Increasing pupil use of the target language through creative and cross-curricular contexts - an action research project focusing on a mixed top set year seven French class

Jennifer Morgan

(PGCE Modern & Foreign Languages 2008-9)

jennifer.morgan@cantab.net

Abstract

This research is based upon my teaching of a sequence of eight lessons with a mixed top set year 7 French class of 30 pupils. The research took place during the second half of their second term of French at an 11-16 language college. My research was influenced by innovations and developments in the curriculum, which emphasises the practical application of the foreign language through using authentic materials and creative contexts. Based in the context of motivational and attitudinal theories of second language (L2) acquisition, it is the practical implications thereof which influence my teaching interventions. Theories are many and varied and often logically appropriate to a curriculum concerned with pupils' communicative capabilities and cultural awareness. The project explores the extent to which demands on teachers to conform to national and school policies hinder/encourage pupil use of the TL. I chose to restrict my research to the nature of the MFL classroom, which itself engenders a cross-curricular context. If the purpose of teaching and learning languages is to communicate in various ways and encourage an understanding of cultural aspects of a country and its language, then we must encourage pupil use of the TL from the beginning of the process.

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Introduction

This research is based upon my teaching of a sequence of eight lessons with a top set year 7 French class of 30 pupils (13 boys: 17 girls) who have a variety of previous French learning backgrounds. The research took place during the second half of their second term of French at the school - an 11-16 comprehensive language college which offers National Curriculum (NC) and GCSE syllabuses, the Asset languages scheme (a step by step skills based qualification http://www.assetlanguages.org.uk/learners/default.aspx) and a vocational language course. This is an action research project whose aim is to implement strategies through my own teaching, which will influence my own and colleagues' practice. My choice of research area was influenced by current innovations and developments in the NC, which emphasises the importance of practical application of the foreign language through use of authentic materials and creative contexts. Although based in the context of motivational and attitudinal theories relating to second language (L2) acquisition, it is the practical implications of theories of L2 acquisition which influence my teaching interventions. I hope to be able to use this opportunity to contribute ideas during a period of curriculum change.

The inspiration for this project comes from a news report, outlining how French school children are learning English during PE lessons (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/7835958.stm). I also investigated NC case studies exploring aspects of history and culture taught in French. Due to time constraints, I could not develop such a large-scale cross-curricular, creative language project and accordingly

concentrated on identifying strategies which can be used on a daily basis in the MFL classroom, focussing on the types of exchanges which might facilitate pupil use of the target language (TL) and which are based upon the rubrics provided by the NC (see www.qca.org/curriculum).

The emphasis on the cross-curricular impact and implications of modern foreign languages (MFL) teaching and learning is reflected in recent literature, such as *Modern Languages Across the Curriculum* (Grenfell, 2002). This text focuses on the idea of 'broadening horizons' at the start of a new millennium and the ways in which languages can be integrated with other subject disciplines, reflecting the cross-curricular aspect of the current MFL curriculum.

TL use is an element of MFL teaching which perhaps engenders the broadest and most varied discussions. It has been more or less at the forefront of discussion, depending largely upon curriculum concerns and priorities. However, since the late 1980s a focus on communicative language learning has meant that a large amount of research and literature has been produced on the subject of TL use and communication in the MFL classroom. Whilst theories are many and varied and often logically appropriate to a curriculum concerned with the communicative capabilities and cultural awareness of pupils, the practice is not as simple as the theory implies. I took my focus for this research from my own teaching targets and also from the rubrics of the NC Programme of Study and explore the extent to which the demands on teachers to conform to the NC and school policies hinder or encourage pupil use of the TL. Whilst communication in the languages classroom is affected by whole school issues and policies, I chose to restrict my research to the nature of the MFL classroom, which itself engenders a cross-curricular context. If the purpose of teaching and learning languages is to be able to communicate in various ways and to encourage an understanding of the cultural aspects of a particular country and its language, then it is essential to encourage pupil use of the TL from the very beginning of the process. The sections of this project focus variously upon the ways in which I sought to explore the nature of second language acquisition:

- **Literature Review** – a discussion of existing theories and research regarding second language acquisition and communication in the MFL classroom and how these impact upon my research.

- **Research Methodology** – an outline of the background to my research, its context and the methods I adopted to obtain the data.

- **Discussion and Data Analysis** – presentation of data and a discussion of the extent to which the evidence allows me to answer my research questions.

- **Conclusion** – a summary of my main findings and the implications thereof for my own practice in the light of my professional and academic understanding of this area of research.

Literature Review

'Ils ne s'arrêtent pas de jacasser!' – pouvons-nous dire cela de nos apprenants ?...Pourquoi…dans les Sections de Langues Vivantes nous plaignons-nous que nos apprenants ne veulent pas parler…? Dans le couloir ces mêmes apprenants parlent de bon cœur – qu'est-ce qui change au moment d'entrer dans nos salles de classe ? Rien, au fond : leur silence est une condition anormale que nous leurs enseignants, avons le devoir de corriger. Permettre à chacun de retrouver sa personnalité en l'exprimant au moyen d'une autre langue, quelle gageure !

(Foster, 1994)

['They don't stop chattering!' – can we say that about our pupils?...Why do we complain that our pupils in modern languages do not want to speak...? In the corridor these very same pupils speak readily – what changes on entering the classroom? Nothing, essentially: their silence is an abnormal condition that we, their teachers, must correct. The challenge is to enable each of them to find and express their personality through the medium of another language!]

This forms part of the introduction to Foster's *Remarques sur la langue cible dans le secondaire* in which she considers conditions (l'ambiance [environment], l'authenticité de tâche [authenticity of task], l'authenticité de locuteur [speaker authenticity]) and strategies which can be implemented to motivate conversation (la parole libérée) in the TL. This is no easy task and much research has focussed on notions of communication and social interaction in the context of L2 teaching and learning.

Existing L2 acquisition theories focus on learners' innate characteristics, the role of the environment or a combination of the two. Both are important to consider, for learning a second language is different in many respects from first language (L1) acquisition, in terms of personal characteristics and environmental factors. However, the theory of Behaviourism identifies commonalities between L1 and L2 acquisition and Lightbown and Spada (1999, pp.

31-32) identify questions for consideration with regard to the L2 learner. These questions have strong implications for the implementation of strategies to increase and encourage pupil use of the TL. Theoretical links with L1 acquisition are also relevant as the study focuses on a group of young L2 learners.

The following review of literature focuses on three distinct yet interrelated areas of research: theories of L2 acquisition, theories of communication and social interaction in the context of L2 education and the practical application of these theories within the context of the NC. It is the latter area, informed by the former, that is the focus of this research study.

Theories of second language acquisition

A suitable starting point is the Chomskyan distinction between grammatical (formal) and communicative (functional/notional) approaches to L2 teaching. Pupil use of the TL has been contextualised within the development of communicative approaches to L2 teaching, particularly since the 1980s. Chomsky identifies communicative competence and communicative performance as ways of distinguishing between knowledge of grammar and other aspects of language and actual language use. This theory is based upon the hypothesis that 'innate knowledge of the principles of Universal Grammar permits all children to acquire the language of their environment, during a critical period in their development' (Lightbown and Spada, 1999, p. 36). However, Chomsky does not make any specific claims regarding the implications of this hypothesis for L2 acquisition. Whilst the distinction between competence and performance is an essential one, it should not be considered without investigating the claims of those who have criticised Chomsky's basic linguistic model for being 'too restrictive in failing to include the societal aspects of language (Hymes, 1970; Halliday, 1979; and many others)' (Richard-Amato, 1988, p.15).

In the context of the notional-functional syllabus Widdowson identifies the concept of negotiation of meaning through interaction i.e. discourse (Richard-Amato, p. 16). Breen and Candlin (Richard-Amato, p.17) consider discourse a crucial component in a successfully applied communicative methodology, promoting greater interdependence and flexibility among teachers and pupils in order that L2 acquisition takes place.

The importance of social interaction also forms a central part of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development hypothesis, which (like Krashen's Comprehensible Input hypothesis) seeks to 'explain...the cognitive operations involved in language acquisition' (Richard-Amato, p. 31). Krashen concentrates on the role input plays in language acquisition and both hypotheses refer to the distance between actual and potential language development (Richard-Amato, p.42), whereby meaningful interaction is the key to this progression.

L2 acquisition is thus influenced by personal and environmental factors. If we are to consider the central role that social interaction plays in this process, we must also consider the characteristics of both the learning environment and the learners themselves. Lightbown and Spada (1999, pp.32-34) state that 'young language learners begin the task of language learning without the benefit of some of the skills and knowledge which adolescent and adult learners have.'

