of English, University of Baghdad.	To investigate whether humorous methods can help L2 students learn grammar effectively and help them to remember the learned grammar rules.	Humorous activities in classroom, such as laughter-evoking metaphors in instruction, may help improve students learning of difficult grammar.
Alghanmi and Shukri (2016)	Female L2 English teachers from universities in Saudi Arabia ($n = 30$), all majoring in English.	To investigate teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching in L2 English classes and the relationship to their grammar instruction practices.	Implicit grammar teaching is believed to be more effective, but certain L2 teachers tend to teach grammar explicitly. The research suggests that "students' proficiency, attitudes, needs, learning styles, classroom environment, and the teachers' development process" (p 84) influence grammar teaching practices.
Geist (2017)	English learners ($n = 10$) 15–16 years old with L1 German in secondary schools.	To explore which grammar points L2 English learners notice when asked to write an English essay. Problem-solving strategies in writing were also studied.	Learners are more concerned about sentences (especially sentence length and the connection of clauses) than word choice. In addition, they tend to solve problems intuitively while writing rather than referring to external help such as dictionaries.
Jung (2015)	Undergraduate Korean students ($n = 52$, 38 female and 14 male), with an average age of 23.	To investigate the effectiveness of glossing ¹ to students' comprehension.	Glossing has a positive impact on the learning of English verbs. It also helps learners to quickly notice grammatical errors and increases confidence to give correct responses.
Lopez (2017)	Chinese L2 learners of English ($n = 50$) who were in a 10-week preessional English program in a UK university.	To investigate whether explicit instruction can help L2 learners with no article system in their L1 to learn articles.	Detailed instructions on article use are not helpful for low-intermediate Chinese ESL learners. In addition, introducing the concept in detail increases the complexity of instruction and reduces accuracy in using them.

1. The glossing in Jung's research was realized by providing Korean translations of new English words.

Nassaji (2017)	ESL learners ($n = 48$, 13 males and 35 females) and 1 Canadian teacher; learners were aged between 18 and 37 years old. L1s include, among others, Chinese, German, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese and Spanish.	To investigate the effects of intensive and extensive feedback on learning English articles.	Recasts ² have beneficial effects in language learning. Extensive recasts, which provide feedback on a wide range of errors including article errors, are more effective than intensive recasts providing feedback only on articles.
Polat (2017)	Volunteer English teachers in Turkey, aged 22 to 51 ($n = 247$); most participants were ELT graduates.	To examine teachers' attitudes and the factors influencing their attitudes toward teaching grammar in ESL classes.	Gender of teachers is not a significant factor influencing their grammar teaching, age, teaching experience and degree obtained have a significant impact. In addition, 89 per cent of the teachers believe that explicit grammar teaching benefits students.
Silva and Roehr-Brackin (2016)	Mexican English learners attending a university English extension program ($n = 30$), university English teachers in Mexico ($n = 11$) and applied linguists with postgraduate level qualifications ($n = 3$).	To examine the difficulty judgments of applied linguists, teachers and L2 English learners toward certain English grammar points, and the relationship between difficulty and learners' performance.	Learners' and teachers' difficulty judgments correlate more with learners' performance while applied linguists' judgments correlate less.
Wach (2016)	Polish students ($n = 85$) with English as L2 and Russian as L3, at a university in Poland; average age was 19.6 and the average length of English study was 11.2 years.	To examine the role that L1 strategies play in L2 and L3 grammar learning.	L1-based learning strategies are often used in learning grammars of L2 and L3, but the frequencies and patterns differ due to the language repertoire and the similarity between languages.

2. Recasts “can be defined as a target-like reformulation of the learner’s erroneous utterance in the course of interaction” (Goo and Mackey 2013; Long 2007; Nassaji 2016, as cited in Nassaji 2017).

potential factors affecting teachers’ decisions about grammar teaching style, a total of 84 per cent of the participants in that study agreed that explicit grammar teaching would benefit ESL learners more than implicit teaching methods. However, although Alghanmi and Shukri’s (2016) research participants also recognized the importance of grammar teaching in class, they suggested that implicit grammar teaching was superior to explicit instruction. Even so, most of the teachers ended up teaching explicitly. This research study brought more perspectives for teachers to consider in choosing grammar-teaching methods, such as students’ needs, proficiency and learning styles. The two above-mentioned research studies regarding teachers’ attitudes demonstrate the need for teachers to take various factors, related to both themselves and their students, into account before choosing either explicit or implicit grammar teaching methods.

Specific Methods of English Grammar Teaching and Learning in ESL Classes

Among the research studies included in Table 2, seven of the nine papers provided specific grammar teaching methods that might be adopted in ESL classes. The suggested teaching methods can be divided into three parts:

1. Preteaching: According to Silva and Roehr-Brackin (2016), learners were able to accurately determine the difficulty of various grammatical aspects when studying grammar, but their judgments were not always correlated with those of the applied linguists, the potential developers of textbooks. Therefore, the research results could serve as a reminder for teachers and textbook designers to listen to students’ voices about what to focus on in a language class.

2. In-class: Jung's (2015) research showed the prominent impact that the glossing of L2 texts had on learners' vocabulary as well as grammar learning. Abdulmajeed and Hameed (2017) proposed that humorous methods of teaching grammar helped L2 learners to understand difficult grammatical aspects effectively and to remember the learned grammar rules. According to Wach (2016), L1-based learning strategies could also benefit grammar study of low-level L2 learners. Based on the research finding of Lopez (2017), it seems that detailed, explicit grammar instruction may have little positive effect on low-proficiency L2 learners' grammar learning. It may increase the pressure of grammar leaning and result in learners' decreased accuracy in the use of certain grammar rules.
3. Post-teaching: Nassaji (2017) suggested that teachers provide feedback about all types of grammatical errors in recasts. In this way, not only could learners' accuracy of using typical grammatical points improve but also the frequency of recasts. Geist (2017) specifically studied L2 learners' writing process and found out that noticing (that is, learners paying attention to the grammar by themselves) occurred during the process of writing. In addition, according to Geist, learners solved problems in writing based on their intuition, instead of referring to teachers' help or dictionaries. Therefore, this research suggested some potential practices, such as developing a habit of using dictionaries, which teachers should develop in their students in the process of teaching them how to write.

Classroom Implications and Future Research

Based on the research reviewed above, language teachers are encouraged to teach implicitly in grammar courses and provide feedback on a wide range of errors instead of on a specific type of errors. In addition, teachers need to make choices between extensive and intensive instruction based

on the language level of the learners. Humorous activities could be brought into the classroom to improve the effects of learning. Further research could be conducted from two perspectives: first, more research could be done with learners of different backgrounds and could more fully investigate the needs of teachers; second, replication studies could be conducted with different groups of participants of various language or educational backgrounds.

3. Effective Ways to Teach Spelling: Is the Traditional *Dictée* Dead?

Dictation (an activity in which the teacher dictates words or sentences for the students to write down) was originally used to assess spelling in a way that encouraged students to concentrate on the writing and spelling process without having to compose an original text and to focus on the quality of the text. A benefit of dictation includes allowing the students to use newly learned words in context. It also benefits students by testing their mastery of spelling patterns and rules. However, questions have been raised about whether dictation is an effective way to teach spelling. This section of this review will therefore focus on the following research question: Is the traditional *dictée* an effective way to teach spelling in a classroom?

Studies were chosen that investigate the use of dictations in various languages including Dutch, Italian, Chinese and Korean. Some of the studies examine the spelling abilities of children with average intelligence and compare the results with those students with spelling disabilities. A summary of the research on the topic is provided in Table 3.

The results shown in Table 3 indicate just how diverse the use of dictation can be in a classroom setting. Previous studies have demonstrated its effectiveness in a range of settings, using a variety of students from average intelligence to students with spelling disabilities. Previous studies have also used various languages in order to make the results more conclusive.

