

Code-switching as a foundation for including multilingualism in English as a foreign language education

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Abstract

In light of the increase of students with international backgrounds in the classroom, there is a strong movement to have a more multi-linguistic approach to foreign language education. Although met with skepticism by some teachers, by including students' multi-cultural and multi-linguistic backgrounds in education, educators are to help students learn more effectively. In order to contribute to its linguistic foundation, this paper will look at the constructivist principles of code-switching as a guiding principle for including multilingualism in English as a foreign language education.

Key words

creative language teaching, code-switching, metacognitive skills

Introduction

In 2001, Anderson said the following about the developing globalization worldwide, "it has become obvious that a huge and many-sided evolutionary development is taking place in our time: I'm referring, of course, to globalization, the flow of forces that are converging to produce a world that is truly one world and is now beginning to be recognized as such by all the people who inhabit it - the first global civilization" (p. 1). The sociologist Malcolm Waters defined globalization thus, "A social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding" (as cited in Anderson, 2001, p. 5).

One may argue whether the process of globalization is truly taking place on a worldwide level, but unification and collaboration on multiple levels of politics, the economy, and society is the goal and practice of the European Union. The EU is a unique economic and political partnership between 28 European countries that together cover much of the European continent. As part of Culture and Education, the EU emphasizes the importance of the different languages spoken in the EU. Under the heading of Multilingualism, the EU website states that in addition to the 24 official EU languages, more than 60 indigenous regional and minority languages, and many non-indigenous languages are spoken by migrant communities (European Union, 2014).

The EU, while stressing it has limited influence because educational and language policies are the responsibility of individual Member States, is committed to safeguarding this linguistic diversity and promoting knowledge of languages, for reasons of cultural identity and social integration and cohesion, and because multilingual citizens are better placed to take advantage of the economic, educational and professional opportunities created by an integrated Europe. One goal of the EU policy on multilingualism is for every European to speak two languages in addition to their mother tongue, which the EU believes would be best accomplished by introducing children to two foreign languages from an early age on (European Union, 2014).

In 2012, the EU published the Special Eurobarometer 386 - Europeans and their languages report, a survey on Europeans and their languages. The results of the report showed that the large majority of Europeans (84%) think that everyone in the EU should speak one language in addition to their mother tongue, and that most Europeans think that EU citizens should speak more than one foreign language (72%). The Eurobarometer Report also shows that Europeans have a positive attitude towards multilingualism: 98% consider mastering foreign languages useful for their children's future, and 88% think that knowing languages other than their mother tongue is useful for themselves (Europeans and their language, 2012).

Even though there is not one official "working" language in the EU, in daily life English has been functioning as the *Lingua Franca* of the European people. This is reflected in another finding of the Special Eurobarometer 386 report. Other than one's mother tongue, two thirds of Europeans (67%) think that English is the most useful language for personal development. English is, again, perceived to be the most useful language to be most useful for children to learn for their future (79%). (Europeans and their language, 2012). Based on these results, one can conclude that European citizens believe that multilingualism is important, and that the majority believes that the most important language for personal benefit, as well as for the educational success of their children is English. The personal opinion of citizens is important, because this is what will influence the political process with its consequent educational policies.

The modern European language classroom

In a global world, with the EU's emphasis on developing multilingualism, an important question is how this policy will be effectively transferred to especially the foreign language learning classroom where English is being learned. Multilingualism, plurilingualism, multi-culturalism, and pluriculturalism are words often heard in policy meetings regarding effective foreign language teaching, especially in regards to students with an international background

living in countries where English will be at least the second foreign language they are learning.

From the millennium and the transition into the European knowledge society, multilingualism has evolved into a political framework in which linguistic diversity and language learning have been bound up with the highly diversified themes and objectives that relate to the emerging European KBS [knowledge based society] and its economy (Rindler, Schjerve & Vetter, 2012, p. 18). Different EU language policy texts continually remind us that from the turn of the millennium onward mother tongue + 2 [languages] has been developing from a maximum requirement for pupils and students to a minimum requirement for all Europeans (Rindler, Schjerve & Vetter, 2012, p. 23).