They continue:

> The first language learner does not have the same cognitive maturity, metalinguistic awareness, or world knowledge as older second language learners...
>
> Most child learners do not feel nervous about attempting to use the language...but adults and adolescents often find it very stressful when they are unable to express themselves clearly and correctly...Older learners are often forced to speak – to meet the requirements of a classroom....Older learners, especially students in language classrooms, are more likely to receive only limited exposure to the second language.

<div align="right">(Lightbown and Spada, 1999: 32-34)</div>

It will thus be necessary to determine the nature of the group in question – which category do they fall into or are they to be placed somewhere between young and older learners, thus creating an environment in which there exists an unusually varied representation of learner characteristics?

In summary, there is no comprehensive theory of second language learning. The theories and hypotheses discussed above can broadly be classed as behaviourist/innatist/interactionist and research continues within these frameworks. Macaro summarises the broad implications of the development of theories in L2 acquisition for the teaching and learning of L2 and tentatively concludes that 'a definitive model for every teaching and learning situation is an illusion' (p.60).

Communication and the importance of social interaction

> If the native speaker's knowledge of his language is characterized as a grammar of expectancy that incorporates pragmatic knowledge of the world, the problem of teaching a second language can be defined as providing the student with a corpus of language in meaningful communicative settings
>
> (Oller in Richard-Amato, 1988: 45)

This highlights the problematic nature of L2 teaching, focussing on the concept of meaningful communication.

Oller's Episode Hypothesis responds to the above question, in its emphasis on the notion that discourse is easier to reproduce, understand and recall if it is motivated and structured episodically:

> Language programs that employ fully contextualised and maximally meaningful language...optimize the learner's ability to use previously acquired expectancies to help discover the pragmatic mappings of utterances in the new language into extralinguistic contexts...They would seem to be superior to programs that expect learners to acquire the ability to use a language on the basis of disconnected lists of sentences
>
> (Oller in Richard-Amato, 1988, pp. 47-48)

Taking this hypothesis as a basis for the assumption that L2 learning and teaching should be based upon meaningful, motivated discourse, we can conclude that an investigation of the ways in which pupils might be motivated to increase their use of the TL demands a consideration of the engagement of emotions and intellect. Richard Amato identifies the Affective Domain as that which 'includes several variables that can either enhance second language acquisition or hinder it, depending upon whether they are positive or negative, the degree to which they are present, and the combination in which we find them' (p.54). Richard-Amato defines such variables based upon the following categories: attitudes (toward self, toward the TL and the people who speak it, toward the teacher and the classroom environment), motivation, level of anxiety and related factors (acculturation and personality) (Richard-Amato, 1988, p. 66).

The difficulty lies in the subtlety and intangibility of these variables which, linked to personal characteristics, operate out of the subconscious. Whilst such variables undoubtedly affect L2 acquisition, they are inherently difficult to measure and research. Attempts to link motivation

with successful L2 acquisition are fundamentally flawed - the fact that two things tend to occur together is not necessarily due to a causal relationship. Motivation may just as well be rooted in early success as success may be rooted in an innate sense of motivation. Nonetheless, learner attitudes and personal characteristics must inform the nature of L2 learning and teaching and this aspect of the theoretical background informs my research.

If the main purpose of L2 learning is to acquire the skills needed to communicate in the L2, then Michael Canale's (in J.C. Richards and R.W. Schmidt, eds, 1983) research on communicative competence provides an introduction to the ways in which theory can be put into practice. However, Canale in fact opposes the view that communication is the essential purpose of language and does not regard it as the only purpose relevant for L2 pedagogy. However, the focus of my own research is oral communication based upon transactional classroom language. Canale focuses upon the distinction between communicative competence and communicative performance and places this distinction in the context of limiting environmental conditions. Canale distinguishes between knowledge-oriented and skill-oriented teaching and testing. He states:

> Learners must receive as much comprehensible input in the second language as possible...Such...exposure...is crucial for acquisition of basic knowledge and skills required for effective second language use...[S]uch exposure...is thus both a (comprehension) skill-oriented activity and a knowledge-oriented one while exposure to the first language in the second language classroom is (at best) only a knowledge-oriented activity designed to teach about communication...[T]here seems to be a comprehension stage which must precede a production stage in second language learning;...production of the second language must not be *forced* during this initial stage

(Canale, 1983: 17)

It would seem that the quality of the input and the creation of an appropriate environment are the main factors contributing to learners' ability to exploit their limited communicative competence. The following factors are thus crucially important in the context of my own research: learners' communicative competence, teachers' and learners' motivation and attitudes, effective use of communication strategies on the part of teacher and pupils.

The language classroom and the MFL curriculum

During the 1990s several researchers posited theories that 'situation-specific motives closely related to classroom reality played a far more significant role in the L2 motivation complex

than had been assumed earlier' (Dörnyei and Csizér, 1998). It is only since then that there has been a move away from purely socio-psychological research approaches to L2 motivation. Dörnyei developed a framework of L2 motivation based upon an empirical study (Clément *et al.*, 1994). Dörnyei attempts to synthesize various lines of research by offering an extensive list of motivational components categorized into three main dimensions, the *Language Level*, the *Learner Level* and the *Learner Situation Level*. This general framework, along with Dörnyei and Csizér's ten commandments for motivating language learners provide a point of reference for examining the results of my research. However, characteristics of the UK curriculum along with particularities of my own teaching style and environment will have influenced the results of my research.

Coleman, Galaczi and Astruc (2007), present the results of their research into motivation of UK school pupils towards foreign languages at Key Stage 3 in the context of theories concerning motivation and L2 acquisition, but more significantly in the context of the UK school system and the NC. They depart from the assumption that 'motivation is always inseparable from learning context' (p.5). Their study focuses on pupil motivation with relation to gender and on the nature and type of school, including specialist language colleges and those implementing schemes such as Asset languages. This is of significance to my own research, considering the specialist language status of the school in question and its implementation of the Asset languages scheme. Also of relevance is the implementation of the new KS3 curriculum.

We should also consider Macaro's observation that motivation is only one of the variables in an overall model of L2 learning:

> It cannot easily be isolated and treated as either a dependent or independent variable in its own right. It is clear that motivation cannot overcome deficiencies in language aptitude on its own...Only if the learner is given the tools with which to overcome difficulties can motivational aspects 'kick in''

<div align="right">(Macaro, 2003: 115)</div>

Iain Mitchell identifies steps which language teachers can take to provide these tools, to replicate some of the conditions of L1 acquisition in the MFL classroom, in order to create an appropriate linguistic environment in which pupils can talk in structured and unstructured conversation and in order to avoid the following:

> The British classroom is not a 'natural' environment for the French language. The way languages have traditionally been taught is the opposite of what happened in our early lives. The teacher decides what the pupil needs to say and feeds the pupil appropriate language. The teacher, more omnipotent than the infant's parent, can make the learner speak (and in public) whether the learner is 'ready' or not
>
> (Mitchell in Swarbrick, 1994, p.107)

Just as classrooms can simulate the linguistic environment physically and visually, the teacher can also ensure that learners are immersed in the sounds of the language. Variety and unpredictability, supported by structured guidance and encouragement from the teacher are key to motivating L2 production in the MFL classroom. Analysis of my findings refers both to the readings discussed above and to Karen E. Johnson's (1995) text *Understanding Communication in Second Language Classrooms*, which provides practical advice for interpreting and informing strategies for L2 communication in the classroom.

A secondary theme which runs throughout this project is TL use in the context of creativity, a theme which, along with cross-curricular opportunities, occurs in the current curriculum. This is a difficult context to define clearly as there are numerous ways in which it could be interpreted. The concept of drama techniques in MFL teaching occurs frequently in the literature, focussing on the idea of giving pupils the opportunity to create a personality in the L2, to experiment with and explore the language through a variety of tasks and activities. This creative context complements my research and its focus on the setting, surroundings and interpersonal dynamics of the MFL classroom. Some literature focuses on role activities and how pupils begin to learn social roles in the L2. Mitchell and Martin (1997) conducted a longitudinal study of French teaching and learning in two secondary schools in southern England (the progression in foreign language learning project, PFLL), in which they consider pupils' acquisition of a creative control of TL grammar (p.6). The parallel focus in their research - rote learning and repetition – has significant repercussions in my own research. The class I taught are accustomed to choral repetition activities as a way of introducing new 'chunks' of language and I was expected to provide some continuity in this respect. Mitchell and Martin conclude that whilst researchers saw communicative activities as a means by which pupils might progress from regurgitation of learned 'chunks' of language towards a more creative and flexible control of the TL, the reality of such activities presented itself as primarily an opportunity for further recycling and recombination of learned chunks with a lack of any real pressure to use this learnt material for new communicative ends. They consider to what extent this rote learning of 'chunks' of language is a necessary stage in the

learning-to-be-creative-with-language process (pp. 23-25) and to a certain extent this was a consideration in my own research.