TABLE 3. Studies Conducted on the Use of Dictation

Author (Date)	Participants	Goal of the Study	Key Findings
Bigozzi, Tarchi and Pinto (2017)	Native Italian speakers ($n = 169$ boys and 156 girls) in Grades 2, 3, 4 and 5.	To compare spelling performance across composition and dictation and to examine the consistency and stability of spelling performance in the first stages of Italian literacy acquisition.	Dictation and composition are equivalent in identifying students' spelling difficulties. Students' spelling performance was consistent across tasks, and older students made fewer errors in spelling tasks.
Cordewener, Verhoeven and Bosman (2016)	Dutch students ($n = 72$) all in Grade 3; all spoke Dutch at school, one of them spoke Serbian and one of them spoke both Dutch and English at home.	To determine whether strategy instruction condition or self-correction is more effective for the spelling performance and awareness in Dutch.	Overall, the strategy-instruction condition was the most effective for spelling performance and awareness.
Leung et al (2011)	Students from Grades 1–6, divided into two groups: 1) reading-aloud task ($n = 1590$), and 2) writing-to-dictation task ($n = 2194$).	To determine if a similar Feed-Forward Consistency (FFC) effect (that is, the consistency of a word's pronunciation with that of similarly spelled words) exists in reading aloud and writing-to-dictation in Chinese and to evaluate the influence of the number of homophones of a character on writing-to-dictation.	There was a positive FFC effect in reading aloud across all grades and significant homophone effect from Grades 2 to 6 in writing-to-dictation. The two tasks are effective for learning to spell with Chinese characters.
Pyun and Lee-Smith (2011)	Korean heritage learners; group 1 (composing writing samples over a five-year period) ($n = 76$); group 2 (taking two dictations—one computerized self-study (audio recorded) and one in-class) ($n = 18$).	To identify common types of orthographic errors made by Korean heritage language learners and to discuss the use of dictation as a learning device to overcome orthographic errors.	The results showed a marked increase in spelling achievement after dictation exercises.
Van Hell, Bosman and Bartelings (2003)	Dutch students, $n = 33$ (group 1 = 11 students with spelling problems of normal or above-normal intelligence; group 2 = 11 students with spelling problems of normal or above-normal intelligence who also exhibited severe externalizing behavioural problems; group 3 = 11 students with spelling problems of relatively low intelligence).	To examine the merits of visual dictation (spelling training) for teaching spelling to students with spelling disabilities in Dutch.	Overall, the general results demonstrate that visual dictation appears to be effective in all three groups.

Studies Evaluating Dictation as an Effective Way to Teach Spelling in Languages with Roman Versus Non-Roman Alphabets

Although some of the previous research evaluating the effectiveness of dictation within languages with Roman alphabets goes back 40 years in French (Savignon 1982) and in English (Fouly and Cziko 1985), this current section focuses on newer studies from after the year 2000. Overall, research has demonstrated that dictation is a successful tool in identifying spelling difficulties, improving spelling performance and teaching spelling to students, including those with spelling disabilities both with Roman alphabets (as demonstrated in Van Hell, Bosman and Bartelings [2003] and Cordewener, Verhoeven and Bosman [2016] with Dutch, and Bigozzi, Tarchi and Pinto [2017] with Italian) and non-Roman alphabets (as demonstrated in Pyun and Lee-Smith [2011] with Korean, and Leung et al [2011] with Chinese).

Classroom Implications and Future Research

Based on previous research shown in this section, the traditional dictée may be an effective tool to teach spelling. It has also exhibited signs of effectiveness in identifying students' spelling difficulties and assessing their spelling improvement. Strategy instruction (for example, teachers working individually with students to go over spelling rules for each word in the dictation) has been shown to be highly beneficial in terms of spelling improvement and therefore could also be highly beneficial in a classroom setting. Studies have also demonstrated and confirmed the merit of dictation as a teaching and learning device in remediating heritage learners' spelling weaknesses. Finally, since the literature does not explicitly mention the use of spelling skills from children's first language while learning spelling in a second language, looking into whether the spelling experience in an L1 could positively affect spelling in L2 could be beneficial for future research.

4. The Role of Imagery in L2 Vocabulary Instruction

Although vocabulary has been widely acknowledged as an important contributor to L2 language proficiency (for example, Boers 2013; Iwashita et al 2008), there is no consensus as to the best means for teaching vocabulary in the classroom (Bush 2007, 727). Paivio's (1971; 2007) dual coding theory, which emphasizes the positive effect of visual images plus verbal information on L2 word learning, provides an applicable vocabulary teaching approach that merits further exploration (Farley, Ramonda and Liu 2012). However, little attention has been paid to the contribution of visual stimuli (for example, pictures, posters, slides) in L2 learners' uptake of new words. In addition, some studies even demonstrate that L2 learners may be distracted by images when learning unfamiliar words (for example, Boers et al 2009; Tight 2010). Therefore, this section of the review attempts to answer the following research question: Does the use of images improve L2 learners' vocabulary retention? The studies reviewed here focus on learning and teaching L2 vocabulary using visual images. A summary of recent research on the topic is provided in Table 4.

Studies Demonstrating the Facilitative Effect of Visual Images on L2 Vocabulary Retention

Current research shows a lack of consensus with regard to the role of imagery in L2 vocabulary learning. Some researchers, such as Shen (2010) and Farley et al (2012), propose the use of pictures as an effective way of memorizing abstract L2 words. Their studies include both pictures and type of L2 vocabulary in the instructional conditions, namely a picture and a nonpicture instructional condition and a concrete and an abstract word instructional condition. Based on participants' performance on vocabulary posttests, both studies demonstrate the superior effect of pictures on learning abstract words, but no superior effect was found for concrete words. In addition, the delayed posttests in Farley, Ramonda and Liu's (2012) study show a long-term facilitative effect of pictures on meaning recall of abstract words, which supports and extends Shen's (2010) findings. It is noteworthy that participants within these two

Table 4. Empirical Research on the Role of Visual Images in L2 Learners' Retention of New Words

Author (Date)	Participants	Goal of the Study	Key Findings
Boers et al (2009)	English as a foreign language (EFL) learners whose first language is Dutch ($n = 38$); first- and second-year undergraduate students of various proficiency levels.	To examine whether pictures can help L2 learners comprehend and remember the meaning of idioms in the target language.	The addition of pictures contributed little to learners' retention of linguistic forms. Distraction by pictures may have had a detrimental effect when learners tried to acquire unfamiliar and difficult words.
Boers et al (2017)	Chinese EFL learners ($n = 48$), second-year undergraduate students; Malaysian EFL learners ($n = 48$), third-year undergraduate students; Dutch EFL learners ($n = 29$), second-year undergraduate students.	To investigate the effect of adding pictures to glosses on L2 learners' recollection of glossed words while reading.	The addition of pictures did not help the learners to retain the glossed words any better than providing glosses containing only words. When learners were prompted to recall the written form of the words, the gloss condition with pictures resulted in the poorest performance.
Farley, Ramonda and Liu (2012)	Spanish learners with L1 English ($n = 87$), first-year undergraduate students.	To investigate the effects of visual imagery on L2 learners' retention of abstract words.	Participants in the learning abstract words with the help of pictures outperformed learning abstract words without pictures on both the posttest and the delayed posttest; however, pictures were not beneficial for learning concrete words.
Shen (2010)	Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) learners ($n = 40$) in the concrete words group; CFL learners ($n = 35$), first-year undergraduate students in the abstract words group.	To compare the learning effects of two instructional encoding methods (verbal and imagery encoding), and to examine whether the use of textual information plus pictures can enhance L2 Chinese learners' retention of new vocabulary.	The verbal plus imagery instructional method did not show a superior effect in retention of the sound, shape and meaning of concrete words, but this instructional method was effective for learners' retention of the shape and meaning of abstract words.
Szczepaniak and Lew (2011)	Polish upper-intermediate EFL learners ($n = 105$), first-year undergraduate students.	To investigate the role of visual images in teaching vocabulary and to explore whether the use of images in idiom dictionaries leads to better retention.	There was a facilitative effect of pictures on short- and long-term retention of both form and meaning of idioms, but notes about the origin of words did not show any positive effect.
Vungthong, Djonov and Torr (2017)	Polish upper-intermediate EFL learners ($n = 105$), first-year undergraduate students.	To investigate the effect of multimedia (that is, videos of songs) instruction on students' word learning. Learners were exposed to visual and verbal input (for example, lyrics, images and sounds) in learning vocabulary.	The combination of visual and verbal input supported EFL learners' acquisition of vocabulary. Teachers play an important role in guiding EFL learners to use multimedia technologies.

studies were tested on different target languages, demonstrating the generalizability of the imagery effect across languages.