The emphasis of the EU on multilingualism, both in the sense of the goal of having EU citizens speak 2 languages beside their mother tongue, as well as in the sense of promoting and protecting linguistic diversity, has resulted in policies to promote language learning. The term multilingualism has variety of definitions and applications. In the sense of EU, multilingualism speaks of the ability to speak more than one language. In a larger perspective, multilingualism has also become a key term for education. Many schools in different part of the world have multilingualism as one of their educational aims and in most cases this includes achieving communicative competence in English. English is often considered a tool that brings new opportunities, but other languages are of course useful for their speakers in their everyday lives (Abello-Contesse et. al., 2013, p. 86).

A new term has emerged in the reference to speakers of more than one language, translanguaging. The Modern Language Association of America says the following, "At one end, language is considered to be principally instrumental, a skill to use for communicating thought and information. At the opposite end, language is understood as an essential element of a human being's thought processes, perceptions, and self-expressions; and as such it is considered to be at the core of translingual and transcultural competence. While we use language to communicate our needs to others, language simultaneously reveals us to others and to ourselves. Language is a complex multifunctional phenomenon that links an individual to other individuals, to communities, and to national cultures". (2007, p. 2). The writer continues to point out that, "The language major should be structured to produce a specific outcome: educated speakers who have deep translingual and transcultural competence. Advanced language training often seeks to replicate the competence of an educated native speaker, a goal that postadolescent learners rarely reach. The idea of translingual and transcultural competence, in contrast, places value on the ability to operate between languages" (2007, p. 4).

To narrow the scope of this paper, the question is how English teachers can develop and include teaching strategies and practices to help all students develop this translanguaging and transcultural competence. How can teachers of English as a foreign language include effective translanguaging and transcultural principles in foreign language learning processes? The author of this article has lived, studied about 23 years in the Netherlands, followed by about 23 years of study and work in the USA. Currently, the author has been living in Linz, Austria for over four years. The experiences living, studying and working in three different countries and cultures, have contributed to the following reflections of teaching and learning other languages.

A further interesting consideration for this paper is that teachers often feel that they are already dedicating too much time and effort teaching the regular teaching curriculum within a set amount of time. Strategies that don't make actual teaching easier are not always valued (Oelkers, 2009). Sometimes, teachers express frustration with the expectation to include more multilingualistic teaching strategies and practices in the English as a foreign language classroom.

Relevant foreign language learning philosophies

What are some pedagogical factors involved with learning another language? The philosophy of teaching has been influenced over the years by many theories, like behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, and social constructivism. These theories determine specific strategies and practices for including the educational aspects of foreign language teaching in the classroom. Behaviorists see learning as a somewhat permanent change in behavior as the result of gained experience. Cognitivists believe that organizing and processing information effectively results in learning. If educators understand how learners process information, they can design learning experiences that optimize this activity. Constructivism focuses on what people do with information to develop knowledge. In particular, constructivism holds that people actively build knowledge and understanding by synthesizing the knowledge they already possess with new information. For constructivists, learning is an active process through which learners 'construct' new meaning (Jordan, Carlile & Stack, 2008).

Two constructivists are worth noting in the context of this paper. Jerome Bruner changed from a cognitivist position to a more constructivist view of education focusing on the social importance of language and culture in meaning-making. He viewed knowledge as represented by internal images that stand for an idea (Jordan, Carlile & Stack, 2008). Furthermore, Vygotsky, a social constructivist, with his Zone of Proximal Development stressed the fact that competences just beyond the student's present abilities can only be learned and developed by being presented with tasks that are a combination of present

knowledge and abilities combined with tasks just above our present competences. The student cannot achieve the next level on his or her own, but needs the help of a teacher/coach to reach and develop the next level of the targeted competence (Woods, 2012).

These theories have affected first language acquisition theories from Behaviorism by Skinner, which sees language learning as the result of imitation, to Chomsky's Innatism influenced by Cognitivism, to Social Interactionism (based on Piaget and Vygotsky's theories), which holds that language develops through meaningful relationships with others in our environment without a cognitive age limit (Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams, 2003). Some newer theories are Cognitive Linguistics and Cognitive Sociolinguistics. Cognitive Linguistics, a branch of linguistics, argues that language is governed by general cognitive principles rather than a predisposed ability (Geeraerts, Kristiansen & Peirsman, 2010, p. 1). These first language acquisition theories have spurred many theories relating to second language acquisition, from language teaching strategies and practices that promoted language habit formation to Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (Lado, 1957), linguistics-based language teaching strategies based on Chomsky's Constructivism, language teaching based on Stephen Krashen's five Hypotheses, communicative language teaching strategies based on Social Interactionism, Bilingualism, Immersion, Cognitive Sociolinguistics, Whole Language Learning, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), CLIL, and so on (Brown, 2000).