I consider the cross-curricular context of my research in my approach to research methodology and regard this as an integral part of the creative contexts which I explored through the implementation of various language learning activities.

Research Methodology

With creativity and cross-curricular contexts as secondary themes, my research focuses upon the following questions:

1. In what contexts do pupils make most use/most effective use of the target language?

This has a broad focus, covering aspects of the theory reviewed above. Foster's *Remarques sur la langue cible dans le secondaire* (1994) offers some initial areas for consideration: what in particular about the MFL classroom causes pupils to speak less than would be desirable? If human beings have a predisposition and need to communicate, how can this be transferred to the L2 learning environment? Thus, strategies concerning the creation of an authentic and appropriate learning environment to promote increased use of the TL are the focus of this question. Richard-Amato (1988) provides a summary of the theoretical approaches to L2 acquisition, highlighting the importance of societal aspects of language and introducing the significance of social interaction as an integral aspect of the L2 learning environment. Contextual aspects of the class' learning experience will be investigated in detail i.e. the affects of different group dynamics and organisation and of changes in classroom environment (computer room/classroom). Foster identifies *authenticité de locuteur* as a key element to encouraging optimal L2 use in the MFL classroom and states:

> Suggérons donc aux apprenants qu'ils changent de partenaire selon les exigences naturelles d'une situation…Le principe derrière ces changements de partenaire est la recherche du vrai, ou du vraisemblable. Évitons toujours, sauf pendant la phase de répétition, de demander aux apprenants de poser des questions dont ils connaissent déjà les réponses. Interviewer son voisin ne va guère produire beaucoup de surprises. Faire un concours avec ou contre son meilleur ami encourage la tricherie plutôt que le français

> (Foster, 1994 : 23)

> [Let us thus suggest to the pupils that they change partners according to the natural demands of a situation…The principle behind these changes of partner is the search for truth or plausibility. We should always, except during the repetition stage, avoid asking pupils to pose questions to which they already know the answers. Interviewing one's neighbour is hardly going to produce many surprises. Having a competition with or against one's best friend encourages cheating rather than French.]

Oller's Episode Hypothesis is of significance here, as it considers ways in which the linguistic input and learning environment might be exploited to motivate and structure learning. Canale also identifies the quality of input and the creation of an appropriate environment as contributing to learners' ability to exploit their communicative competence. Research into situation-specific motives and their relation to classroom reality is a particularly recent addition to theories of L2 acquisition. Dörnyei's and Csizér's *Ten commandments for motivating language learners*, along with empirical research studies such as that of Coleman, Galaczi and Astruc (regarding the UK school context), provide a point of reference for forming conclusions based upon the evidence collected during my research. Iain Mitchell's general strategies for improving the MFL classroom environment also offer a point of reference regarding strategies implemented during teaching interventions.

2. Does teacher use of the target language encourage pupil use thereof?

This focuses upon linguistic input in the MFL classroom and the role that attitudes and relationships play in the context of communication and discourse. Linguistic input is not a focus of Chomskyan theory. However, Vygotsky's and Krashen's hypotheses develop Chomsky's competence/performance distinction within the context of social interaction. Oller develops these theories, suggesting that 'the problem of teaching a second language can be defined as providing the student with a corpus of language in meaningful communicative settings' (Richard-Amato, 1988: 45). Richard-Amato considers the way in which such input might best facilitate L2 acquisition. He relates this to Oller's Episode Hypothesis and the importance of fully contextualised and maximally meaningful input in optimising the

learner's 'ability to use previously acquired expectancies to help discover the pragmatic mappings of utterances in the new language into extralinguistic contexts' (p.45). Both Mitchell and Canale consider the classroom environment, focussing upon the MFL teacher, who must consider his role in facilitating (not hindering) the learner's L2 acquisition. Mitchell emphasises the need for variety and unpredictability of linguistic input. One aim of this project is therefore to consider whether such theories and hypotheses do have a practical application in MFL teaching. My research allowed me to experiment with different strategies concerning ways of inputting the TL and my aim is to consider which, if any, of these strategies produced the most favourable results.

3. Are there particular pupils who make an effort to use the target language and if so, why is this and why are others not following suit?

Whilst attitudinal factors inform both of the above questions, this aspect of my research lends itself more significantly to the concept of the Affective Domain. We can reject Chomskyan theory (in isolation), for it does not specifically apply to L2 acquisition. It is essential to consider aspects of behaviourism and Lightbown and Spada's questions for consideration with regard to the L2 learner. Factors such as gender and age/maturity also inform this aspect of my research. My own actions as teacher must also be considered. A quotation from Richard-Amato highlights exactly the nature of this part of my research, namely to consider the factors which cause some pupils to be more ready and willing than others to make use of the TL:

> Attitudes which are largely determined by what our students have experienced and by the people with whom they identify...influence the way students see the world and their place in it. Motivation also...is a strong force in determining how proficient the students will become. In addition, level of anxiety has its effect. Have the students been given a chance to try out the language in a nonthreatening environment where stress is kept at a minimum? If so, they will be more able to go through the stages of acculturation without its becoming a debilitating process.
>
> (Richard-Amato, 1988: 66)

My aim over the course of the eight lessons was to implement strategies which I hoped would encourage an increase in pupil use of the TL. In this case TL implies transactional and classroom language, i.e. the peripheral, non topic-based language which allows pupils to communicate their needs and opinions. The ability to use this transactional classroom

language provides a framework in which to learn new topic-based vocabulary and structures. The creative and cross-curricular aspect occurred in the ways in which I attempted to use authentic materials and provided more authentic practical applications for use of the TL. This creativity featured particularly during the once fortnightly computer room lesson.

A variety of data collection methods were used to gain an insight into the ways in which the class acquired the confidence and skills needed to make increased use of the TL during lessons. Observations and evaluations of lessons by myself and the class teacher illustrated the extent of pupils' ability and willingness to use the TL. There are significant advantages to using observation as a method of research: it requires little technical/statistical support and helps retain the 'naturalness' of the setting. However, this method of research does cause problems of reliability and generalisability, since there is a lack of verifiable data and little scope for recreating the research setting (Denscombe, pp. 209-210).

The first lesson of the sequence was spent reintroducing the class to the classroom TL and gauging their existing knowledge. Pupils worked in groups to match up French phrases with their English translations, before receiving classroom language sheets for reference during lessons. This was supplemented by the sheets they had already been given at the start of the academic year and differed in the way in which the language was organised into categories and in the lack of English translations. I decided that including English translations of the phrases would mean that pupils did not actually learn the French phrases, preferring to simply look up the English phrase before attempting to read the French equivalent. Use of the TL during subsequent lessons was then encouraged through a points system, in which I kept a tally of use of French and use of English. Pupils were also asked to learn particular categories for homework, in order to then use at least one new phrase the following lesson. At the end of the sequence of lessons pupils completed a 'speaking French' questionnaire (see the text box). Throughout the teaching intervention my own observations and evaluations combined with those of the class teacher provided feedback regarding pupils' progress as well as strategies/activities which were particularly successful and effective in encouraging pupil use of the TL.

Do you find the classroom language sheet helpful during lessons? Yes/No

Was it helpful to go over phrases you can use in the classroom? Yes/No

When practising speaking I prefer: pair work/group work/whole class work

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> Do you feel confident to speak French in lessons? Yes/No
>
> What could the teacher do to make speaking French easier?
>
> Would you like to speak French more often in lessons?
>
> Do you think you made a good effort to speak French in lessons or could you try harder? (Give yourself a mark out of 10 for effort ☺)
>
> Before we started working on speaking more French in class, how confident did you feel about speaking? Give a mark out of 10 and a comment.
>
> Do you feel more confident speaking French now? Yes/No Why?
>
> What activity/activities most helped you to speak more French?
>
> Does the teacher speaking French help you to speak French? Yes/No Why?

Text Box: French – Speaking French Questionnaire

This is a qualitative action research project and, as mentioned above, the establishment of external reliability and validity is thus problematic. It would be impossible to replicate this study exactly, since the results drawn from the data gathered are dependent upon the contextual conditions of the particular time and place in which the research was carried out. The nature of such a project means that it is most likely that the responses and behaviour of pupils as well as of the researcher/teacher are influenced by the fact that the teacher is playing this dual role. It is therefore the research strategies and closely detailed analysis and interpretation of the research findings that are of importance for the replicability and generalisability of this study.

