READING AND WRITING

IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM:

A CASE STUDY OF TEACHER BELIEFS, KNOWLEDGE, AND PRACTICES

OF LITERACY-BASED INSTRUCTION

DISSERTATION

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By

Amye R. Sukapdjo, M.Ed.

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The Ohio State University

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Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Keiko K. Samimy, Co-Adviser

Dr. Anna O. Soter, Co-Adviser   Approved by:

Dr. Alan Hirvela

_____   _____

Co-Adviser   Co-Adviser

College of Education and Human Ecology

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the beliefs, knowledge, and practices of middle school foreign language teachers' literacy-based instruction. It sought to additionally consider its findings with relation to the theory of emergent biliteracy (Malloy, 1998) for the middle school foreign language classroom context. This theory positions middle school foreign language learners as developing second language readers and writers, whose formal foreign language literacy development is facilitated by certain instructional experiences. Prior to discussing foreign language classroom instruction, however, one must first consider the instructors themselves and how their beliefs and knowledge will shape their praxis.

A qualitative case study approach was used so as "to engage with and report the complexity of social activity in order to represent the meanings that individual social actors bring to the settings and manufacture in them" (Stark & Torrance, 2005, p. 33). Four experienced middle school foreign language teachers (one Spanish, three French) shared their histories and classrooms over the course of six months (October 2007-March 2008). Data included a questionnaire, interviews, monthly teacher activity logs, classroom observations, and a materials analysis. Triangulation and inductive data analysis led to a better understanding of the "what, how and why" (Shulman, 1986) of the literacy instruction choices of the participants.

According to the data, middle school foreign language teachers see great value in the development of foreign language literacy (biliteracy) skills. Yet even experienced teachers may lack specific training in teaching foreign language reading and writing and may tend to justify their literacy instruction with stakeholders not research or pedagogical recommendations in mind. This may lead to a heavy reliance on the textbook, or on the individual's past teaching or learning experiences instead. There are times when an individual's beliefs, knowledge, and practices cannot be reconciled, so teachers do "what works" (Grossman, 1990) within their settings. As a result, while it seemed that some foreign language classroom reading and writing practices were influenced by the teacher's beliefs and knowledge of biliteracy development, other practices were the result of other influences, including textbook and curriculum requirements, and academic calendars for grading and testing.

The study includes pedagogical implications and recommendations for future research in the middle school foreign language context, and discusses the possibilities for the conceptualization and practice of emergent biliteracy instruction in this setting.

To my children who amaze me each day

in their biliterate–bilingual journeys in life.

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Firstly, I would like to thank those teacher participants who shared so much (their time, energy, classrooms, personal and professional moments) with me during the course of this study. Without their assistance and willingness to inform, I would not have been able to explore this topic. I hope that their contribution to the field will be valued and appreciated, and that other K-12 teachers will not recoil from the idea of conducting research be it on their own or in collaboration.

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Thanks to my children for being my inspiration. My three Muses remind me every day that it is important to laugh, to enjoy what one does, and that it is possible to strike a balance in life. Personal and professional commitments can coexist; the trick is in being able to see the greater picture while also being able to zoom in and focus on the details.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband for his patience and love as he encouraged me in pursuing my academic goals. I am grateful for your support in my choice to raise our children bilingually despite the fact that you never studied a foreign language yourself. Thank you for helping me to give a wonderful gift to our children.

VITA

May 18, 1969 ……………… Born in Indianapolis, IN

1991 ……………………….. B.A. in French with History,
Wellesley College, Wellesley, Massachusetts

1991 – 1992 ……………….. French Instructor
Wilhum Academy, Indianapolis, IN

2000 – 2001 ……………….. M.Ed., Foreign and Second Language Education, and
Graduate Research Associate in Foreign Language Center
The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH

2002 – 2004 ……………….. French Teacher
Hastings Middle School, Upper Arlington, OH

2004 – 2006 ……………….. Project Assistant, Model Curriculum Writing Team
Ohio Department of Education, Columbus, OH

2004 – present …………….. Ph.D. student, Foreign and Second Language Education
The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH

2005 – 2006 ……………….. Lower School French Teacher
The Wellington School, Columbus, OH

2008 – present …………….. Adjunct Faculty
Gainesville State College, Oakwood, GA

PUBLICATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Literacy is a term often heard in and out of the classroom. While traditionally the

term literacy has been defined as the ability to read and write (Elbow, 2004), other

definitions have emerged in the past ten to fifteen years. These expanded notions of

literacy include visual literacy, media literacy, and health literacy (Luke, 2000; Moje,

Young, Readence, & Moore, 2000; Zarcadoolas, Pleasant, & Greer, 2006). Behind all the

variations in definitions, generally, there is the common idea of using printed symbols

and images to derive meaning for purposeful, personal, and culturally relevant

communication. Often, however, the act of reading is the sole presumed meaning of the

word *literacy*. This seems especially true in the field of Education in the United States

(U.S.) where The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (U.S. Department of Education

[USDE], 2002) places a focus on testing reading thus relegating writing to a back seat

position. But authors like Elbow (2004) remind us that literacy "literally means power

over letters—that is, over both writing and reading" (p. 9) and as such, literacy must be

understood to comprise both activities.

Goody (1999) discusses the cultural, social, educational, and political implications

of literacy and how it has impacted communication in many societies throughout the

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world, even those that had never before had a writing system (e.g., Cherokee). Reading and writing are posited as being cognitive and social processes through which we strive to gain clarity of intent, purpose, and meaning (Elbow, 2004; Goody, 1999). It is also through reading and writing that analytic skills, linguistic understanding, and social communication are developed because literacy is a "matter of interaction between internal mental processes and the external products in the shape of words (or graphics) on paper" (Goody, 1999, p. 31, original parentheses). Furthermore, the written word also allows for reflection, analysis, critique, and response on interpersonal and intrapersonal levels. "It is the availability of an explicit written record and its use for representing thought that impart to literacy its distinctive properties" (Olson, 1977, p. 281). As such, if valued within a certain society or community, the ability to read and write benefits the individual and the collective.

Research suggests that reading and writing skills support one another (DeFord, 1981; Grabe, 2001; Jabbour, 2001; Tchudi & Tchudi, 1999) because readers see examples of how language is used while writers develop important writing skills through their understanding of the reading experience. Scholars in English Language Arts (ELA) have explored this relationship for many years. For example, DeFord's (1981) data revealed three important issues about literacy learning: (1) "language interaction is necessary to becoming literate;" (2) "there is a supportive and interactive relationship between the reading and writing processes;" and (3) "children must be free to explore and make their own discoveries" (pp. 656-657). This holistic perspective of the literacy

learning process contrasts experiencing literacy with the instruction of literacy. Elbow (2004) concurs that reading and writing support each other when he states the "process of writing helps children comprehend written language and control letters and texts, an understanding that they need for reading" (p. 9) thus reinforcing the contention that literacy holds cognitive benefits. And, Harwayne's (2000) examples of "schoolwide literacy rituals" (p. 44) remind us that language in all of its forms (oral and written) serves to connect us to each other and to "mingle with the world" (p. 382), thereby substantiating instruction of both writing and reading from a social perspective.

Yet, as Belcher and Hirvela (2001) explain, the interest in second language (L2), which includes FL, reading-writing relations "has not coalesced into what might be called a critical mass of L2 reading-writing scholarship" (p. 1). In foreign language education, perhaps this is because many "face a pedagogical environment in which two camps have developed," (Shanahan, 1997, p. 164) one emphasizing language and communicative competence, the other literature (Maxim, 2006; Shanahan, 1997). While this bifurcation is predominantly observed at the post-secondary level (Maxim, 2006; Shanahan, 1997), it is mirrored in the secondary setting by way of its course structures: language at the lower levels, "content" (Maxim, 2006, p. 19), also termed literature, at the upper levels. It is not surprising then that the expectation for MS FL teachers is to only instruct communicative skills to beginning students. Yet, some argue that going beyond the simplified, short texts at the lower levels of language instruction is completely possible and should be implemented (Malloy, 1997, 1998; Maxim, 2006; Shanahan, 1997) for, as they assert,

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literacy-based instruction is not to be viewed as a replacement of language-based instruction at the lower levels, but rather as a complement to instruction (Maxim, 2006).