Szczepaniak and Lew (2011) examined the influence of references to imagery in idiom dictionaries on L2 learners' immediate and delayed retention of idioms. In this study, participants were instructed to read 18 idiom entries with or without images, after which they took an immediate form and retention test. One week later, all participants repeated the procedure of the immediate test to show the delayed effect of imagery. The results indicated that images facilitate the recall of idiomatic meaning and form in both the short- and long term. Although this study does not focus on the instruction of L2 vocabulary, it may shed light on an effective approach for teaching L2 idioms in the classroom by employing pictorial illustrations.

Vungthong, Djonov and Torr (2017) investigated the effect of pictures on L2 learners' uptake of vocabulary in a multimedia learning context. By employing multimedia technologies, images were inserted in songs sections to elaborate on the meaning of words. This study suggests that images integrated into multimedia technologies can provide support to L2 learners in understanding new vocabulary, leading the researchers to conclude that the "use of EFL teaching materials can benefit from an increased awareness of the independent and combined meaning-making potential of images and language" (p 55).

Studies Demonstrating the Detrimental Effect of Visual Images on L2 Vocabulary Retention

Unlike Szczepaniak and Lew's (2011) findings, Boers et al (2009) concluded that images exert little influence on L2 learners' retention of the form of idioms, and may even have a detrimental effect if learners are not visually oriented. A possible explanation for the different findings may lie in the different samples and materials used in the two studies. Boers et al (2009) selected 100 idioms as the materials, and participants were instructed to spend two hours learning the idioms with or without illustrations. The large number of idioms and long learning session may have reduced students' dependence on visual images. Boers et al (2017) further investigated the effect of imagery on memorizing glossed words. In one trial of this experiment, participants were randomly assigned to two groups. One group was

exposed to glosses containing only text, while the other group received the same glosses combined with pictures to elucidate the lexical meaning. The results showed a detrimental effect of images on L2 learners' uptake and recall of word meaning.

Classroom Implications and Future Research

Based on the research that has been reviewed, it is clear that the use of images may have a positive effect on teaching abstract words and idioms. For example, when teaching the word *difficult*, instructors can use a picture depicting a student who is suffering during an examination to explain the meaning of the word. When teachers are selecting appropriate images for vocabulary instruction, it is noteworthy that the descriptions of the images should be related to (or semantically associated with) the target words. Further research needs to investigate further why the use of pictures may be less effective in teaching concrete words and how to use pictures for vocabulary teaching in a systematic way.

5. The Effects of Monolingual and Bilingual Dictionaries on L2 Vocabulary Learning

Although a focus on grammar is common for many L2 classrooms, L2 vocabulary deserves equal, if not greater, attention in L2 learning and teaching. As Wilkins (1972) states, "While without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (pp 111–12). Learners acquire much of their new vocabulary through inference. Nonetheless, previous research suggests that using dictionaries can enhance L2 learners' vocabulary acquisition (for example, Hulstijn, Hollander and Greidanus 1996; Lupescu and Day 1993). An important question regarding L2 vocabulary instruction regards the choice between monolingual (that is, including definitions in the L2) and bilingual (that is, including translations in the L1) dictionary use. While teachers might encourage the use of monolingual dictionaries (for example, Ali 2012), the majority of students prefer using bilingual dictionaries (Lew 2004). The current section of this review focuses on the following research question: Is there a difference in the effectiveness of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries on L2 vocabulary acquisition?

Table 5 provides a summary of the research on the topic. Studies focused on glosses are also included, as the effects of L1 and L2 glosses can be compared to the effects of bilingual and monolingual dictionaries, respectively.

Table 5. Empirical Studies Examining the Effects of Definitions and Translations on L2 Vocabulary Learning

Author (Date)	Participants	Goal of the Study	Key Findings
Ahangari and Dogolsara (2015)	Iranian intermediate EFL learners ($n = 60$) second-year undergraduate students.	To investigate the effects of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries on L2 vocabulary learning.	Learners using monolingual dictionaries outperformed those using bilingual dictionaries on a multiple-choice vocabulary test.
Choi (2016)	Male Korean upper-intermediate EFL learners in Grade 10 ($n = 180$).	To investigate the role of L1 and L2 glosses on learners' incidental vocabulary learning and lexical representations.	Learners using L1 glosses achieved better long-term retention of high frequency words than learners using L2 glosses.
Hayati and Fattahzadeh (2006)	Iranian undergraduate intermediate EFL learners ($n = 60$).	To compare the effectiveness of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries on L2 learners' vocabulary recall and retention.	There was no effect of the type of dictionary used on learners' vocabulary recall and retention, but learners using bilingual dictionaries performed the reading task significantly faster than learners using monolingual dictionaries.
Hu et al (2014)	Taiwanese EFL learners who were junior high school students of different proficiency levels ($n = 78$).	To examine the effectiveness of L1 and L2 e-glosses on L2 learners' incidental vocabulary learning.	High-proficiency learners using L2 glosses remembered more words on the delayed posttest than those who used L1 glosses.
Ko (2005)	Korean intermediate undergraduate EFL learners ($n = 106$).	To investigate the effect of L1 and L2 glosses on learners' reading comprehension.	Only L2 glosses significantly improved students' reading comprehension, and most students (62 per cent) showed a preference for L2 glosses.
Kung (2015)	Taiwanese intermediate undergraduate EFL learners ($n = 64$).	To investigate how the use of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries can affect L2 learners' vocabulary acquisition and learning attitudes.	Only the use of monolingual dictionaries had a significant positive effect on learners' vocabulary acquisition and learning attitudes.
Lew (2004)	Polish EFL learners of various ages and proficiency levels ($n = 712$).	To determine the relative effectiveness of monolingual, bilingual and semi-bilingual (that is, including both definitions and translations) dictionaries on comprehension.	Bilingual dictionaries were easier to use and more effective than semi-bilingual dictionaries. Monolingual dictionaries were the least effective on the lexical receptive tasks.
Zarei and Naseri (2008)	Iranian undergraduate EFL learners ($n = 270$); 90 beginner, 90 intermediate and 90 advanced.	To determine the effects of monolingual, bilingual and bilingualized (that is, semi-bilingual, including both definitions and translations) dictionaries on learners' vocabulary comprehension and production.	Beginner learners using bilingual dictionaries were able to comprehend significantly more words than those using monolingual dictionaries. Intermediate learners tended to perform better with bilingualized dictionaries, and advanced learners with bilingual dictionaries.

Evidence for the Superior Effectiveness of Monolingual Dictionaries

Some studies on the effects of glosses suggest that the definitions provided in L2 glosses are more beneficial than L1 translations, as they improve learners' reading comprehension (Ko 2005) and vocabulary retention (Hu et al 2014). Ahangari and Dogolsara (2015) explain that definitions in monolingual dictionaries might be more effective than translations in bilingual dictionaries, because they require greater cognitive effort and deeper processing of the new vocabulary in addition to providing more contextual cues to the learners.