These second language learning theories have resulted in a number of specific foreign language classroom teaching strategies and practices. Some strategies and practices based in behaviorism are the audio-lingual method, designing learning outcomes, structured lesson plans, drills, memorization, modeling and Total Physical Response (TPR). A number of cognitive foreign language teaching strategies and practices are linguistics-based language teaching, brainstorming, visuals, activating prior knowledge, phonetics/phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, contrastive analysis, cross linguistic influence, sentence parts, and phrases, especially focusing on the learners' cognitive abilities. Constructive teaching strategies and practices are based on some of the linguistic strategies, but place the learner at the center of the educational process using brainstorming, visuals, and prior knowledge as part of a bigger learning strategy, class discussions, self assessment, peer evaluation, class projects (film, research, internet, etc.), role play, field trips, learning by doing, pair work, and group work with the teacher being more of a coach. Social constructivism emphasizes social interaction using for example the Gradual Release of Responsibility method while placing more emphasis on building meaning in a social context with the support

of teachers. In teaching foreign languages in the classroom, many of these strategies and practices have been used across the board.

Lessons learned from Expert Language Users

With a larger emphasis on developing competences and skills in English language learners, are there lessons we can learn from speakers of more than one language, who are bilingual (or more), preferably from an early age on, to find important strategies and practices for language teaching? It is an established fact that first language acquisition, second language learning and foreign language learning are separate processes developed at different stages of life and in different sociocultural situations. However, this does not mean that we cannot learn language learning and speaking strategies from expert language users who can switch expertly between two or more languages. The outcome of all language learning is, with various degrees of competency, should be that people are able to communicate with the various skills in specific sociocultural or academic situations.

The concept of looking at expert language users is not new. One group of language users that has been carefully analyzed to find effective literacy skills and strategies are expert readers. In 1988, Herrmann, wrote the following, "In the past 10 years our understanding of the reading process has changed dramatically. Reading is no longer thought of as the "mindless" application of isolated skills. Instead, recent research shows us that reading is a strategic, meaning-getting process requiring awareness and control of complex reasoning processes. Some readers learn how to be more strategic than others, but researchers are not quite sure why. Somehow, expert readers discover reasoning processes associated with strategic reading. With little assistance, they learn how to apply these processes to construct meaning and to study and learn from text."

The results of a preliminary study by Johnston and Afflerbach in 1985 suggest that expert readers do use mediated, nonautomatic comprehension strategies to construct main idea statements rather than constructing them automatically, at least when reading difficult texts (Afflerbach, 1990, p. 34). In 1990, Afflerbach published a study on the influence of prior knowledge on expert readers' main idea construction strategies. This study found that expert readers automatically constructed the main idea significantly more often when reading texts about familiar topics. The author suggested several possible interpretations of this finding. "First, constructing a main idea statement for unfamiliar text may be of sufficient difficulty in and of itself to require use of a cognitive strategy. Second, lack of prior knowledge contributed to expert readers' dependency on comprehension strategies prior to main idea construction. These strategies, because they were not automatic, used resources in working memory, possibly

leaving fewer resources for tasks important to automatic main idea construction, such as building an accurate macrostructure of the text. In contrast, when expert readers encountered texts about familiar topics, well-developed schemata were easily accessed and applied to the task at hand. In addition, prior knowledge aided in the generation of accurate initial hypotheses, which facilitated comprehension monitoring and may have freed additional cognitive resources for main idea construction. Such automatic processing may have contributed to significantly greater automatic main idea construction for familiar texts" (Afflerbach, 1990, p. 43).

What sets expert readers apart from average or poor readers? According to Afflerbach, Cho, Kim, Crassas & Doyle (2013), these successful readers are metacognitive. They plan their reading in relation to specific goals, and they monitor and evaluate their reading as it progresses. As they are motivated and engaged, they look forward to reading, in school and out. The readers have a deeper and developing understanding of the different possible purposes authors had when writing. Finally, these successful readers have high self-efficacy—they expect to be challenged by different texts and tasks, and they expect to meet those challenges.