With regard to the internal validity or authenticity/credibility of the research findings, it is essential to consider potential areas which may cause the research to become invalid and to develop strategies to avoid this. I wanted to present use of the TL as an ongoing challenge to the class, not something which was restrained by time or the limitations of the research project. I thus did not present them with a questionnaire at the start of the project. This does mean, however, that comparisons are more difficult to draw between attitudes pre- and post-teaching interventions. The nature of the questionnaire itself meant that pupils could not expand upon or express their attitudes as freely as an interview/focus group might have allowed and questionnaires do have distinct disadvantages regarding incomplete or poorly answered responses, the limiting nature of closed questions and validity/truth of respondents' answers. However, as a means of gaining responses from the entire class and in terms of comparing evidence across the whole class, the questionnaires proved an effective method of

data collection. As Denscombe (2003: 159) states, 'questionnaires supply standardized answers, to the extent that all respondents are posed with exactly the same questions – with no scope for variation to slip in via face-to-face contact with the researcher.' It would have been beneficial to collect some form of audio-visual evidence, since the focus of my research was oral TL production. However, my decision to concentrate on transactional classroom language, although a challenge in terms of integration with the topics to be taught on the scheme of work, means that my research has a narrower focus. It also means that this is a project which has ongoing implications for my own and others' teaching practice, irrespective of the thematic context or the scheme of work.

Discussion and data analysis

As an initial general observation, over the course of the sequence of lessons all pupils believed they had increased in confidence when speaking French in class. At the start of the lesson sequence, there was a broad spread of perceived confidence levels on the part of the pupils (fig. 1). A relatively small number of pupils (3) referred to prior learning at primary level, whilst the majority simply compared confidence levels before and after the teaching interventions, stating that they had gained in confidence because they knew and understood more French than previously. Factors such as types of activity and repetition of vocabulary for pronunciation purposes also featured among the reasons pupils gave for increased confidence levels (see appendix 2). The question that remains is to what extent this increase in confidence would have occurred anyway, irrespective of any concerted efforts on my part to facilitate and encourage TL use.
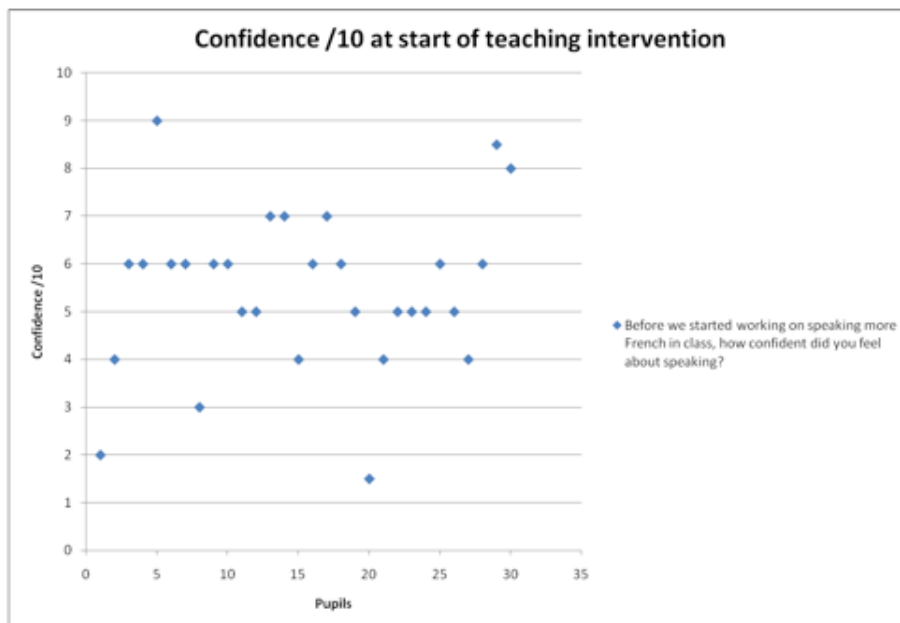
Figure 1: Confidence of pupils regarding speaking French at the start of the teaching intervention

1. **In what contexts do pupils make most use/most effective use of the target language?**

In order to place pupils' preferences regarding contexts for speaking in the TL, let us consider some of the various conclusions drawn by researchers in this field. Mary Foster presents an approach which aims to create an authentic and motivating environment for pupil use of the TL (la motivation: authenticité de tâche). She emphasises the distinction between speaking and saying ('Parler' et 'Dire') and states:

> [L]'enseignant doit se poser au préalable les questions suivantes – Aurais –je jamais besoin de dire cela moi-même ? –Est-il vraiment intéressant comme propos ? Au plus simple cela veut dire qu'on ne pose pas de questions dont on connaît déjà la réponse, qu'on ne demande pas aux autres d'en poser ; que répondre à une question suppose qu'on a des faits ou des opinions à partager et que la personne qui pose la question engage l'intérêt suffisamment pour mériter une réponse

(Foster, 1994: 22)

> [the teacher must first ask himself the following questions – would I ever need to say this myself? – Is this really an interesting topic of conversation? Put most simply this means that we should not ask questions to which we already know the answers and that we do not ask others to pose these questions; that answering a question implies that we have facts or opinions to share and that the person who asks the question engages interest enough to merit a response]

Alongside this sense of having something to say, Foster suggests that motivation can be engendered through pair and small group work, in which pupils regularly change partners and groups and engage in a variety of activities. She also suggests that this type of dynamic allows more confident pupils to experiment with the language whilst also supporting those for whom speaking the language is a more difficult and daunting task:

> C'est en proposant le plus grand nombre et la plus grande variété d'activités quasi- ou vraiment authentiques…que nous permettons la réussite et le progrès de tous
>
> (Foster, 1994 : 23)

> [It is through offering the most and greatest variety of semi- or truly authentic activities...that we allow everyone to progress and succeed]

Pupils gave a variety of reasons for preferring different activities (fig. 2), but learning from each other's mistakes and helping each other - the concept of collaborative learning - seems to be a running theme throughout their responses. Macaro (1997: 134-166) discusses data from the Tarclindy Project and concludes that whilst teachers often only recognise the social, behavioural and pedagogic functions of collaborative learning, it also has a strong linguistic function: it helps learners to develop an awareness of the way that natural discourse operates, through the development of extended output. The Tarclindy data also shows that pupils make proportionally more reference to such collaborative learning processes than do the teachers in interviews. This is confirmed in my own results, as discussed below.
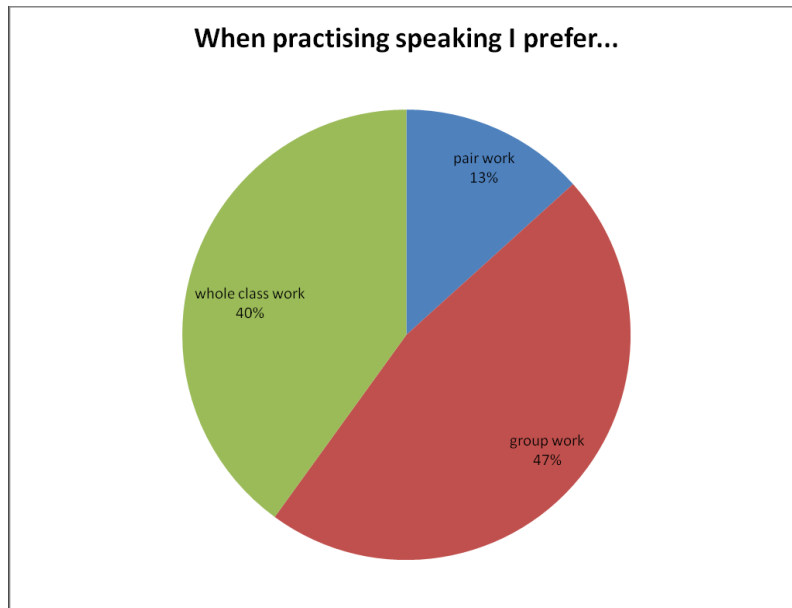
Figure 2: Pupils Preferences regarding types of activity for practising speaking in the target language