One of the few studies that tested the long-term effects of dictionary use was carried out by Kung (2015). Over the course of one semester, 64 Chinese intermediate EFL learners read 54 English texts—either with the help of monolingual or bilingual dictionaries. Only the group of students who used monolingual dictionaries improved in L2 vocabulary performance from the pretest to the posttest. The author argues that the ample L2 contextualization is more beneficial than providing L1 equivalents, which sometimes can be ambiguous and adversely influence learners' L2 vocabulary development. Findings from the qualitative data collected in this study indicate also that the authentic L2 input in monolingual dictionaries can increase students' learning motivation.

Ng (2016) compared the impact of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries on the most common lexical errors committed by Chinese EFL learners. The analysis of the monolingual *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* and the bilingual *Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary* revealed that the information provided in the bilingual dictionary was enough to prevent only two of the four most common errors, whereas the monolingual dictionary appeared to be effective for the prevention of all four major lexical errors. The researcher concludes that EFL learners with L1 Chinese should be encouraged to use monolingual dictionaries.

Evidence for the Superior Effectiveness of Bilingual Dictionaries

Zarei and Naseri (2008) conducted one of the few studies on the effects of dictionary type, and they included learners of different proficiency levels. Although most of the results were not statistically

significant, they found that advanced learners tended to perform better on the immediate posttest if they were taught new vocabulary with bilingual dictionaries. A large-scale study by Lew (2004), which involved 712 Polish learners of English, suggests that the lack of translations in monolingual dictionaries negatively affects L2 vocabulary learning for learners of all levels. Recently, Choi (2016) also found that translations in L1 were more beneficial than L2 explanations for Korean intermediate EFL learners' incidental vocabulary acquisition and retention. Moreover, Hayati and Fattahzadeh (2006) demonstrated that using bilingual dictionaries is more time efficient than using monolingual dictionaries. Therefore, the results of these studies counterbalance the claims that using monolingual dictionaries is more beneficial for L2 learners than using bilingual dictionaries.

Classroom Implications and Future Research

Due to the inconclusive (and often contradictory) results from the previous studies, it is difficult to determine which dictionary type is generally more effective for L2 vocabulary acquisition. The review of the research suggests that teachers may favour the use of monolingual dictionaries, but bilingual dictionaries appear to be just as effective. One research area that has not been investigated and could potentially have important classroom implications regards the relationship between dictionary type and type of target vocabulary (for example, abstract versus concrete, functional versus lexical and nouns versus adjectives versus verbs). It is possible that the effectiveness of a given type of dictionary varies for different word categories.

6. The Role of Autism Spectrum Disorder in L2 Development

Educators who come across students who fall into the autism spectrum may be unclear about the extent to which these individuals are able to learn an L2. In fact, there is a predominating belief that children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) cannot understand second (or third) languages (Hambly and Fombonne 2011). Research done by Koegel and LaZebnik

(2014) indicated ASD students are often seen as being either antisocial or socially awkward, which does not adequately characterize them and may have a negative impact on educators' beliefs regarding their ability to learn an L2. The importance of understanding ASD students is crucial, especially when it comes to L2 teaching and learning. This section of this review will

focus on the following research question: What is the role of educators in promoting language development among students with ASD? Most of the research on this particular topic compares various age groups of typically developing (TD) students to those with ASD. A summary of research on the topic is provided in Table 6.

TABLE 6. Research Investigating (Language) Learning Among Students with ASD

Author (Date)	Participants	Goal of the Study	Key Findings
Koegel and LaZebnik (2014)	Elementary students (various ages).	Chapter 5 gives both parents and educators an approach that could spark ideas for introducing ASD children into classrooms with TD students slowly.	It may be difficult for an ASD child to communicate in big group settings. Options include introducing them into smaller groups or allowing students to be part of a buddy system.
Hambly and Fombonne (2011)	Children aged 3–9 years from Quebec or Ontario who came from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> monolingual environments ($n = 30$) bilingual environments ($n = 45$, 11 of whom were exposed to trilingual environments). **Two participants were nonverbal and seven spoke less than 10 words.	This study investigated children growing up in various language environments. The research also included the exposure to language learning in a child's everyday life.	The results, based on surveys, interviews and language diaries revealed that the TD children had higher dominant vocabulary counts than ASD children of the same age.
Hampton et al (2017)	Thirty- five bilingual families: parents of ASD children ($n = 17$) and parents of TD children ($n = 18$) The children were between 3 and 10 years old.	To explore factors and influences parents had on ASD children's L2 learning.	On the basis of surveys and interviews, parents of children with ASD had many more concerns about bilingualism (that is, that the children would be confused) versus parents of TD children.
Iarocci, Hutchison and O'Toole (2017)	Children, aged 6–16 years, who were <ul style="list-style-type: none"> monolingual ($n = 76$, 52 of whom had ASD) bilingual ($n = 91$ students, 32 of whom had ASD). 	To explore L2 exposure and its effects on delaying communication, specifically in children exposed to several languages.	The results of a questionnaire study investigating language exposure indicate that there were no differences in communication based on environment (that is, monolingual versus bilingual).
Yu (2015)	One immigrant family from China (that is, two parents, a grandfather, a daughter and a son who has ASD).	To explore the difficulties an immigrant family faced after they chose to use one spoken language with their ASD child.	The family found it difficult to use only one language in their house, which was not their L1. Communication with the son was less rich as a result.

Exposure

Parents may be able to help educators in communicating relevant information; for example, the information between speech-language therapists and educators. Hambly and Fombonne (2011) recommend a language diary to assist professionals by indicating where children were throughout their day, whom they spoke to and in which language. Iarocci, Hutchison and O'Toole (2017) indicate that both monolingual and bilingual groups scored similarly when caregivers answered questionnaires about the children's language exposure in either a monolingual or bilingual environment.

The Environment

When Hampton et al (2017) studied the parents of both TD and ASD children who acquired a L2, these parents indicated that they created a special bond with their children. Parents in the study recalled the obstacles they faced when learning a L2, which, in turn, encouraged them to understand the challenges their children might face when learning an additional language. Additionally, parents of the ASD children expressed concerns that their children might face language delays and language confusion. Educators are encouraged to ask bilingual parents to speak both languages with their ASD children rather than one.

Classroom Implications and Future Research

Iarocci, Hutchison and O'Toole (2017) indicate that having open communication between parents and professionals is useful for a child's language development. Language diaries such as those proposed by

Hambly and Fombonne (2011) may facilitate communication among all involved in an ASD learner's language journey. Koegel and LaZebnik (2014) recommend slowly integrating ASD children into class, in hopes that they will not become too overwhelmed. The authors indicate that a partner system that pairs ASD and TD children may benefit both students. Future research should continue to test the effects of these methods with ASD children.

7. Approaches to Teaching an L2 to Literacy-Challenged Adults

Learning a new language is a demanding endeavour for all learners, but since almost all instructional approaches are based on the assumption of dealing with literate students, particular challenges arise when learners face illiteracy—understood as the lack of ability to read and write—or low literacy levels in their L1. Research has focused on how literacy challenges affect certain aspects of L2 learning (for example, dividing the speech stream into words, Havron and Arnon [2017], or the processing of feedback on learner errors, Bigelow et al [2006]); however, research on which teaching approach could benefit this type of learners deserves further exploration. The current section of this review aims to obtain answers for the following question: What characterizes a useful approach for teaching an L2 to literacy-challenged adults?

Table 7 summarizes existing research on the topic, along with studies devoted to understanding which aspects of the L2 are affected by literacy challenges in the L1. The studies look at populations from several countries, focusing mostly on immigrant and refugee learners.

Table 7. Studies on Literacy-Challenged Students Learning an L2

Author (Date)	Participants	Goal of the Study	Key Findings
Bigelow et al (2006)	Adult L1 Somali speakers ($n = 8$) with limited formal schooling learning English as an L2.	To examine the impact of L1 literacy in the acquisition of L2 oral skills by studying whether learners were able to correct their errors based on feedback, specifically recasts. ³	Learners with higher literacy levels were able to correct their errors based on feedback more than low-literate ones. Corrections that required multiple changes were better recalled by the more literate group.