Code-switching speaks of the ability of a native speaker to switch between two or more languages, often learned from an early age on. In the sense of this article, it speaks of the ability of speakers to correctly switch between the codes in order to express themselves clearly under the expected sociocultural circumstances. Especially bilingual (or tri-lingual, etc.) speakers have a clear linguistic sense of what code to use under what sociocultural circumstances. How can foreign language teachers help students in their classrooms develop this ability to use a foreign language correctly under specific linguistic and cultural circumstances? In the sense of this paper, we are looking at expert code-switchers. We do have to keep in mind that with speakers who switch between codes, confusion in correct usage of codes may happen if the individual codes were learned in a sociocultural situation without clear differentiation for the usage of the codes (the codes are no longer clearly used in one sociocultural situation).

As there is not one strategy that meets the language learning needs of all students, one way to help students learn foreign languages is the inclusion of metacognitive teaching and learning strategies and practices, much like code-switchers seem to do. Including metacognitive strategies, via multiple teaching practices, can contribute to creating a positive environment that is conducive for language learning. Using metacognitive strategies and practices to develop analytic cognitive abilities in a social communicative setting greatly helps our learning processes. Stimulating cognitive abilities is especially helpful for

teaching academic content and is also a great place to bring in previously learned L1 academic content in an L2 environment. The brain stores and uses information in a variety of ways. It is important to teach language in a structured and logical way, because that is how the brain works. Along with that, it is also good to use the foreign language that was just learned in a playful and imaginative approach, like by using games, or by doing creative activities. However, a structured, logical language teaching approach should also include relevant and authentic language.

The idea of translanguaging mentioned earlier has relevance for foreign language teaching and learning as it sees the ability to speak more than one language as a multifunctional, translingual and transcultural competence that is being used to operate effectively between and communicate in different languages linking an individual to other individuals, communities, and national cultures (The Modern Language Association of America, 2007).

Metacognitive foreign language teaching strategies

The foreign language teacher may feel overwhelmed with the plurality of teaching strategies and practices for their classroom. Often teachers become comfortable with using a textbook, complemented with a number of proven classroom exercises. Another complicating factor that may contribute to teacher frustration is the fact that more rigorous examination requirements have been designed by higher educational policy makers. Teachers often end up teaching to the test in order to prepare students for some standardized assessment, without consideration of any individual needs students may have.

Furthermore, in a number of western European countries the influx of non-native speakers, for whom English often becomes their second foreign language (if they are living in countries where English is not the native language) makes foreign language teaching even more challenging as these students are learning a third (foreign) language via the second (foreign language). For example, in Austria, in 2013, there were 1,142,726 students in all primary and secondary school. Out of this group of students, for 226,547 students, German was not their mother tongue. This represents 20.2 percent of all students in primary and secondary schools. In the school year 2011-12, out of 1,093,078 students, 1,068,993 had English as a foreign language as course subject (Statistik Austria, 2013). How can teachers effectively address the learning needs of their students in this multilingual environment? In order to meet the need of individual students, a combination of the effective strategies and practices with a well-designed metacognitive educational framework is needed.

New educational policies on competence and skill development for specific content areas are developing and spreading. In this educational model,

competences and competence development are driving education and pedagogical strategies and practices. In order to meet the need for competence development, metacognitive skills are needed. Metacognitive strategies are learner-initiated strategies and actions that assist with the learning tasks on a higher mental level (Veenman, Van Hout-Wolters, & Afflerbach, 2006). These strategies and practices represent ways to understand, remember and recall information effectively, and utilize the necessary means to practice newly-learned competences and skills efficiently. Technology can aid in the development of metacognitive strategies in relationship to learning content and language as students can use technological tools to apply what they have learned. It is great if we can teach our students to use metacognitive strategies and practices, which they can use to apply to language as well as content learning strategies (Jonassen, 2010, p. 340).