Surprisingly, neither the 'fun element' nor ease of comprehension (of language and task) feature as priorities amongst this class. The majority prefer group work (47%) with only 13% stating pair work as their preferred type of activity (see fig. 3 and appendix 2). This is perhaps because pupils tend to have to work with the same partner (i.e. the pupil they sit next to every lesson) whereas groups do vary slightly. Foster's approach seems to be of particular significance here and in future I would be more aware of the ways in which the dynamics of the classroom can easily be varied.
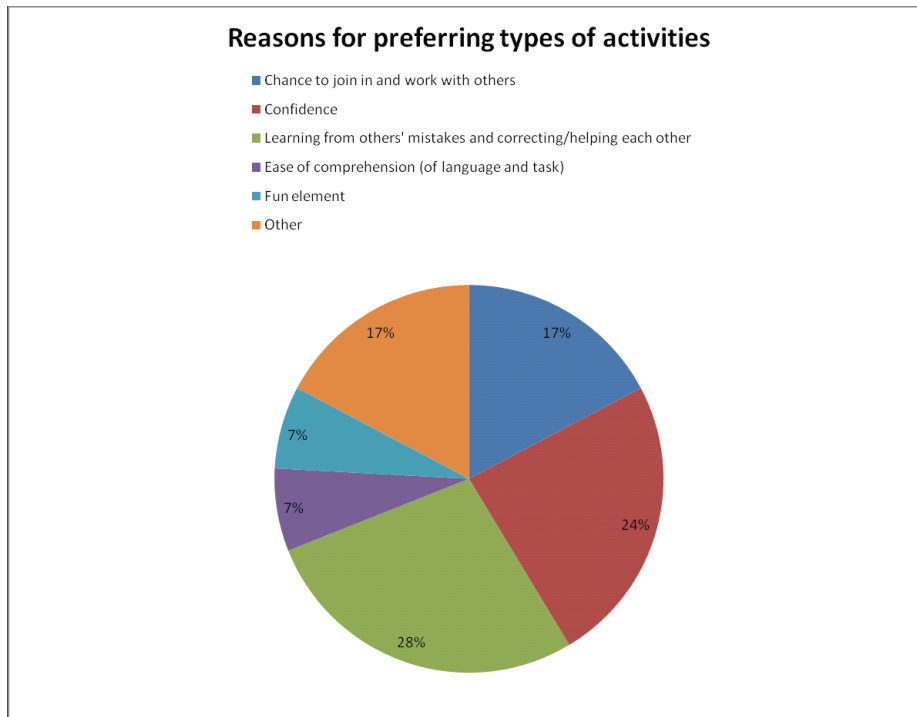
Reasons for preferring types of activities

- Chance to join in and work with others
- Confidence
- Learning from others' mistakes and correcting/helping each other
- Ease of comprehension (of language and task)
- Fun element
- Other

[Pie chart: 17% (Chance to join in and work with others), 24% (Confidence), 28% (Learning from others' mistakes and correcting/helping each other), 7% (Ease of comprehension), 7% (Fun element), 17% (Other)]

Figure 3: Pupils' considerations and reasons for preferring certain activities

In this context it is essential to consider Lightbown and Spada's (1999) questions for consideration 5 and 6. These relate to the attitudinal and environmental theories of Richard-Amato in the context of the Affective Domain and cause us to question the nature of the particular class in question. Should they be considered older learners who are often forced to speak to meet the requirements of the classroom or is there still scope for these pupils to experiment or remain silent until confident to use the language?
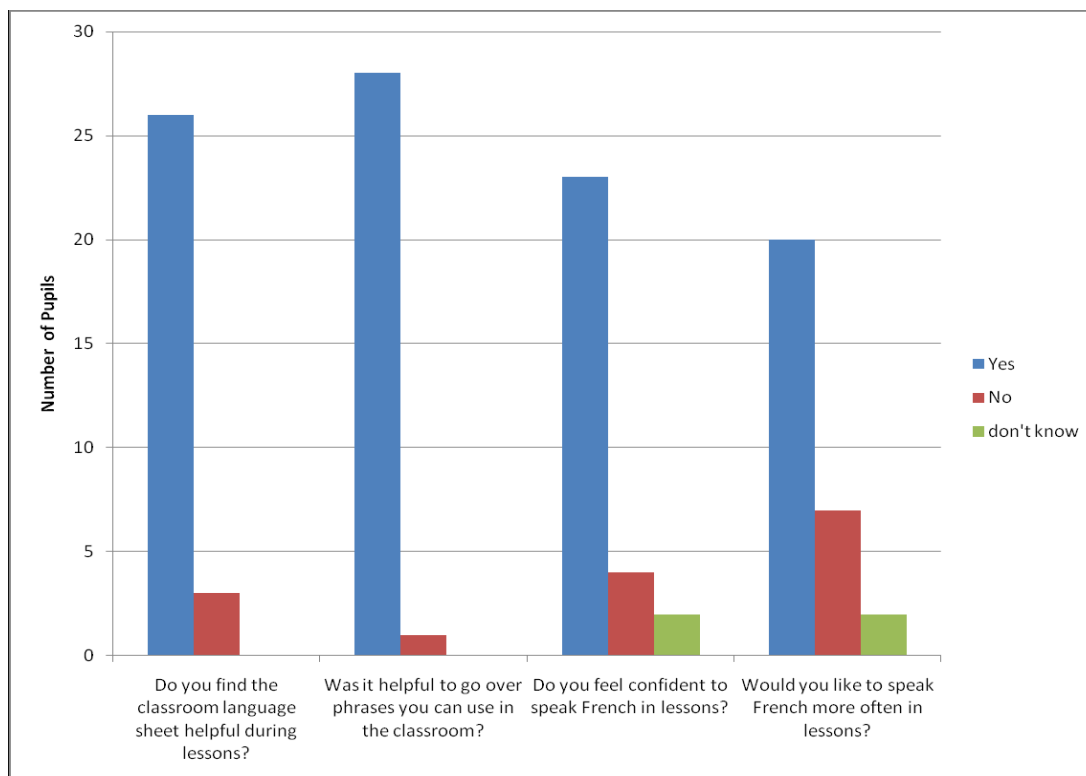
Figure 4: Student responses to speaking the target language

The majority of pupils feel confident to speak French in lessons and would like to speak French more often (fig. 4). However, these two questions did elicit more negative responses than did other questions relating to support for use of the TL. When asked, however, whether they felt *more* confident to speak French after the sequence of lessons, the response was unanimously positive (fig. 5). This would imply that the activities I planned and the ways in which I encouraged and motivated pupils to speak more French during lessons did generally have a positive effect on their learning and participation. However, as previously stated, motivation may just as well be rooted in early success as success may be rooted in an innate sense of motivation. In subsequent lessons, which have included revision for the purpose of end of year assessments, I have observed that teaching style and type of activity do seem to have a significant effect on this class' motivation. They enjoy an element of collaboration and competition (as evidenced in the response to group activities and use of French points).
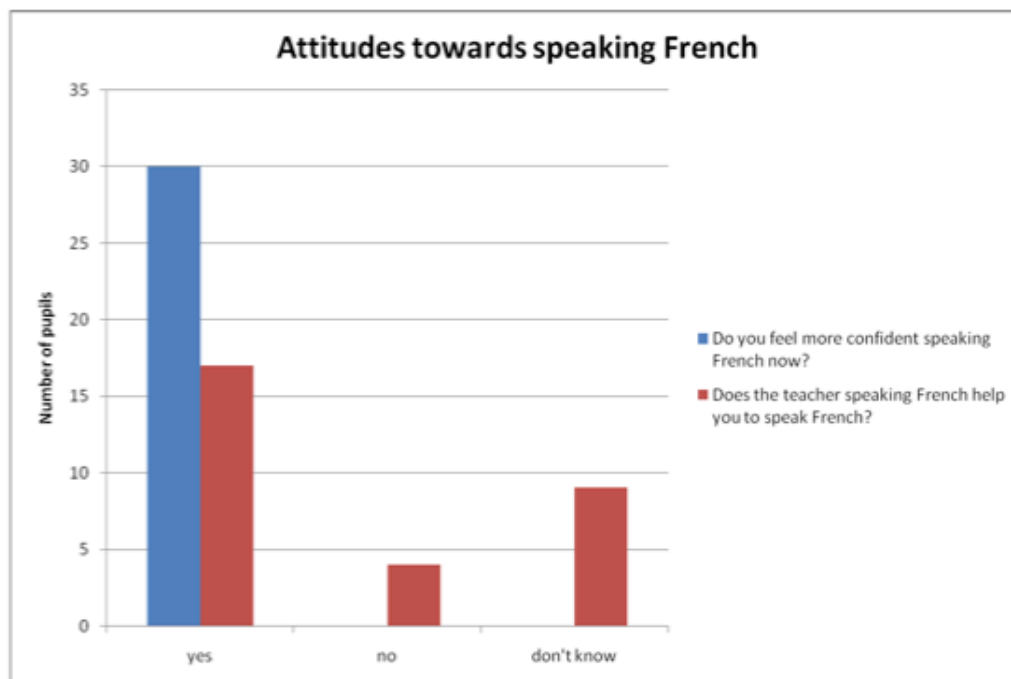
Figure 5: Student attitudes to speaking French

It is also apparent that careful structuring of group activities is required, in order that pupils are aware of expectations and goals for learning. As Johnson states:

> Student-student interaction, if structured and managed appropriately, can play an important role in students' cognitive development, educational achievement, and emerging social competencies. Student-student interaction can induce cognitive conflict, and thus foster cognitive restructuring and development. It can foster the use of more exploratory language and encourage informal learning styles and strategies among students. It can enhance students' abilities to work collaboratively, encourage collaborative rather than competitive social relationships among students, and foster positive attitudes toward school
>
> (Johnson, 1995: 114)

There are clear whole-school/cross-curricular implications of such collaborative styles of learning.