The focus of most L2 reading-writing relations research has been centered on elementary level English as a Second Language (ESL) students (Au, 1980; Ballenger, 1999; Hudelson, 1984, 1994; Pérez & Torres-Guzmán, 2002). Adult language learners of ESL, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and foreign languages (Canagarajah, 1993; Ferris, 2001; Gan, Humphreys & Hamp-Lyons, 2004; Janzen, 2001; Oxford, 2001; Robb, 2001) are also often the focus of investigations. But, there is clearly a group of learners that has been left out of the picture of L2 reading-writing scholarship: those learners in middle school (MS) (grades 6-8). Mary Malloy (1997, 1998) presented the field with the theory of emergent biliteracy specifically tailored for the MS setting. But her work seems to have gone unnoticed; perhaps this is because of the bifurcation in FL instruction (language versus literature), or perhaps it is because of the difficulties in the articulation of foreign language programs "between elementary and secondary schools, including middle schools" (Sung, Padilla & Silva, 2006, p. 128). If our goal as literacy educators "is to help students learn to link these literacies in ways that are empowering to them as readers and writers and effective within the discourse realms or communities in which they use them" (Belcher & Hirvela, 2001, p.3), then more L2 reading-writing scholarship is needed which investigates both literacy teaching and learning. It is through such investigation, FL educators might glean a better understanding of how FL literacy

learning proceeds for learners of various ages, at various levels, in various settings, including students in MS FL classrooms.

Hudelson (1994) emphasizes that at the heart of the (socially motivated) language processes of reading and writing is the construction of meaning. She proposes that literacy should not only be functional and purposeful but also personally engaging, such that elementary school settings might be sites where children are <u>able</u> to read and write in addition to being sites where children <u>choose</u> to read and write. It is with this view of reading and writing for pleasure and purpose that she posed the question: How should literacy be promoted? By observing MS FL classrooms, an opportunity is afforded to investigate how FL literacy is promoted. What reading and writing practices are encouraged, supported, and promoted within this setting that lead students to construct meaning on personal and academic planes? Are literacy-based classroom practices reflective of the MS FL teacher's literacy-based beliefs and knowledge? If so, what are these beliefs and knowledge? If not, what guides their practices?

For the MS FL classroom setting, Huddelson's question might be changed to inquire: *What influences how FL reading and writing is promoted in the MS classroom?* This modified question is prefaced not only on existing second language acquisition (SLA) research literature but also on the FL teachers themselves, what they believe, what they know, and how they choose to instruct FL reading and writing. Such an investigation is an important contribution to foreign language education in general because "the absence of consistent and articulated learning goals across all levels of instruction has

characterized much of FL instruction for quite some time" (Maxim, 2006, p. 19). More research is needed in order to inform the articulation of K-12 foreign language instruction, and is specifically needed in the underrepresented middle school setting.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, this study seeks to investigate the literacy-based beliefs, knowledge, and practices of MS foreign language teachers in order to learn more about this group of educators and their instructional choices in this context. Little research has been conducted with teachers in this educational setting regarding this topic. Traditionally MS FL methodology has viewed language learners as coming to the FL classroom with L1 literacy skills in place. Learning to write and read in the L2 is still often thought to be a matter of transferring the existing knowledge from one alphabet to another (Birch, 2007), as in the case of English speakers learning French, and although students at this age are capable of analyzing and learning language through a systematic linguistic approach, they are also still honing their own L1 literacy skills and are quite receptive to those same literacy-learning practices that support their L1 literacy skill development (e.g., read alouds, storytelling) (Malloy, 1997, 2001). Yet, little research has been conducted where the MS FL learning experience is conceptualized as fostering the developmental process of learning to read and write because traditionally, as Barton (1994) suggests, bilingualism and literacy research have been separately investigated areas. Thus L2 reading and writing has not been a prominent topic of study. Increasingly