What are some effective pedagogical strategies and practices that can be included in language teaching? To start with, it is so important to make foreign language input understandable and comprehensible. This can be done by different strategies and practices, like by referring to the student's L1, but also by using appropriate speech, clearly modeled explanations, specific teaching methods, and teaching aids, like visual aids, graphic organizers and using practical exercises that visualize the lesson. As they assist in the teaching process, these strategies and practices can be used creatively to help our students understand and learn better. Graphic organizers are another great teaching tool in the classroom to use with asking students introductory questions. They are great for explaining topics or themes, they can provide an excellent basis for teaching, and can even be used for assessment (pre, post). Visual organizers can be used to brainstorm with the students about a topic. It is also a good method to activate prior knowledge. It is always surprising how much students really do know about a topic. Furthermore, the students know they contributed to the topic with their knowledge. With the visual outline from a brainstorming activity, depending on the grade and level of the class, students can design artwork, work together on a topic, write a paragraph or essay.

Visuals are excellent tools to make clear what is being communicated to the students. The old cliché that a picture is worth more than a thousand words holds still true. However, visualization goes beyond showing pictures. Visualization should be used to clarify vocabulary and content in a relevant and authentic context. Visualization should include the bigger and practical picture. Modeling is another great strategy for teaching. When teachers actually demonstrate what students need to do for an activity or assignment, step-by-step, and multiple times if needed, students get a clear picture of what is being expected of them. When students know what is expected of them, they will be

able to perform much better. Teachers also need to use the appropriate level of English so that our students will model that usage. The emphasis in modeling is on imitation rather than original behavior. However, we can also see it as a constructivist strategy where students adapt modeled behavior as a mental framework for their own purposes. From an educational point of view, it is clear that much learning occurs by observation. Modeling should be part of all learning, by teachers presenting examples of good work that they would like students to use (Jordan, Carlile & Stack, 2008, p. 60).

Scaffolding is a strategy that draws on Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. Scaffolding speaks of a joint knowledge construction aided by skilful teacher-managed discussion and support which helps learners to construct new knowledge. Scaffolding may consist of resources, challenging activities and mentoring provided by teachers or more experienced peers. The use of scaffolding is the best way to "release" the students from being dependent on the teacher for assistance and become more reliant on their own abilities. (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2013, p. 122). Teaching the students to ask the questions themselves will allow the students to take more responsibility for their learning. Another way is to continually elicit more responses from the children (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2013, p.123). Teachers should provide multiple strategies and practices that help students to process the information internally, before expressing it externally (Jordan, Carlile & Stack, 2008, p. 65). The Gradual Release Model is a great scaffolding and mentoring approach. It progresses from "the teacher does it" to "the teacher and students work together" to "the student works alone" and then the "students work together" (Levy, 2007). It helps foreign language learners to develop from a controlled teaching environment to a place where they implement and apply material themselves.

There are many linguistics-based language teaching strategies and practices that are important to include in foreign language teaching. Based on the strategies and practices used in code-switching, we can see the importance of clearly defined language usage rules as seen in the six parts of linguistics: orthography, phonetics/phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Linguistics looks at the way how language is really used in daily life.. Therefore, from a linguist's perspective, grammar should not just be taught from a prescriptive perspective, but also from a descriptive, linguistic perspective. There are many other effective language teaching methods. For example, CLIL (Content Language Integrated Learning), Content across the Curriculum and immersion strategies are a few of the strategies that combine teaching content and the second language in a practical learning environment that considers the culture and background of the students. CLIL is a method in which an additional

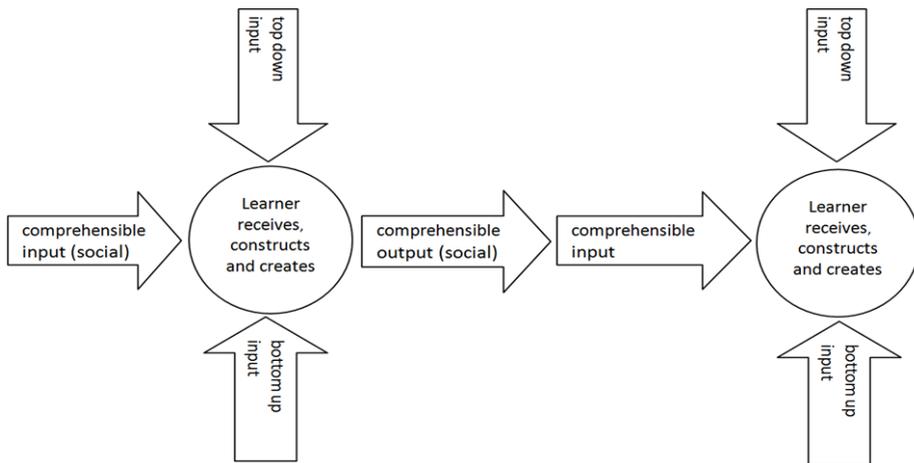
language is used for the teaching and learning of both the content and language. (Abello-Contesse et al., 2013, p. 87).