3. A recast is an immediate correct reformulation of a learner's erroneous utterance (Bigelow et al 2006).

Elmeroth (2003)	Adult immigrants to Sweden ($n = 22$): 11 enrolled in a basic adult education program, mostly illiterate; 11 enrolled in a Swedish for Immigrants program, with higher literacy levels.	To examine the influence of having lived in a refugee camp has on language acquisition.	Most illiterate participants were affected by their difficult lived experiences. Despite moving to Sweden, they had little or no contact with Swedish speakers other than their teacher. Their options for language acquisition were affected by their lack of learning in school and by their lack of contact with native speakers.
Havron and Arnon (2017)	Male soldiers of the Israeli Army ($n = 39$), native Arabic speakers with literacy challenges, learning to read in Hebrew as L2.	To test the influence of L1 literacy on the participants' ability to pick out words from the speech stream.	Participants with higher L1 (Arabic) literacy performed significantly better in repeating words in reverse in their L2 (Hebrew). No significant correlation appeared between L1 literacy and acquisition of new L2 words.
Kotik-Friedgut et al (2014)	Two groups of learners in literacy classes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> adult Ethiopian learners of Hebrew ($n = 63$) with no formal schooling background (experimental group); adult Ethiopian learners of Hebrew ($n = 61$) with no formal schooling background (control group). 	To test an approach for teaching a L2 to illiterate adults. The tested approach considered language to be a higher mental function that is developed both by biological and social factors. It included exercises in phonological awareness and visual perception.	The experimental group improved significantly compared to the control group, especially in word and sentence production and letter recognition. There was no difference in reading familiar and unfamiliar words. Experimental group learners claimed to be more confident in their L2 skills.
Menard-Warwick (2005)	Adult female immigrants from Latin America to USA in an ESL literacy program ($n = 2$); one with high school education and one with limited primary education.	To analyze the role of socio-political and familial factors in the language and literacy development.	The evaluated literacy programs failed to consider the trajectories of learners or the importance of family history for learning motivation.
Pettitt and Tarone (2015)	Multilingual adult male ($n = 1$) living in the United States in the process of developing alphabetic and print literacy in his seventh language: English.	To analyze and describe changes in oral language while acquiring literacy during a six-month ESL literacy course.	Results mainly showed a gradual but significant improvement in the development of print literacy as well as decoding and comprehension skills in oral tasks. There was no significant improvement in vocabulary measures.
Tshabangu-Soko and Caron (2011)	African refugee learners in an ESL program in New Hampshire ($n = 8$), ESL teachers and personnel from New Hampshire Department of Education's ESL program.	To analyze the perception of effectiveness of ESL programs among preliterate ⁴ and nonliterate African refugees in the United States, and program instructors and administrators.	Difficulties faced by the students in the program were due to lack of peer education, short classes and lack of consideration of L1 literacy challenges. Students attributed difficulties to their own learning challenge.

4. Preliterate individuals are people with an L1 who do not have a written form.

Studies Evaluating the Impact of Literacy Challenges in L2 Learning

The existing literature indicates that learners with literacy challenges have certain particularities when learning a L2, including their relative lack of ability to distinguish words and separate them. A study by Bigelow et al (2006) demonstrated that participants with lower literacy levels faced problems of lexical segmentation when exposed to recasts, a popular language learning strategy used with learners with average literacy levels. Another study by Havron and Arnon (2017) demonstrated that while participants with lower literacy had bigger challenges like distinguishing words and dividing them into sounds, this did not have a significant impact on their ability to learn new words. These findings imply that learners with literacy challenges are in need of revised approaches that consider their particularities and the need to adapt techniques and strategies used to teach learners with average literacy levels.

Studies Evaluating Effective Approaches for Literacy-Challenged Adults

Studies investigating the efficacy of approaches for teaching a L2 to literacy-challenged adults are scarce and have not yet reached a consensus on the characteristics of an effective teaching approach. However, the study by Kotik-Friedgut et al (2014) that investigated a multidisciplinary approach, which integrates communication, culture and neuropsychology (including exercises in phonological awareness and visual perception), shows a possible path toward a more effective way of teaching this particular group of learners.

Other studies demonstrate the importance of considering the difficult experiences that literacy-challenged learners may have faced—especially those students fleeing from conflict. Such is the case of the research project carried out by Elmeroth (2003) in which observations showed that students find it difficult to establish contact with native speakers or persons beyond their immediate surroundings. The results of previous literature recognize that it is necessary to consider the socio-political

conditions of the new setting in which these students learn a L2 (Mernard-Warwick 2005) and to evaluate the pertinence and efficiency of existing programs.

Classroom Implications and Future Research

Existing research implies that literacy-challenged persons learning an L2 may not benefit from traditional teaching approaches. Including familiar topics related to everyday life and culture and considering their life experience are beneficial elements to be included in a classroom with this type of learners.

Future studies are needed to understand the aspects of language that are most challenging for these learners, and to design and test new teaching approaches to help them successfully integrate into a new setting.

8. Factors That Influence Students' Decisions to Leave French Immersion Programs

There are various reasons why one chooses to enrol in a L2 program. Many find great success through the respective program, but despite high aspirations, some other students eventually leave these language programs, and this departure is known as student attrition. Research has focused primarily on two types of influencing factors that would lead students to withdraw from their language program: academic and social. This section of this review will focus on the following research question: Why do students choose to leave a French immersion (FI) program? A summary of the research on the topic is provided in Table 8.

The results of the studies presented in Table 8 demonstrate how complex and diverse FI student attrition is. Looking at different grades and levels, some studies concluded that academic factors influence attrition, while others found that social factors were influential. The research looking to understand the factors that lead students to leave a FI program investigated different perspectives, respectively: those of the students, their parents and their teachers.

Table 8. Studies on Factors That Influence Student Attrition from FI Programs

Author (Date)	Participants	Goal of the Study	Key Findings
Beck (2004)	Late FI intermediate students in Grade 8 or 9 who withdrew from the program one or two years after starting in Grade 7 ($n = 6$).	To gain a better understanding of the factors that led students to leave the FI program.	Main reasons for attrition: students (1) perceiving themselves as academically inferior to their classmates, (2) believing that they would find more academic success in an English program and (3) desiring to be with their friends in the English program.
Berube (2015)	FI teachers who have dealt with student attrition ($n = 4$).	To investigate teachers' experiences in relation to the factors that influence FI student attrition.	According to the teachers, both academic and social factors (for example, students' difficulties in French, their poor language skills and low support from family and friends) promote student attrition.
Boudreaux (2010)	French immersion students' parents ($n = 445$).	To explore the factors that influence parents' decision to withdraw from or keep their child in a language immersion program with its ultimate goal of proposing solutions to better immersion experiences.	Three major factors contribute to student attrition: (1) the inconsistency between the preprogram aspirations and the actual program, (2) the negative impact of these aspirations on students' institutional experience and (3) parents' perception of dissatisfaction. There are two waves of withdrawal: in kindergarten/Grade 1 and at the end of Grade 6.
Cadez (2006)	Teachers ($n = 35$), current FI students ($n = 220$) and former FI high school students who have withdrawn from the immersion program ($n = 18$).	To understand how three FI high school centres implement previous research findings on attrition related to students' learning challenges, behavioural challenges and difficulties.	Problems identified include the perception that higher marks can be achieved in an English program or that no equally challenging programs are offered in French as they are in English.
Campbell (1992)	Grade 6 FI students ($n = 22$), students' parents ($n = 16$).	To identify the reasons why children choose to transfer out of French programs after completing Grade 6.	Half of the students left to attend a private school, eight left because of reading and writing difficulties, and seven left due to the parents' concerns that their children were not receiving a quality education.
Makropoulos (2007)	Current Grade 11 FI students ($n = 131$), Grade 11 students who have left the FI program ($n = 14$).	To understand the role of engagement in FI programs and its relation to students' perception of where they came from and plans for the future.	Students with lower academic success who did not seek future economic benefits from bilingualism and had access to French outside of school were more likely to withdraw from the program. Students who began in an early FI program became less engaged than those who began in late FI.
Noel (2004)	FI educators ($n = 11$), FI students' parents ($n = 17$).	To reveal the decision-making processes of parents choosing whether or not to keep their children with learning difficulties in the early FI program.	Four categories of factors strongly influenced parents' decisions: (1) choice of future program, (2) academic concerns, (3) parent comfort and (4) child comfort.