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though, educators are recognizing the research gap that exists. Hung (2007) states that there is so little research on children's FL literacy learning that more research needs to be conducted – in particular, more longitudinal research is needed. Moje, Young, Readence and Moore (2000) noted that when the International Reading Association changed the name of the *Journal of Reading* to *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* in September 1995, the "distinctive dimensions of the reading and writing of youth" (p. 402) were recognized and asserted. Middle school FL students are in a distinctive position in their academic career, in their physical, psychological, and cognitive development, and in the language-learning continuum (National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE], 2006). To date, little research has been conducted in this context. Therefore, FL literacy researchers who focus on this setting have an opportunity to fill in the gap that would better inform FL programs and help in the articulation of K-12 language instruction.

Second, it is hoped that this investigation will also lead to some insight on the applicability of Malloy's (1998) emergent biliteracy theory for the MS FL context, while also possibly revealing why this particular theory has not been taken up in a decade. Is this due to the bifurcation of instruction or due to the lack of articulation in K-12 programs? Or perhaps the "nonuptake" (Crookes, 1997, p. 72) is due to a lack of belief and knowledge in its premise? When any theory is applied, it is important that practitioners of said theory understand and conceptualize its principles and intent. Therefore, the terms *emergent* and *biliteracy* need to be understood and conceptualized by teachers. Likewise, MS FL learners need to be considered as a particular group of

learners with specific characteristics who merit attention. Indeed, a lack of knowledge and of focus on these learners may be why MS FL learners and Malloy's (1998) theory of emergent biliteracy have been overlooked.

Teale and Sulzby (1986) discuss literacy development as oftentimes being perceived from a logical (step-by-step) perspective in lieu of being conceptualized as a process. In their work, they posit two ideas, which are essential to this particular study. The first is that "[t]he child develops as a writer/reader" (Teale & Sulzby, 1986, p. xviii). This statement recognizes that a literacy process exists yet does not constrain the process with a time frame. The second idea presents educators with the terminology for this idea: "emergent connotes development rather than stasis: it signifies something in the process of becoming" (p. xix). As such, an emergent FL reading and writing developmental process is an appropriate conceptual framework for understanding the MS student. That is, based on the notion that a developmental process exists by which children become readers and writers of language, it is appropriate to apply this concept to foreign language learners as well. Emergent FL reading and writing recognizes that this developmental process occurs as a FL is being learned. The MS FL classroom merits specific attention as to date there has been a paucity of research in this context on this concept.

Emergent L2 reading and writing has often been examined from the area of ESL (Hudelson, 1994; Maguire, 1999; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). Recent studies on biliteracy have focused on young (grades K-5) speakers of Chinese or Spanish (in addition to other languages) who are learning to read and write in English in elementary school (Ferreiro,

2007; Flores, 2007; Hung, 2007; Lin, 2007). These ESL learners come to school familiar with oral skills in their native language but are not necessarily able to read and write in their L1. Typically then, they are in the process of learning to read and write in both their L1 and L2. This parallel learning process is fascinating, but contrasts greatly with the FL literacy development process of MS FL students who come to the FL classroom having knowledge of both oral and written forms of their L1 English. Therefore, an important distinction should be noted at this point between FL and L2 learners. L2 learners are native speakers of a language other than English and who are learning English through a bilingual or immersion experience (Moll, Sáez, & Dworin, 2001; Maguire, 1999). FL learners are English-speaking students who are studying a FL, who have already learned to read and write in their native L1 English.

Middle school FL students have already experienced the emergent literacy process in L1 English, which includes learning the relationship of sounds with written symbols, reading and writing with socially driven communicative intent, producing language with such intent, and learning through reading and writing. In studying a FL, MS students embark upon the emergent biliteracy process, which involves the same components as the emergent literacy process, however these underlying concepts already exist with these learners and are recontextualized. That is, MS FL students already understand that a relationship exists between the speech sounds and written symbols of a language, that meaning is constructed and conveyed through these written symbols, and that schooling involves using and learning through the oral and written forms of a

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language. Students' past school experience along with their cognitive and academic development combine to create a particular situation for the L1 English MS FL student.