Even though each of these strategies and practices have relevance in their own way to foreign language teaching, foreign language teachers should not just focus on providing comprehensible input as a formula. Clearly identifying what a student knows and does not know might not be a straightforward task. Effective comprehensible language output also needs to be part of the foreign language learning process. Swain (1996) said the following regarding relevance of learner output, "The importance to learning of output could be that output pushes learners to process language more deeply (with more mental effort) than does input. With output, the learner is in control. By focusing on output, we may be focusing on ways in which learners can play more active, responsible roles in their learning" (p. 99). Swain and Suzuki (1996) further mention that the research shows the important role of output that pushes learners to make use of their resources and stretch their limited linguistic capacities to their fullest (p. 568).

Bilingual (or trilingual, etc.) speakers show through code-switching that they have separately constructed linguistic and cultural frameworks that they draw on for proper communication with the world around them. It is important that the language learner is at the center of any foreign language learning programs. However, the foreign language learner needs structured vertical top-down and bottom-up linguistic input to correctly learn how to use a foreign language. This means that a foreign language teacher will have to teach specific grammar structures so that students learn how to use them correctly. But the foreign language learners also need to be placed in a social interactive environment where they can use the language they are learning in a practical, authentic and relevant environment. On the communicative level, the teacher can function as a coach. The following model shows three ways the language learner can receive comprehensible input. This should be translated into comprehensible output, which in turn should contribute to receiving more comprehensible input (see Graph 1).

There are a number of key words in the foreign language learning process. Language needs to be authentic – relate to real life, and be relevant – it needs to have practical meaning to the students. It is helpful that language that is being used in the teaching process is contextualized. The content needs to be taught in a practical frame work that provides meaning and connection to the bigger picture of life.

Graph 1: The input/output process of foreign language learners.



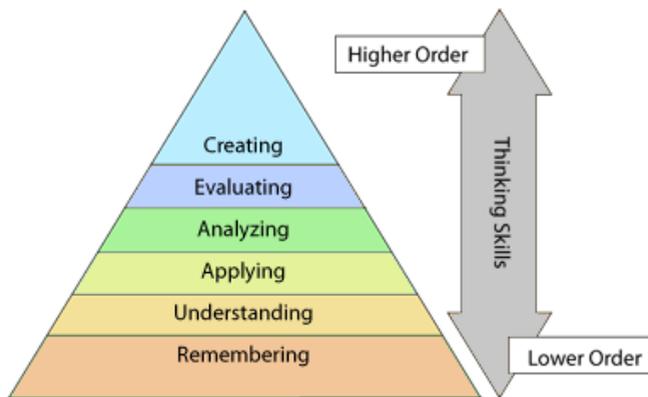
Another important key word that is often overlooked is "conceptualizing." In vocabulary teaching, the creative process goes from learning words, to forming concepts, to being able to use these concepts in creative (producing) ways. When students can create something new based on concepts they already know, the learning process is greatly aided. For example, students can write a paper using their own creativity based on concepts they already know about a certain topic, while including new ones they are finding through their own research. In this context, we need to see concepts as the bigger idea of which something is a part. For example, we can know the meaning of the word "car" vs. understand the concept of driving the car (as seen in the student's daily life). What is the concept that we want our students to learn, and how are we going to accomplish this?

Anderson and Krathwohl, along with a group of scholars started to revise Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning in 1995. In 2001, they produced *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. Whereas the original was uni-dimensional, the revision had two dimensions, based on the two parts of objectives: (1) nouns describing the content (knowledge) to be learned, and (2) verbs describing what students will learn to do with that content; that is, the processes they use in producing or working with knowledge (Krathwohl & Anderson, 2002).

When taking a closer look at this visualization of the revision of Bloom's Taxonomy, it can be noted that creating is the highest domain of the learning pyramid. Often teaching gets stuck in the domains of lower order thinking skills - remembering, understanding and applying. Based on Bloom's Revised

Taxonomy, teachers should realize that students need to progress to the highest stage where they are able to independently create their own work. In the case of language learning, students should be able to communicate in speaking and writing, while being able to use listening and reading successfully. Creating is a key skill that students should be able to use as a final step in the learning process.