Studies Investigating Students' Perspectives on FI Student Attrition

It is necessary to consider students' perspectives on their experiences that led them to withdraw from their program. Altogether, students attributed their program withdrawal to the feeling of inadequacy compared to their peers, the notion that they could perform better in an English program and to their desire to join their friends in the English program (Beck 2004). There are differences, however: some students state that they withdraw because they have difficulty learning French, whereas others claim that there are not sufficient course options in French (Cadez 2006; Campbell 1992; Makropoulos 2007). Additionally, without prospective future economic benefits from bilingualism, or with ties to French outside school (Makropoulos 2007) students are more likely to withdraw. Helping students find the relevance of learning French could help them stay motivated and remain in the program.

Studies Investigating Parents' Perspectives on FI Student Attrition

Parents can often have a strong influence in the final decision to withdraw the student from a program. It has been found that if parents have preprogram aspirations and later discover that the program is not what was expected, they may withdraw their child (Boudreaux 2010; Noel 2004). Parents also consider their child's experience in terms of comfort when making the final decision to withdraw from the program (Boudreaux 2010; Noel 2004). In other studies (Campbell 1992; Noel 2004), parents were found to be generally satisfied with the quality of teaching in the program but were concerned about the lack of English instruction at the junior and high school level. Reassuring parents that the immersion program's English instruction is sufficient could help parents feel more comfortable keeping their child in the program.

Studies Investigating Teachers' Perspectives on FI Student Attrition

Not many studies consider teachers' perspectives on this subject. The most relevant and recent

study on this topic was conducted by Berube (2015), who explored teachers' experiences in relation to the factors that influence student attrition and found a multitude of academic and social factors to influence program attrition. These teachers were adaptable and often tried to help students try to overcome any signs of possible attrition by changing their teaching approach and strategies (Berube 2015). In the past, when teachers were approached for advice, they reported instances in which they suggested leaving or staying in the program depending on the student's situation. Teachers indicated that no two cases are the same and that each individual case should be fully explored and understood before making any suggestions.

Classroom Implications and Future Research

Considered together, these studies demonstrate that it is important for teachers, parents and students to recognize that student attrition cannot be attributed to a single factor. There is great variability in the factors that motivate students to withdraw from their program, and no two cases should be generalized and treated in the same way, as every situation is complex. It is also important to note that students do not always leave the program due to teachers' instruction and that more often a multitude of other factors come into play. Teachers should explore all possible factors and consult with other educators before deciding on how to handle student attrition. More research on this topic is necessary to fully understand the reasons why students leave FI programs.

9. Conclusion

The present literature review included over 50 research studies to address relevant questions in L2 pedagogy. Based on this review, we can conclude the following:

1. Students may benefit from an action-oriented approach where they need to use the target language to complete authentic and meaningful tasks, as this increases their motivation and learning outcomes.
2. Teachers should consider learners' needs and characteristics (for example, proficiency

level) before choosing specific grammar teaching methods (for example, implicit versus explicit).

3. Dictation may be an effective way to teach spelling in languages using the Latin alphabet as well as in languages using other writing systems (for example, Korean, Chinese).
4. Pictures may help learners to retain new vocabulary (for example, abstract nouns), but using images in marginal glosses might not be necessary or even helpful.
5. Both bilingual and monolingual dictionaries can aid L2 vocabulary acquisition in different ways.
6. Open communication between parents and educators is especially important for students with autism spectrum disorder.
7. Students who have not developed solid L1 literacy skills require different L2 teaching approaches.
8. Withdrawal from immersion programs can be due to a number of factors, and students often do not leave the program due to concerns about teachers' instruction.

A number of important questions emerging from this literature review remain unanswered. For example, it may be worthwhile investigating in more detail the relationship between different grammar teaching methods and teachers' attitudes toward teaching grammar. Future research may also explore the relationship between learner styles and the use of images in vocabulary acquisition. Regarding the effects of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, it is important to focus on different word categories (for example, adjectives versus nouns) so that teachers know when to encourage the use of a specific type of dictionary. Finally, more research is required to identify possible teaching approaches with literacy-impaired adults. Importantly, finding ways for teachers and researchers to work together to identify problems and carry out research that answers meaningful questions may lead to more relevant research and ultimately more effective classroom language teaching.

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Personal, Cultural and Political Implications of Language Loss or Change

John W Friesen

Language is our unique relationship to the Creator, our attitudes, beliefs, values and fundamental notions of what is truth. Our languages are the cornerstone of who we are as a people. Without our languages, our cultures cannot survive.

—*Towards Linguistic Justice for First Nations*
(Assembly of First Nations,
Education Secretariat, 1990)

A primary concern of minority communities in Canada is maintenance of their cultural identity, a goal supported by Canada's multiculturalism policy. Language is a vital component of cultural maintenance, and leaders of ethnocultural communities are fearful that many languages are vanishing. Their concerns are well founded.

Despite Canada's commitment to immigration and multiculturalism, most Canadians are unaware of the degree to which this country is linguistically diverse. Even the well educated and the politically influential are largely ignorant of the diversity, complexity and cultural richness of Canada (Shaw 2001, 45). Even with federal legislation pertaining to the maintenance of languages and cultures, researchers estimate that by the end of this century, 5,000–7,000 world languages will be lost for various reasons, and the cost will be high—personally, culturally and nationally. According to international research undertaken by the National Geographic Society, a language disappears every 14 days (Solash 2010). Factors responsible for this phenomenon vary and may include politics, media, international travel, economics and historical developments, among many more (Crystal 2004). In Canada

specifically, it is estimated that in the next half century, nearly every Indigenous language will be lost.

Linguists are often unable to prevent this tragedy because they do not have the wherewithal to recommend appropriate action. Solash (2010) quotes Mark Turin, a linguistic anthropologist, who notes that linguists “only know enough about 5 per cent to 10 per cent of the world's languages.” Documentation of the unique composition of the other 90 per cent of languages constitutes a puzzle of great magnitude and, sadly, has not yet been undertaken.

The brotherhood of humankind is the poorer when a language dies. Not surprisingly, all eyes turn to the education system when these unfortunate trends are identified. As will be discussed later, there are several things educators can do to help out, but language loss is not a situation that schools alone can resolve.

This article will discuss four aspects of language loss or change—personal implications, community concerns, efforts to preserve languages and the politics of language preservation. Then, the final section will spell out the direction educators must pursue to alleviate the situation and perhaps slow down the pace of language loss in Canada.

Personal Implications

Language is very much a part of one's identity. People generally feel most at ease conversing in their mother tongue. When a language dies, or when it becomes necessary to adopt another language, many people feel a loss of identity and of conceptual familiarity.

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Language loss also affects the family. When a new language is adopted, parents lose a valued means by which to socialize their children and to convey to them the family's culturally originated values, beliefs, understandings and wisdom.

I have personal experience with changing my primary language, having first learned to speak a Dutch-German dialect known as Low German. I did not learn English until my parents enrolled me in Grade 1 in Trail, British Columbia. Originally from Saskatchewan, which was experiencing tough economic times, my parents had migrated to British Columbia in search of employment. Our family made an annual trip back to Saskatchewan to visit relatives.