Significance of the Study

     As there is to date a gap in the research literature, this study contributes to the field of foreign language education (FLED) by examining an underrepresented setting (MS FL classrooms), with a focused literacy topic (FL reading and writing development), as understood through an often-silent voice (teachers' perspectives). It investigates the beliefs, knowledge, and practices of MS FL teachers' literacy-based instruction and reveals their perspectives. It seeks to additionally consider its findings with relation to the theory of emergent biliteracy (Malloy, 1998) for the MS FL setting in order to understand why this theory has not been taken up in a decade, and to explore its applicability.

Motivation for the Study

     The motivations for this study are rooted in both personal and professional experiences. As a non-native speaker of French raising her children bilingually, I have become deeply engaged in ways to help my children become biliterate as well as bilingual. Research and writings by Bialystok and Hakuta (2001), Dunn (1998), Gopnik, Meltzoff, and Kuhl (1999), Grosjean (1982), and Myles (2003) have inspired me to create opportunities for my children to use their bilingual skills because of the cognitive and social benefits of learning and knowing a second language. What is more, their biliteracy

development became an important concern as I recalled Dunn's (1998) comment: "Keeping a foreign language alive appears to be linked to the ability to read" (p. 187). How would I teach my children to read in two languages? How would I help them learn to write in two languages? I personally knew that language learning extended beyond its narrow and discrete components (e.g., knowing vocabulary, learning grammar points) to include broad and interconnected goals (e.g., using language for communication). But the parenting act of reading stories to my children led to an adjustment in my own perception of how FL reading and writing were situated in one's language learning process.

As a MS French teacher, I realized my instruction was not providing this perspective to my students. In many ways, my students were similar to my children. They were learning about the French language's oral and written systems: how to read and write the other language, and how to create personal and public meaning through their oral and written production in French. Even as my students were beginning their FL studies at a very different academic and cognitive moment than were my children, nonetheless, I had to ask myself: What can I do to help them in their journey toward biliteracy?

Middle grades education acknowledges that MS students are unique. Early adolescents are experiencing significant development changes. Recognizing these unique developmental characteristics as attributable to changes in human growth, educators have been considering the relationship between the learner's physiological changes and education programs (Caskey & Anfara, 2007) for quite some time now. Unlike

elementary students or preschoolers (see work by Connery, 2006; Lim, 1993; and Lin, 2007), the cognitive skills of older, middle grade children (ages 11-14) are more mature, yet are still not fully developed. Middle grade students are simultaneously developing abstract thought processes, the ability to reason, the ability to make principled choices, while also exploring levels of independence and self-identity at a time of intense social and emotional shifts. MS students have substantial experience with oral and written English language and with instructed language in the classroom. This is not to say that their literacy abilities are firmly in place, after all, language learning and literacy learning are lifelong endeavors (see the NCTE Principles of Adolescent Literacy Reform, NCTE, 2006, for a discussion). But there is certainly a case for positioning MS learners as being in a distinctive life moment by the time they are studying a FL in sixth, seventh or eighth grade.

As a MS French teacher, I was never really satisfied with the materials provided by the textbook publisher. The reading texts were short, edited or glossed, and the comprehension questions (typically posed in English) did not seem to assist the students in building their FL abilities because responses could be taken directly from the texts themselves. Likewise, the textbook's writing exercises resulted in an uneven experience for my students and me. Some exercises were so narrow (mechanical) that it seemed their objective was merely to keep students busy. Meanwhile other exercises were so open-ended that they overwhelmed students. This unevenness often made it difficult for me as a teacher to bridge between the two extremes particularly in light of the diverse skills the

students themselves brought to the classroom. For example, homework exercises (e.g., mechanical drills) were not challenging for the higher performing language students who understood basic parts of speech, who could easily follow exercise models, and who were already confident in the skill sets they brought to class. For the lower performing language students, who struggled in recognizing language patterns and in following the given models, this kind of learning through mechanical drills seemed disconnected; these students tended to adopt the "Did I get the answer right?" mentality in lieu of a "How do I express myself in another language" mentality. As I introduced the writing process of drafting, editing, and polishing, some students readily accepted the steps, yet others reluctantly performed the tasks. My students' individual L1 English reading and writing abilities appeared to correlate with their approach to reading and writing in French. Generally speaking, strong ELA students were strong in FL class, and weaker ELA students were weaker in FL class. I felt there was more I could do to help my students along their FL reading and writing paths, but at that time, it was not clear to me how to go about it.