Fig. 1: Bloom's Revised Taxonomy. (n.d.). Teaching Center, University of Lethbridge, CA



Mayer (2002) said the following about the Creating domain in Bloom's Revised Taxonomy, "Create involves putting elements together to form a coherent or functional whole; that is, reorganizing elements into a new pattern or structure. Objectives classified as Create involve having students produce an original product. Composition (including writing), for example, often, but not always, involves cognitive processes associated with Create. It can, in fact, be simply the application of procedural knowledge (e.g., Write this essay in this way). The creative process can be broken down into three phases: (a) problem representation, in which a student attempts to understand the task and generate possible solutions; (b) solution planning, in which a student examines the possibilities and devises a workable plan; and (c) solution execution, in which a student successfully carries out the plan" (p. 231).

Experimentation

The purpose of these field experimentations is to see how foreign language learners are implementing creative strategies and practices similar to native

expert speakers, and especially code switchers who easily construct comprehensible output. The assumption is that code switchers are able to implement these creative processes on a higher cognitive level, as they have to construct output, in a variety of situations that requires a high level of adaptation and creativity. As described earlier, expert readers are similarly able to utilize metacognitive strategies and practices that quickly assist them to understand the meaning and context of the text they are reading, while being presented with a measure of unknown information as they are reading texts that they are not familiar with.

How can we practically apply some of these ideas and practices in the foreign language learning classroom? Are there ways to construct lessons under a cognitive and constructive aspect while still giving the student the opportunity to express their own creativity beyond just reproducing the learned content in pre-arranged textual or oral contexts? I would like to present a few examples of possible lessons that address metacognitive learning strategies and practices of students of English as a foreign language.

Experiment 1 - The Sound Exercise

Only few external stimuli were used to see how subjects could utilize existing concepts effectively to create something new. In consideration of multi-sensory learning (McGann, 2010), the task that the subjects had to execute, combined auditory, visual, and tactile elements into a learning task. Subjects had to use listening skills, writing skills, and metacognitive skills. This assignment works best with intermediate to higher level students, but in adjusted form has also been used with beginners (e.g. via drawing for first graders). The assignment consisted of the following task: Subjects had to listen to seven sounds without any preparation or introduction. The reason sounds were used was that they provide a low level of external input and allow for the students' maximum personal interpretation of what they heard and what it meant to them personally. No lesson preceded this activity. The sounds consisted of: 1. a telephone ringing (old-style telephone sound that sounds like an alarm clock; 2. a piece of packing tape being torn off a dispenser; 3. ocean waves; 4. fire crackling with crickets chirping in the background; 5. Morse code; 6. tropical birds chirping; 7. a person jumping in the water.

First, subjects had to listen to the sounds, and write down in English what they heard. There was no right or wrong, or a need to correctly identify what was heard. During the second listening, students were asked to write down what the sound meant to them, e.g., a telephone ringing could mean stress, or ocean waves could mean vacation. This question aimed at finding out what concepts students had attached to the vocabulary they selected to identify the sounds. The third

time around, the students had to use the vocabulary and information from the previous two listening tasks to write a short (fantasy) story in English. If time allowed, two students combined their stories into one.

The results have been interesting. Students were very proud of their work. It has been clear that students take pride in work that they create on their own. According to the pyramid reflecting Bloom's Revised Taxonomy by Krathwohl and Anderson, these kind of exercises put learning in the hands of the students on the highest metacognitive level - creating.

Experiment 2 – Listening Exercise

The idea behind this lesson is using podcasts or web-based videos, like on YouTube, and information gap strategies. This particular exercise works best for intermediate students, but can be adjusted for lower or higher level students. The purpose is to use visuals to teach vocabulary with different parts of "how to", and the students need to put writing to it. For this exercise, a YouTube video with Jamie Oliver making scrambled eggs was used (see references: HyperionBooksVideo, 2009).

The same clip has to be shown to students three times. Before playing the clip the first time, students wrote the alphabet down the side of a piece of paper. During the first listening, students needed to look or listen carefully for all ingredients (vocabulary) beginning with different letters of the alphabet (everything they saw or heard) e.g. a = apple, e = egg. The teacher checked and reviewed what the students had written. Students told the class what they had written down.