During one such visit, I was shocked to discover that everyone was speaking Low German. I drew my father aside and demanded to know how this could be. Wasn't Low German our family's private language? After all, no one we knew in our British Columbia community spoke the language; our neighbours and friends were all English-speaking folks. I thought that having a private family language was a very good idea; that way family members could safely share private information in the presence of strangers if they needed to. I assumed that every family had a private language.

My father smiled at my discovery and gently informed me that our extended family belonged to a group called the Mennonites and that we all shared a historical background, culture and language. My seven-year-old eyes widened. This was my first truly multicultural experience.

Losing one's language, trying to learn a second language or having to exchange one's mother tongue for another can be traumatic, particularly for older people. Many older immigrants expect to maintain their culture and language and hope that succeeding generations will carry on their traditions. After all, the Canadian government advertises that this is a multicultural country where the cultural traditions and practices of newcomers will be encouraged. As the 1971 government policy states,

The Government of Canada will support all of Canada's cultures and will seek to assist, resources permitting, the development of those cultural groups which have demonstrated a desire and effort to continue to develop, a capacity to grow and contribute to

Canada, as well as a clear need for assistance. (Canada 1971, 8,545)

Canada has not always been faithful in helping immigrant groups to maintain their languages; instead, it has tried to assist incoming groups in acquiring at least one of the official languages in order for them to become full participants in Canadian society (Remnant 1976, 12).

This apparent hypocrisy has severely disappointed first-generation immigrants, particularly so as they have witnessed their grandchildren's high motivation to adopt one of Canada's official languages. Elders sometimes perceive the acquisition of another language as the first step in renouncing loyalty to the land of their origin. A predictable result is the loss of communication between generations as older people retain their first language and their grandchildren learn to speak one of the resident languages (Rong and Preissle 1998, 41–42). This development is particularly unsettling among cultural groups where grandparents are involved in raising the children. However, it appears that language loyalty persists among the younger generations only as long as economic and social circumstances are conducive to it. If another language (such as either of Canada's two official languages) proves to have greater value, a shift to that language immediately begins (Edwards 1993, 129).

Fillmore (1991) relates the story of a grandfather who arrived in Canada from Korea, only to discover that his grandchildren, who were residents here, could not communicate with him in the Korean language. The children's father ordered them to address their grandfather in Korean, but they were unable to do so. It was only then that the father realized he had neglected his children's linguistic lessons. When the children did address their grandfather in a rusty form of Korean, they neglected to use the proper forms for addressing elders. The grandfather was shocked at the children's apparent disrespect toward him. He scolded his son, who took it upon himself to punish his children, using a stick as his weapon of reprimand.

Immigrant students may hesitate to speak their first language out of embarrassment or because Canadian schools encourage limited use of first languages other than English or French. Similarly, students seeking to master an official language but having difficulty doing so may avoid interacting

with their peers, thus creating a wall of another sort (Egbo 2009, 70–71). Schools are faced with the complex challenge of trying to help second language learners feel welcome while encouraging them to take second language learning seriously. Parents who become aware that their children are having difficulty adjusting often enrol them in private schools instead. Such a move may reduce stress, but it also hinders students' development in second language learning.

The challenge to retain a language is immense and often becomes quite personal, particularly for those who speak more than one language. As linguist Joshua Fishman (1996, 81) asks, “What are you going to do with the mother tongue *before* school, *in* school, *out* of school, and *after* school?” Because that determines its fate, whether it is going to become self-renewing.” The most reliable way to assure language maintenance is to speak the language in the home (Cummins and Swain 1986; Friesen 1991).

Community Concerns

In her 1996 Vancouver Institute Lecture, “Between Two Referendums: The Future of Quebec and Canada,” journalist Lysiane Gagnon stated,

Language goes deeper than skin colour, or ethnic origin. Skin colour is superficial.

Language is not. Language calls for a different set of cultural references, a different school system, another literature. . . .

Language is more than a passing difference in a democratic and pluralist society like Canada. It might even be the major one.

Language is undoubtedly a most effective carrier of cultural content. It is an invisible tie that binds people together. Sociologists use the term *Gemeinschaft*, meaning fellowship of the deepest order—a sense of community.

This close relationship between language and culture means that when a language vanishes, more than the language itself is lost. As Fishman (1996, 72) suggests, “Take [language] away from the culture, and you take away its greetings, its curses, its praises, its laws, its literature, its songs, its riddles, its proverbs, its cures, its wisdom, its prayers.” In other words, when you take away the language, you also take away the essence of the culture, which

cannot be expressed in any other language. When a language dies, the culture loses conceptual knowledge that cannot easily be translated into another language—if it can be translated at all.

For example, many interpretations of everyday activities are unique to a specific cultural milieu. The names of certain institutions may have special meaning in a given cultural context. Some Indigenous communities recognize ownership of names, so that when a child is born and the parents wish to use a name owned by another family, permission must be obtained. Shaw (2001, 48) notes that “ownership of a name is often bestowed, renewed, and recognized by successive generations at feasts and potlatches, and is remembered and recounted in formalized oral traditions.” When one is given a new name in another language, that significance is lost.

A similar phenomenon occurs when new words are introduced into a heritage language. Researchers who study language are quick to point out the difficulty of translating conceptual ideas from one language to another. Words just do not have the same meaning or impact when rephrased in another language. For example, the French are very proud of their language and see its use as a sign of intelligence and sophistication. Words and phrases from English are not welcomed: “The French Language Academy is under constant pressure to maintain the purity of French by purging it of English ‘junk’ culture” (Elliott and Fleras 1992, 213).

The following example from my own experience demonstrates the difficulty of trying to translate words from one's heritage language. The Low German word *zowt* is used to imply that one has had enough of a particular situation (hence, “Ech ze zowt,” meaning “I have had enough”). *Zowt* can be translated as *fed up*, but a lesser degree of animosity is intended with *zowt*. The concept is really not that easy to translate. I am certain that everyone who speaks a second language can easily identify similar examples.

Here is another example. The utterance “all my relations,” used by Dakota- and Nakota-speaking people in Canada, is misunderstood by non-Indigenous people. The expression is used to close a prayer or to acknowledge the communication abilities of all living things made by the Creator, particularly animals and humans. If sensitive to this truth, every creature can learn from all others. An

eagle flying overhead may signal that the Creator is blessing a group of people gathered below. An ant staring up at a person who has inadvertently overturned a plank, thereby upsetting the ant's hidden abode, may be signalling that its habitat has been invaded. Any encounter between two living entities has the potential for learning. Hence, the phrase *all my relations* has a powerful meaning.

Many immigrants quickly discover the need to adopt one of Canada's official languages in order to succeed in the job market. Young immigrants are usually quite quick to abandon their heritage language, much to the chagrin of their elders. The latter often establish heritage language schools and enrol their grandchildren in them in an effort to preserve some semblance of their old way of life. Usually this does not work, much to the disappointment of the older set (Paupanekis and Westfall 2001, 101).

Abandoning one's heritage culture and language often has spiritual and emotional implications (Shaw 2001). This is particularly true in the Indigenous context, since few forms of religious life imported from Europe even remotely resembled the ceremonial life of Indigenous Peoples of Canada. In fact, their spiritual beliefs and rituals were roundly condemned by European missionaries. First Nations children were placed in missionary-operated day schools and residential schools, and they were instructed to abandon the traditional beliefs and practices of their people and adopt European models. Although some Roman Catholic priests learned to speak Indigenous languages (with converting the locals as the underlying reason), students were punished if they conversed with one another in their native tongue.

Many First Nations people, such as the Stoney Nakoda Sioux of Alberta, believe that some forms of uttered language are sacred; that is to say, when certain words or phrases are used in a specific context, a form of spiritual exercise or worship is enacted. In some cultures, languages are considered holy in themselves, while other cultures hold that forms of their language contain holy thoughts, holy dicta or metaphors of holiness (Fishman 1996, 75). Thus, educators should tread lightly in situations involving varying interpretations of spirituality.