I adore reading children's books, and find them to enrich the language learning experience. As I read French stories to my children each night and, over time, saw the language connections they made through stories, I started to wonder about using them in the French classroom. Such great potential seemed to exist in using children's stories with middle school students. My experience indicated that middle schoolers enjoyed listening to stories; they enjoyed being playful and sometimes silly; they enjoyed using

their imagination. My personal collection of children's books was ever growing and ready to be accessed. I was extremely excited about the prospect, and envisioned being able to provide my students with a more varied language experience, with opportunities to read and write about stories others imagined and to read and write about ones they imagined themselves. I felt there was such potential. So, I began using children's books one year. Research indicates a debate within the field regarding the use of modified (e.g., simplified, glossed) or authentic texts (Crossley et al., 2007; Maxim, 2002; Swaffar, 1985; Young, 1999) with beginning language learners. Despite the debate, I chose to use authentic children's texts because their intended audiences are native speakers, and they seemed to hold more face validity with the students themselves. I drew upon course work I had completed in integrated language arts and children's literature (K-5 audience) to frame my lessons. But the constraints of the school year (e.g., student activities, holidays, snow days, school assemblies) in addition to being obligated to follow the curriculum, led to only dabbling and inconsistent efforts on my part to make the use of authentic texts a part of my instructional materials.

Reading and writing instructional materials used in the MS FL classroom are but one part of the complex picture of language learning. The MS FL teacher herself plays an important role in deciding how, what, when, and why literacy instruction is delivered. An interest in this topic stems from my personal stance on how MS French students might learn language. Colleagues and other foreign language teacher friends seemed to think about their FL literacy instruction in terms of skills (reading and writing) and as a series

of activities or projects, whereas I contemplated the introductory level of language learning as the beginning of a long journey. Was this an unusual perspective to hold? Were my beliefs about language learning so different from those of others? If so, why? My personal beliefs and knowledge influenced the way I felt language learning at the MS level might be envisioned, could be expanded, explored, and practiced. Thus, exploring FL literacy learning became a driving interest for me.

The year I began my doctoral course work, I also began a yearlong biweekly literacy project with some eighth grade students. In that school district, all sixth grade students complete a nine-week rotation of exploratory language studies in French, Spanish, and German; the other nine-week rotation of the school year is devoted to a reading class. In this way, students and their parents are able to make a more informed decision about the Level One language course they select to study over the seventh and eighth grade years. As I was not teaching that year, a former colleague, Juliette (not her real name), kindly welcomed me into her classroom. The seventh grade students I had taught the year before were now her students. She and I discussed how to meld the project's goal of using genre exposure (e.g., reading authentic texts and producing samples of each) and explicit phonemic-graphemic awareness with the curriculum she was using. Having taught in the district, I was already familiar with the district's language program materials and expectations and could therefore more readily link my explicit literacy lessons to the textbook's vocabulary themes and grammar points. We also decided that we would evaluate student work based on the district's language

department rubrics and co-evaluated all project assignments. Every two weeks, I taught specifically crafted lessons where I made explicit connections between the English and French languages. As a group, we explored various genres of writing, including fiction, biographies, and poetry. Each week, I read aloud children's books or poetry, which served as models for the students' own creative versions of stories, poems, and rhymes. Students were encouraged to think about how to truly express themselves in another language, to go beyond merely completing an exercise.