Observations from the class teacher confirm these conclusions and also highlight the importance of motivating pupils through feedback and rewards on successful completion of an activity and use of TL. Conversely, the class teacher's observations signalled a preference on her part for pair work activities, as she observed such activities to be most effective in encouraging pupil use of the TL. Perhaps in terms of the amount of TL spoken by each pupil in this context, pair work could be seen as being the most effective dynamic for motivating

TL use and it is thus the lack of variety of partners which cause pupils to state their preference for other types of activity. Karen E. Johnson states:

> If teachers wish to promote communication in second language classrooms, they need to allow for greater variability in the patterns of communication so as to maximise students' linguistic and interactional competencies and create more opportunities for students to participate in classroom events
>
> To promote communication in second language classrooms, teachers must establish an atmosphere in the classroom that is encouraging, supportive, and accepting of any and all student contributions.

(Johnson, 1995: 145 & 154)

Johnson considers how predictability of classroom events and expectations can aid the implementation of group work, in order to distance the teacher's control over the patterns of communication and to increase and value pupils' feelings of competence. It is not only the context of the types of activity which is of significance here, for the context of the classroom itself has a great impact upon the way in which pupils engage in their learning:

> Students' perceptions of the patterns of classroom communication represent a critical component for understanding how students understand, participate in, and learn from classroom events. For students to participate in classroom events, they must accurately infer their teachers' expectations and intentions, the contextualisation cues within the classroom, and the academic and social structures of classroom events

(Johnson, 1995: 42)

This provides an appropriate context in which to consider teacher use of the TL and to what extent it impacts, as a frame of reference, upon pupil use thereof.

2. Does teacher use of the target language encourage pupil use thereof?

Whilst responses regarding level of confidence elicited conclusive results from pupils, it seems that reactions towards teacher use of the TL are more varied (fig. 5). Despite comprehension being a relatively minor concern in the context of group and pair work activities, when it comes to comprehension of the teacher's TL, pupils seem overwhelmingly concerned about their understanding (see fig. 6 and appendix 9). To that end, Lightbown and Spada again offer questions for consideration (1999: 31-32, see questions 4, 8, 9 and 10).
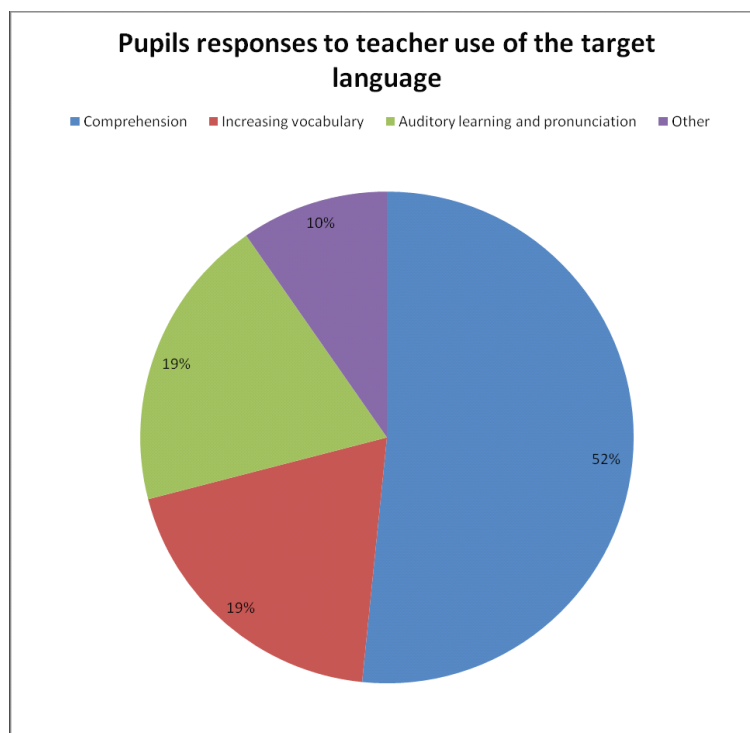
Figure 6 – Pupils' responses to teacher use of the target language

With hindsight it would have been beneficial to have focussed not only upon the types of interactional TL phrases for pupil use but also upon those used regularly by the teacher. Pupils responded well to positive language and praise in the TL and to a small number of particularly frequently used phrases e.g. those used to demand quiet or attention. The importance of mime and gesture cannot be emphasised enough. Pupils themselves engaged very positively in a game of charades when learning vocabulary associated with the verbs 'jouer' and 'faire'. Examples and models conducted in the TL also helped to reinforce the meaning of particular phrases and instructions. Corrective feedback was given, but often as general points for the class to consider. Individual feedback was given more notably when I circulated during group or pair activities. Teacher use of the TL must be judicious and supported by extra-linguistic resources such as worksheets and models. Use of a 'student translator' also proved beneficial, particularly as certain pupils often had a greater understanding of the teacher's TL than others. If I made a point of using phrases that I expected pupils to be using during a particular activity, the pupils gained an understanding of my expectations and began using the language themselves. This worked particularly well when I had warned them during the previous lesson that I wanted them to use particular

language during the following lesson (this was based upon the categories on the TL sheet). The class teacher's observations back up my analysis of teacher use of the TL. The two lessons spent in the computer room were particularly successful in terms of my own use of TL and the pupils' use thereof. The first of these lessons involved pupils following written TL instructions combined with English prompts to navigate around a French tourist website. Pupils were particularly engaged in the task, enjoying the chance to explore an authentic French website as well as the element of competition implied in the treasure hunt style task they were asked to complete. This resulted in a number of pupils feeding back answers to the clues in French. During the second lesson, pupils conducted a survey in French before then following written French instructions (supported by my additional spoken TL and English instructions) to create graphs of their results. I missed an opportunity here to introduce specific computer related TL. These two lessons also demonstrate the way in which creative and cross-curricular contexts lend themselves to more authentic and 'real' use of the TL.

The significant points to be highlighted here are best clarified by Canale's consideration of use of L1 and L2 in the MFL classroom. He views use of L1 as a 'knowledge-oriented activity designed to teach about communication' (1993: 17) and indeed my own use of English was largely limited to occasions when I needed to explain the context of my sequence of lessons.

Another point for consideration is the extent to which pupils responded to variety and unpredictability. As Iain Mitchell suggests, pupils will respond to this if such variety and unpredictability is supported by clear structure and guidance. The computer room lessons demonstrated the way in which this can work well, fostering a positive learning experience for pupils and motivating use of the TL because they are responding to and exploring something new and authentic.

Finally, Johnson (1995) suggests that it is the way in which the teacher uses language to control the patterns of classroom communication which shapes pupils' use of language during second language instruction (p. 27). This is a move away from more traditional considerations of 'teacher talk' and the observable characteristics of teachers' language i.e. the structural adjustments made by teachers when speaking to second language students and the functional aspects of their language (p. 17). Johnson considers, instead, teachers'

language as 'contributing to the overall dynamics of classroom communication' and the importance of this as the only component of the framework for understanding communication in second language classrooms which can be freely changed as each teacher sees fit (p.17).

3. Are there particular pupils who make an effort to use the target language and if so, why is this and why are others not following suit?

There is no particularly significant variation among pupils' own perceptions of the amount of effort put into using the TL (fig. 7). However, my own and the class teacher's observations show that at times the boys seem to visibly put in more effort. The boys seemed to respond particularly quickly to the element of challenge and competition. However, by the final lesson of the sequence, nearly all pupils (20 +) were making a concerted effort to use some of the TL phrases they had been introduced to. This perhaps reflects the different learning styles of boys and girls, but I conclude, rather, that gender is not what creates any kind of divide, but rather individuality. Macaro (2003, p.115) confirms that learning styles are most likely linked to individual differences and considers rather issues of self-efficacy regarding demotivation among learners. The responses to the questionnaire simply illustrate that boys and girls in year 7 share opinions as much as they hold quite different opinions on certain aspects of TL use. It did become apparent, however, that the girls were more willing to admit having spoken in English when they had been challenged to only speak French for part of a lesson.