Milton Gordon's (1964, 70) classic seven-step paradigm of cultural assimilation includes language shifts only by implication. We have learned much

since then and now realize that language is the predominant vehicle by which to preserve cultural identity. Since educators have both the privilege and the responsibility of working in the arena of language learning, they must be better equipped to manage the challenge. Perhaps there are implications for teacher training institutions in this regard.

Preserving Languages: The Role of Schools

A few decades ago, when it was discovered that heritage languages were disappearing, several provincial governments heeded the call to establish heritage language programs, even though there was no available evidence to prove that these programs would be effective. Alberta, for example, began a series of bilingual programs in 1970, with the following enrolment figures: Ukrainian, 1,105; German, 935; Hebrew, 669; and Yiddish, 77. Ontario objected to the idea of offering basic school instruction in any language other than the two official languages, except on a temporary basis to assist students in acquiring English skills (Martel 1984).

Heritage language programs were not initiated without resistance. Assimilationists argued that the programs would hinder the integration process. Their position was that if immigrant children did not acquire facility in one of the country's two official languages, they would not be able to compete effectively in the job market. If students had a deficiency in an official language, it would be contrary to good pedagogy to provide them with instruction in another language. Adherents to this line of thinking also argued that a child's mind can absorb only so much information; therefore, time spent on other than so-called essential instruction would be time taken away from learning important material (Ashworth 1988, 187).

Some provinces mandate heritage language instruction, thus making available the opportunity for all students to learn a second language. In 1971, Alberta became the first province to do so, followed by Saskatchewan and Manitoba in 1978 and Ontario in 1989, all of them responding to the federal government's newly established multiculturalism policy.

Despite these efforts, English continues to be the predominant language of instruction in English-speaking provinces, while French is the principal language of instruction in Quebec. School programs alone cannot maintain or rejuvenate heritage languages, even with strong community support. Nevertheless, such instruction must be made available, if only to meet the intent of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (Egbo 2009, 70). Government assistance in establishing and maintaining heritage language programs is not seen as a significant factor in their success. Still, the yearning to retain elements of cultural life from the old country remains strong.

English as a second language (ESL) programs have been by far the most common educational response to linguistic diversity in Canada. Unfortunately, these programs tend to de-emphasize rather than encourage the maintenance of students' first languages. As Egbo (2009, 71) concludes,

There is an implicit assumption that exclusive focus on the teaching of ESL will facilitate minority students' successful integration into the education system and mainstream culture. . . . Schools have to make an ideological shift that will give greater recognition to the advantages of maintaining students' home languages while learning a second language.

The Indigenous people of Canada are particularly concerned about cultural and linguistic maintenance, and they have a hard job of it in light of the fact that their traditional world view is so different from that imported from other continents. Many Indigenous people of Canada still believe that humankind should respect nature and that individuals and communities should work in harmony with nature's rhythms. They believe that all entities in the universe are interconnected in some way and that this should be acknowledged and respected. Nature is not to be exploited but, rather, to be appreciated and cared for in a context of awe. This perspective is not much valued today, with the increasing emphasis on economic growth and technological development. Indigenous leaders have long sought government assistance in their campaign for Indigenous languages. Antone (2003, 10) insists that unless something is done about it, at least 50 of Canada's Indigenous languages will disappear in the next half century. The only languages remaining will be Cree, Ojibway and Inuktitut, all of which

have more than 1,000 speakers, and possibly Dakota Sioux, whose use seems to be increasing among the younger generation.

Language and Politics in Canada

Canadians appear to possess a high capacity for debate on language issues, many of those issues stemming from the passage of the *Official Languages Act* in 1969 (Elliott and Fleras 1992, 210). After the two official languages were adopted, many minority groups attempted to seek official government recognition of their languages, but this did not occur. Official recognition of a language is politically laden because knowledge of the recognized language is power. Those who make laws in a specific language simultaneously forge specific meanings for citizen behaviour. This is why countries such as Canada embark on underlying or even overt assimilationist endeavours. The argument is that those who are fluent in languages other than the official languages will have the opportunity to succeed economically on the same footing as citizens who are already familiar with an official language.

Egerton Ryerson, known as the "founder of Canadian (English-speaking) education" (McNeill 1974), welcomed minorities but insisted that they become English-speaking. (Some researchers suspect that his real target was to transform franco-phone culture in Ontario, although the evidence for this is minimal.) In Ryerson's words, "The youthful mind of Canada must be matured and molded if this country is long to remain an appendage of the British Crown" (Gaffield 1987, 12). As superintendent of English-speaking schools, Ryerson wanted students to achieve the wealth and glory of his fatherland. A comprehensive education would include familiarity with British achievements and British civil and social institutions, and an understanding of British history and literature.

Despite the multiculturalism policy, attempting to assimilate ethnic minorities has been an underlying goal of the Canadian government since Confederation in 1867. This is certainly true of ESL programs, which unrelentingly foster integration into mainstream Canada. No one knows this better than the Indigenous people of Canada. Harold Cardinal (1969, 28), then president of the Indian

Association of Alberta, drew attention to what he called “hypocritical policy statements.” Cardinal insisted that whatever Canadian government leaders might promise Indigenous people with regard to cultural maintenance would be disregarded. In his words,

Our people no longer believe. It is that simple and it is that sad. The Canadian government can promise involvement, consultation, progressive human and economic development programmes. We will no longer believe them. The Canadian government can guarantee the most attractive system of education. We will not believe them. They can tell us their beautiful plans for the development of local self-government. We will shrug our disbelief. The government can create a hundred national Indian [sic] advisory councils to advise us about our problems. We will not listen to them. (p 27)

As the decades have rolled into the 21st century, many Indigenous writers have echoed Cardinal’s lament (Battiste 2000; Kirkness 1998; Leavitt 1993). These writers do not have much faith in schools as successful institutions of language maintenance. It must be acknowledged that some schools have made great strides in addressing the problem; however, very few of them produce materials in Indigenous languages (Egbo 2009, 74). This task is often left to local Indigenous communities, which lack sufficient financial resources to get the job done. Public school systems that have taken up this challenge have experienced only minimal success.

Implications for Educators

Language minority students present a special challenge for educators because of their varying cultural backgrounds and linguistic diversity. Many of these students have excellent reading, writing and speaking skills in their first language; unfortunately, however, these skills do not transfer well to Canadian classrooms.

If this situation is ineptly handled by the classroom teacher, students could experience failure, despite their gifts (García 1994, 31). Use of intelligence tests, for example, may provide unreliable results because these tools rely heavily on language—primarily English (Ashworth 1988, 146;

Gollnick and Chinn 1986, 156). This places minority students in an unfair competition in which their abilities may not be fairly evaluated. The ability of classroom teachers to recognize and appreciate the value of each language and cultural group, and to adjust classroom conditions in order to treat students fairly and foster their abilities, will to some extent determine the efficacy of Canada’s multiculturalism policy.

That is the challenge for Canada’s educators in the 21st century—the development of unique language teaching strategies designed to ensure successful language acquisition by every student enrolled in the nation’s schools. Hopefully, students will be assisted in becoming more effective learners by the authorities who determine curriculum content and methodology for language teaching in Canada’s postsecondary teacher education institutions.

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Purpose and Goals of SLIC

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

- To enable Alberta teachers to become more aware of the issues of culture and second languages
- To enhance the knowledge, skills and understanding of teachers in the areas of second languages and culture studies through both inservice and preservice education
- To disseminate information about existing practices, programs and resources in second languages and intercultural education
- To encourage research that will result in the development and dissemination of innovative practices, programs and resources in second languages and intercultural education
- To provide advice and expertise to the Alberta Teachers' Association on learning and working conditions, curricula and teacher preparation as related to second languages and intercultural education
- To act through the Alberta Teachers' Association as an advocate for the enhancement and promotion of second languages and intercultural education

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