Having taught in that school, I knew that the students actively worked on reading and writing in English through a variety of texts and media. I also knew it would be possible to draw upon those same ELA skills and experiences in French class, only with a bit more scaffolding. Here are a few examples of how we combined the students' language skills into language production focusing on reading and writing: (a) students read about a boy's birthday party, and then created their own birthday party story, which recycled already-learned vocabulary for dates, telling how old you are, and counting; (b) students brainstormed a holiday topic (e.g., snow, gifts) using an advance organizer, and then created concrete poetry; (c) students contributed to the mini-lessons on ways to create detail-filled, compound-complex sentences in French, and then incorporated this skill in the rough drafts of longer writing assignments. Through this literacy project and the shared classroom interactions, as a language teacher, I began to understand MS FL students from a different vantage; I began to comprehend how the "varied experiences children have with literacy impact how they refine and adapt their reading and writing to

new and unfamiliar experiences" (Goodman, 2007, p. 94). Students came to this French classroom having L1 English literacy skills intact (some more so than others) prior to beginning their FL studies. But, this literacy project opened up the possibilities as to how reading and writing in French could be <u>experienced</u> (Goodman, 2007) – as opposed to merely being taught – in a manner that extended well beyond the step-by-step process presented in the textbooks.

For the most part, these students were studying a FL for the first time, and those ways in which they learned English when they were much younger could also work well in their FL studies. The specific use and deliberate presentation of linguistically varied instructional experiences contribute to a student's deeper understanding of what makes a language unique. As such, it is possible to comprehend that "rich, authentic and meaningful learning experiences are the key to literacy development" (Hung, 2007, p. 268). A language's rhythms, rhymes, expressions, and cultural undertones come alive by experiencing texts. During that school year, students experienced language in many ways: (a) the development of phonemic awareness in French through focused attention on vowels, consonants, blends, and diacritical marks; (b) frequent group read alouds in order to develop listening skills and oral comprehension; (c) opportunities for independent reading (e.g., reading logs) in the FL; (d) the availability of multiple kinds of texts (e.g., magazines, children's books, retail advertisements) in the classroom; (e) assignments geared for personal expression for meaningful communication (e.g., concrete poetry, songs); and (f) differentiation in media of student products/artifacts (e.g., rhymes,

drawings). Over the course of the year, Juliette indicated that the students seemed to grow in their ability to use French to express themselves beyond what the textbook exercises required. Their written test responses and homework demonstrated the implementation of those linguistic, structural, and creative lessons we experienced together. Students were making a concerted effort to extend their writing beyond simple sentences, and began writing complex-compound sentences, varying their sentence structures, and using the French-English dictionaries on a regular basis in search of ways to expand their vocabularies. Based on comments given outside of class and through short post-project surveys, the students were beginning to appreciate that language learning entailed going beyond memorizing lists of vocabulary. They learned that language learning was a personalized experience. Language learning involves actively participating in and "owning" one's experiences in communication. It was encouraging to see students begin to embrace their foreign language studies.

As a doctoral student, I noted that a gap existed in the research. The vast majority of the FLED research studies I read for my courses were conducted in elementary or post-secondary settings. Being a MS FL teacher, I wondered why more studies did not investigate the context in which I taught. During the course of my own research, I came across Malloy's (1997, 1998) work. I immediately felt a connection with what she outlined as *emergent biliteracy theory*. To me, it seemed plausible and possible to do such work with middle school students. I felt inspired. Moreover, as a MS FL teacher, I felt represented.

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These stories are shared to put into place the motivation this researcher has for exploring the area of MS FL reading and writing instruction. In order to help students develop their FL reading and writing abilities, it is worth considering a less linear (e.g., exercise-driven) approach to accomplishing this goal. Using an experiential approach might just as effectively lead students along a path of FL reading and writing development. This shift in approaches can thereby frame the FLED professional's understanding of FL reading and writing as being a process, "a long-term undertaking" (Maxim, 2006, p. 21). Reading and writing in an FL are not merely skills to be acquired at a single moment during the course of one's language studies. Shifting viewpoints permits MS FL educators to draw upon scholarly findings from other research strands as relevant and informing sources for their biliteracy instruction practices. My beliefs, knowledge, and practices were clearly in favor of application of the theory of emergent biliteracy. But what would an investigation reveal of how other MS FL teachers conceptualized FL reading and writing instruction with their students? Would they also agree with the principles of emergent biliteracy theory? Could they envision its application in their own classrooms?