During the second listening, students watched out and listened for all utensils (vocabulary) Jamie was using or which they saw in the kitchen, etc. and wrote them down. The teacher checked and reviewed what the students wrote down. Students shared what they wrote down. For the last listening, students watched out and listened for all the action verbs, e.g. mix, stir, cook, cut, chop, fry, etc. Again, the teacher reviewed the words with the students. In the end, after being checked, students rewrote the recipe (depending on proficiency level). When done, they had a recipe for scrambled eggs. If the school is equipped with a kitchen, it would be great to actually cook this recipe together.

Students were been excited doing this exercise, and getting a recipe for scrambled eggs. A number of them said they would make it at home. The interesting thing is that Jamie talks very fast, and, the first time around students don't understand much. It makes it easier to grasp the meaning when they are listening for select words only. After listening to the presentation three times, students have a pretty good understanding of the message being communicated. They put it together in their own words, again creating something on their own.

This lesson layout can be used in a variety of ways. It can be used for children and adults - it can also be adjusted to different proficiency levels. The theory behind this exercise is that students deconstruct the communication they are hearing into manageable parts that are easy to understand. When they understand the individual parts, they can reconstruct it using their own words. At the end, students are put in charge of their own learning processes, by recreating the recipe, and by cooking the actual food.

Conclusion

Teaching should be a creative process both for the teacher as well as for the students. When teachers have to function within the same pre-arranged mold during their teaching career, boredom and frustration can easily set in. Learning languages just from a textbook with little authentic language does not reflect the language learning processes in real life, as seen with expert language users like code switchers. However, even though school is usually a system with pre-arranged expectations which don't allow for much imagination, teachers who want to be creative can utilize creative teaching strategies and practices that can function within the pre-determined curriculum. Including higher, metacognitive strategies and practices within an existing curricular framework may be one solution that might benefit all. While top-down and bottom-up strategies provide the needed cognitive content, and where social, communicative strategies give the needed social framework to practice the learned language, metacognitive strategies will help develop long-term language learning, especially if we allow students to put them to use on a creative level.

As we look at the ability of (native) speakers to code-switch between two or more languages, at a ground level, we often see that they have clearly defined language codes and structures, and that they can usually easily switch between them depending on the sociocultural situation they are in using effective language usage strategies. This is most clearly seen in sociocultural situations where these languages are used in separate sociocultural systems. Can teachers implement some of the principles of code-switching in their teaching? It is clear that the individual languages code-switchers use were mostly acquired or learned under real-life circumstances. The code-switchers needed to learn their individual languages in order to communicate in specific situations they were facing, be it sociocultural or family relationships.

As seen in the two practical field experimentations the author has done, language learners greatly enjoy the possibility being able to create something new out of existing knowledge. Especially in the first project, even though a subjective conclusion, one thing that stood out with mostly all students was a real sense of accomplishment and pride in the work they had done. The finished

project was no longer seen as a prescribed and expected task. It was seen as the students' original work. However, in order to properly document it, more analysis needs to be done on a qualitative level to reflect the true perceptions of the students regarding these projects.

Teachers should aspire to include metacognitive teaching strategies and practices that place the learning and communicative process in the hands of the learner while providing them with structured teaching that provides the targeted language content. Metacognitive strategies and practices that put the learning of content in the hands of the students should be used in the educational processes of the foreign language classroom. Giving students the opportunity to create something with the learned content on a higher level than basic exercises can greatly contribute to long-term learning. Many pedagogical strategies and practices are presumed to contribute to the individual learning process, but when students are able to conceptualize the learned content by applying it in practical situations, real learning has taken place. Including real life content and using strategies and practices where students have to create output based on learned content imitates the real life challenges code-switchers had to overcome which accelerated their language learning.

Limitations

Although the research through the use of the described exercises has reached its aims, there were some unavoidable limitations. First because of the small number of participants, the results of this study cannot be generalized for a larger population. Furthermore, as the exercises were only meant to be an initial investigative research project, no control mechanisms were put in place. Moreover, there were also a number of technological limitations, as some classrooms did not have the proper technological sound equipment. Technological adjustments were made during the research, but this may have negatively affected the project. Lastly, the study was qualitative in nature, but may benefit from quantitative test measures.

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