These observations serve to illustrate the subtle, intangible and highly variable nature (see appendix 4) of the attitudinal factors affecting L2 acquisition, as described by Richard-Amato's theory of the Affective Domain. The challenge remains to create a language learning environment in which each individual pupil can feel confident to explore and experiment with language without feeling anxious or inhibited. It is however easier said than done and as teachers we must also be concerned to ensure that 'quieter' pupils do not get left behind in the language learning process.
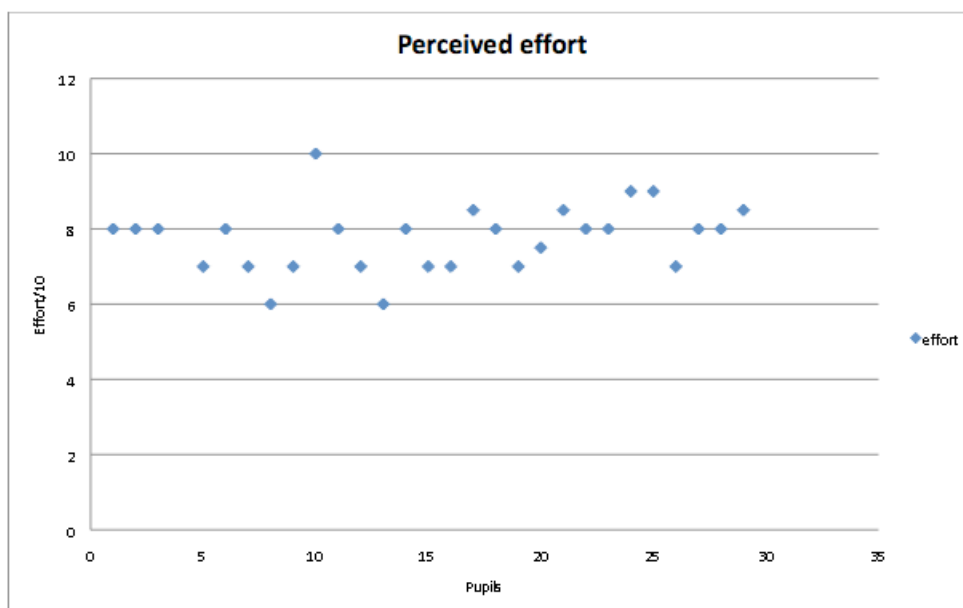
Figure 7 – Pupils' perceptions of their effort in speaking French

The fact that all pupils felt that their confidence in speaking French had increased over the sequence of lessons is a positive outcome. However, the challenge is to maintain this and to consider that increased confidence does not imply that all pupils are now confident to use the TL. The other challenge is to consider the range of abilities and levels of interest even among a top set class. Whilst some pupils will remain engaged even when activities become more teacher-focussed, or will make sure that they participate fully in group work, others are happy to let another take the lead or to let their attention wander. In the MFL classroom, pupils must remain focussed in what is essentially a 'foreign' environment.

Conclusion

The main findings of my research can be summarised as follows:

Whilst all pupils reported an increase in confidence when speaking French in class, this is not necessarily a result of the teaching intervention and pupils still identified areas in which they lacked confidence. Indeed, many pupils were able to identify their needs and preferred learning styles as well as to recognise the merits of particular types of language learning and

teaching methods and activities. The attitudes observed and recorded during my research show that neither ability nor gender necessarily has any positive correlation with pupils' attitudes. Most pupils responded to the element of challenge and competition in conjunction with a points and reward system. Also in evidence is a conflict of opinions between class teacher and pupils regarding student-student interaction activities. The class teacher observed and suggested that pair work elicited the most and best use of TL among pupils. However, the pupils themselves reported a preference for group work and other collaborative learning activities. The lack of preference for pair work is perhaps indicative of a failure on the part of the class teacher and myself to recognise the need for alternating partners and varying the class dynamic (perhaps due to behaviour management concerns). However, both pupils and teacher prioritise collaborative learning and the importance of structuring such student-student interaction whilst still providing the opportunity to experiment, explore and be creative in the TL is particularly significant here. The need for teacher use of the TL to be supported and supplemented by other forms of TL input is also an important point to consider and one which will inform my own practice.

It is difficult, however, to draw many fully conclusive arguments from my research as it was conducted over a very short sequence of lessons. Assumptions can be made regarding pupils' attitudinal responses towards activities and strategies designed to increase their use of the TL, but only the test of time would really show their effect. It is unclear at this point, whether the progress observed among the pupils was really a result of my teaching intervention or whether they would have gained in confidence despite this. However, I can take certain ideas from my research, particularly in terms of methods and strategies which I can use to begin to create a classroom environment which is conducive to second language acquisition and use. The most significant of all of these ideas is the need to supplement pupil and teacher TL use with other forms of TL input, so that each pupil has the best possible chance of grasping the meaning or understanding a task/ activity. These conclusions are certainly supported by much existing theory and research, particularly Lightbown and Spada's questions for consideration along with Dörnyei and Csizér's ten commandments for motivating language learners. However, it is the literature and research regarding the particular nature of the MFL classroom that provides the most pertinent insights into the ways in which teachers might begin to create a suitable learning environment and one conducive to L2 acquisition. Engendering and harnessing a positive attitude towards language learning and the language

learning environment is of utmost importance. The fact that authenticity of language input creates a sense of excitement and engages pupils implies that language learning lends itself to creative and cross-curricular contexts. It is only through recognition of the unnatural context in which language learning takes place that measures can be put in place to make the best possible use of the particular social dynamics and creative educational possibilities of the MFL classroom.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Confidence of pupils in speaking French before and after the teaching intervention

Confidence before/10	Confidence before	More confident after?
2	In primary school we hardly did any French, we only did basics	Yes – we do more than the basics
4	Because I did not know much vocabulary	Yes – I know a lot more French
6	I felt okay about speaking in French	Yes – Because we have had more help in speaking more French
6	I hadn't done so much French, so I was not so confident	Yes – we practise speaking French more
9	Because I didn't mind speaking French before	Yes – we have used more phrases that you can use at home as well as school
6	I knew how to speak some French anyway, but we did not do much in lessons	Yes – because we were encouraged more in lessons
6	We didn't speak as much French before, so I didn't get as many opportunities as I have now to speak and practise my French	Yes – because I have practised it more
3	I was not a very good speaker in French	Yes – I feel that my verbs are much stronger
6	I knew quite a bit from primary school	Yes – I can use a lot of French in lessons and want to learn more
6	Sometimes hard to understand	Yes – because I know how to write them down and how to say some words with accents
5		Yes
5	I feel I am able now to speak more French	Yes – because we have learnt the more useful phrases to use in class
7	Because I had done a lot of French at primary	Yes – because we speak it in class more and we do more work
7	I was quite confident in speaking French	Yes – because I think we've done more speaking
4	I wasn't that confident at speaking at all	Yes – because I am more settled in class
6	Beacause I didn't know that much French before	Yes – because I am speaking more French in class and so getting better
7	I felt quite confident about speaking but I was slightly nervous	Yes – because of all the sheets and French points
6		Yes – because I can speak more French
5	I knew the answers but I was not confident in saying them	Yes – because we have gone over the stuff I was confused about
1.5	I had never known what I was saying and felt like everybody else knew more than me	Yes – but still not completely confident e.g. I have mostly no idea what I am talking about
4	I didn't really know many of the answers	Yes – because I know most of the questions that are asked
5		Yes – because I know more words
5	Because I didn't do any French before I came here	Yes – because I know some French now and I didn't before
5	Because the activities we do now make it easier	Yes – because we do activities that mean we need to talk French and with that table it makes sure we do speak French
6	Because I didn't really understand how to speak in French	Yes

5	Because sometimes I didn't understand but we spent longer working on it	Yes – because we did a lot of pair work so if you messed up it is only in front of one person
4	Because I couldn't say the words correctly and wasn't sure about what I was going to say	Yes – because I can understand most of the things said by the teacher
6	I was more nervous about getting it wrong	Yes- because I know that if I get it wrong I will be corrected then I will understand
8.5		Yes – because I can understand it better
8	I knew a lot of French and was quite confident but I made more mistakes than I do now	Yes – because we go over it again and again and it gets drilled into your mind. Also, sometimes speaking helps you learn better than when you're reading

Appendix 2: Pupils' preferences regarding types of activity

	Pair work	Group work	Whole class work
Reasons Blue = Chance to join in and work with others (5) Red = Confidence (7) Pink = Learning from others' mistakes and correcting/helping each other (8) Green = Ease of comprehension (of language and task) (2) Purple = Fun element (2/3) Black = Other (5)	Because it's easier to speak out loud No reason given Because when it is more people, there is something confusion	Because you all join in and you can share the work with the class I like speaking with friends because you are more comfortable in front of them Because we can correct each other and learn from mistakes Because it is fun and you can talk to everyone Because then I can work with more than one person and not have to do all the work on my own Because you can all help each other It helps because unlike whole class work, it means you can have a go and your group can help No reason given Because you feel confident speaking in a group Because you can ask friends if you are stuck and it is fun to work with friends I prefer these because it is easier and I feel more confident doing it in a group and class work Because you can share your ideas across the group and you can learn more from them So it gives you a chance to work with other people Because if you don't understand you always have someone to help	It is fun if you do it on the whiteboard Because I can understand it easier and get on with my work It is louder and more fun, no one is afraid or nervous to speak because the whole class is Because then you can feel more comfortable I prefer whole class work because then I can tell where everyone else is up to and can work harder if I need to catch up So we can listen to others and learn from their mistakes and lots of activities I prefer these because it is easier and I feel more confident doing it in a group and class work It is fun to watch and listen to other people speak and act in French I really prefer doing most things on my own, but with speaking, whole class work is better for me Using the whiteboard to match things up Because it's easier and anyone can help you Because you can get more people joining in

Appendix 3: Pupils' responses to teacher use of the target language

	Yes	No	Don't know
Red = Comprehension (16) Green = Increasing vocabulary (6) Blue = Auditory learning and pronunciation (6) Black = Other (3)	Yes because she explains what they mean Because you get to learn more vocabulary Yes it helps me to hear how it sounds because I learn best through sound Because I sort of learn new words Yes, because she then says what she says Yes, because then it helps us to speak more French – sets the 'French' atmosphere Because we have to understand what she was saying So you know how to say them right I then know how to pronounce those words but it's hard when I don't understand what they are saying Then you get to learn whilst you are getting set the task I can use some phrases that the teacher has used when I know how to say them Yes because it helps me to learn more vocabulary Because if the teacher says something that you don't know the meaning to then you have to use your knowledge to work it out Because you hear more French and more useful French You can pick up the language easier You hear French Because it helps me understand how it is pronounced	No because sometimes you don't know what they're saying Because I don't know what they are saying Because I don't understand what she's saying Because it confuses me	I don't always know what she's saying but when I do, yes it helps Because you can use French but I don't always understand what they say Sometimes I don't understand but I normally do eventually improve my French I understand French but sometimes not sometimes I can think but sometimes I don't understand Sometimes you understand the teacher and sometimes you don't Because sometimes you understand the teacher and sometimes you don't It's hard because sometimes I don't understand what you are saying No – because I mostly can't understand. Yes – because you learn different words

Appendix 4: Student responses to selected questionnaire items

Item	pupil responses
Do you find the classroom language sheet helpful during lessons? **Yes/No**	• They are a fun helpful way of learning phrases • If I need to see what a certain phrase is I can look it up • I put yes because it helps me speak a lot more French in class • It helps you to say something in the class • I don't use it • It helps with phrases • I can understand the teacher and learn new phrases • I can look up what I need to say in my French lessons • I can never remember how to spell the words • It would be easier to use if they had the English on them as well • I can now ask for things in French that I used to ask in English • I find it helpful when you want to say something in French you just look at the sheet • The phrases are easy to say and remember • I find it helpful for bits of French that I've forgotten • It helps with simple phrases that are needed in most lessons • You can speak more French during the lesson • I sometimes forget words so it is useful • It's a reminder • I sometimes use them when I am stuck and need to ask a question • Yes, sometimes because you learn a bit more French that is useful • It helps me to use phrases more often • It helps us learn new phrases • It really helps, as it says everything I might need to say in class • No response • Sometimes but not always because it does not have enough information on it • I don't know what they are in English • I don't really need any of those questions • Sometimes I get stuck and it helps me • It helps you with lots of different phrases and spelling
Was it helpful to go over phrases you can use in the classroom? **Yes/No**	• My phrases are much stronger than they were • It made me understand and know them easier • Yes, but if you do the same thing for two lessons we already know it • Yes because you can use them in class • You can use them in the register • You learn to pronounce it • So I know how to say them and write them • It added to my vocabulary and meant we could say more in class • When you know what they mean in English it's easier to use them • I would have preferred to have concentrated on learning jouer and faire • I can pronounce them right after hearing them • It was helpful because you remembered how to say them and it encouraged people to speak French • Yes because I didn't really remember them before but I do now • It is helpful because then I can start to use more French in the classroom • It was helpful because some of the phrases are harder to pronounce • So we can understand and practise them more

	• It is good to help remember • Yes because it is everyday French • Yes because I use them when I am stuck • Yes because it reminds you of what you have learnt • Yes because I forgot some of them and it was good to be reminded of them • Yes because it helps make sure we don't forget the phrases later on • Yes, because I find it easy to forget French phrases, and going over them in class helps enormously • This also helps at home to practise • Yes because you can ask to go to the toilet etc. • Yes because then the phrases stay in your head • Yes because I can hear how they are pronounced • Yes because it sticks more • Yes because you will use those phrases in tests and will help you with your criteria
Do you feel confident to speak French in lessons? **Yes/No**	• I still don't have confidence but when my verbs are stronger my confidence will get stronger • Yes because I am getting to know the language more • Sometimes I do sometimes I don't • No, because if you get it wrong it's embarrassing • I don't like to speak in front of people • Yes, because I know most of the phrases • Yes, because I know how to say the word in French, but I am a bit shy • I think I know lots of French and I'm confident in speaking it • Only on words I'm pretty sure about • It isn't hard • I feel more confident in speaking French now than I was before, because I use it a lot more now • No response • No response • Yes because I've learnt a lot more French • I feel much more confident than I used to because I know that it will help me improve • Sometimes, it depends how much we have learnt it • Sometimes • Yes, because I have the language sheet at the back of my book • Most of the time if I understand what we are learning • Yes, when working in groups and as a class • I feel that I use French a lot more now and I feel more confident using it • I've never struggled in languages and I think that's because of my teachers • I find it easy now • I like giving answers and it is fun when we have to try and work out what a phrase/word means • I know enough for it to be worthwhile • Yes, because the target language sheet helps • No response • No, because I can't really remember everything • Sometimes because I'm confident on some and others I'm not
Would you like to speak French more often in lessons?	• If my confidence level rises then yes • Maybe because we speak a lot in French already • No it is ok • No because I'm scared that if I get it wrong then people will laugh • No!

	• No • No because sometimes I can't understand all of the words • Not really • Not really because it would be more to remember • Yes • Yes, because it will make me even more confident, and when I know I am saying it right I'll want to use it more often • Yes • Yes because I'm not very good at French • Yes because then we get used to French more easily • Yes, then I will get used to it • I think maybe a bit more • Yes • Yes • I think we speak a lot of French but it would be nice to speak a little more French to help with tests and pair work • Yes because it is more useful • Yes because when I go to France I have trouble talking to them but now I think I would understand them more • Yes. It's a lot more fun than just doing sheet after sheet • Yes • Yes but I think we do speak quite often. I like the idea of trying not to speak English at all, although this is sometimes hard! • Yes because I know more • Yes I would because it would help me to remember it • Oui, I like speaking French • Yes because it is a very useful language • Yes but I need to practise more
What could the teacher do to make speaking French easier?	• Go over the words and then build up a sentence • Maybe more games and activities • Don't know • More games to keep us interested • Play more games e.g. do more fun stuff in groups then present it in front of the class • Nothing • Go over it one more time • The teacher could get some more pictures or make a game out of it • She could do more activities because it gets the words stuck in your head • Nothing really. I have always found French easy to pick up • I don't know, nothing really! ☺ • Nothing much • No response • Go over what we have learnt in a couple of tests or at the end of the lesson • Explain things (activities) in a bit more English because sometimes I don't understand • She could play more games and keep repeating and going through it • Don't know • Translate to English • Go over things more especially if we have a test it makes us confident • She could go over things more and instead of pair work, do group and class work more • Not sure • I don't think it needs to be easier • Nothing really • Say the phrase/word and make us repeat it. Maybe add actions as this helps to remember

	• Write more things on the board and let us have more time writing things down • Give us a chance to speak more French in the lessons • Do a bit more work on the subject before moving on • Tell us what it means in English. Give us sheets. More games • Speak a bit more English because sometimes I don't understand some of the words