Conceptualizing FL Literacy Praxis in the MS Classroom

This study investigates MS FL teacher beliefs, knowledge, and practices regarding reading and writing instruction. It is therefore important to consider how personal beliefs and knowledge of FL reading and writing influence the MS FL teacher's

conceptualization of MS FL literacy praxis in conjunction with practices themselves. The objective is to seek the matches or mismatches that exist between the MS FL teacher's beliefs and knowledge of FL literacy and their practices and to ask why.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) examine the relationships of knowledge and practice in the classroom with regard to the conceptions of teacher learning. Considering the assumption that the more teachers "know" the "better" they are at teaching, they review the literature on teacher learning and discover that there are very different ideas of how to improve teacher education and professional development. Cochran-Smith and Lytle then present "a framework for considering various initiatives related to teacher learning," which leads to understanding that there are "very different consequences for the everyday lives of students and teachers" (pp. 249-250) as a result of this variation. The three contrasting relationships Cochran-Smith and Lytle conceptualize are "knowledge-*for*-practice," "knowledge-*in*-practice," and "knowledge-*of*-practice" (1999, p. 250, original italics).

"Knowledge-*for*-practice" is described as "[o]ne of the most prevalent conceptions of teacher learning" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 253). The underlying idea here is that teachers will be more effective if they know more (e.g., more subject matter, more pedagogy). Of course, this means that knowledge can be made explicit and assumes that a knowledge base exists for all teachers to learn and execute. Along with this idea comes the term "best practice" (Langer, 2000, 2001), a term tied to empirical

evidence of effectiveness, which presumably implies that once teachers come to know these practices, they can be easily utilized and implemented by all.

"Knowledge-*in*-practice" puts "the emphasis on knowledge in action" (p. 262). Here there is an assumption "that teaching, is to a great extent, an uncertain and spontaneous craft situated and constructed in response to the particularities of everyday life in schools and classrooms" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 262). This perspective actually elevates the teacher's practical knowledge to a higher status and seeks to articulate the tacit knowledge of the wise actions of competent professionals. Contrary to the "knowledge-*for*-practice" concept, the "knowledge-*in*-practice" concept emphasizes that "good teaching can be coached and learned (but not taught) through a reflective supervision or through a process of coaching reflective teaching" (p. 269, original parentheses).

Last, "knowledge-*of*-practice" involves viewing both knowledge generation and knowledge use as "inherently problematic" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 272), that is, always open to discussion and in itself a pedagogic act. Moreover, knowers and knowledge are also regarded as "connected to larger political and social agendas" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 274). As such, teachers are seen to be agents in and of the classroom, in and of larger educational contexts. "To generate knowledge that accounts for multiple layers of context and multiple meaning perspectives, teachers draw upon a wide range of experiences and their whole intellectual histories in and out of schools" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 275). Teacher learning does not end with self-

examination, but also includes critical introspection. Teachers should be encouraged to compose and critically analyze all elements in their classrooms (and their lives) in order to understand their classroom practices.

It has been posited that teacher beliefs are separate from knowledge and have an effect on teacher practices. Pajares (1992) draws upon Nespor's (1987) conclusions that "beliefs are far more influential than knowledge in determining how individuals organize and define tasks and problems and are stronger predictors of behavior" (Pajares, 1992, p. 311). As such, it is possible to revise the Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) framework to instead read as "beliefs-*for*-practice," "beliefs -*in*-practice," and "beliefs -*of*-practice" where the teacher's personal knowledge, experiences, and theories on learning are the primary (re)sources for decisions on classroom praxis. This retooled framework may be less static and more dynamic than first imagined because beliefs and knowledge may shift over time – an idea that will be explored more deeply in Chapter 2.

The belief-practice connection is worthy of examination, particularly when the teachers themselves conduct such introspective work: "By relating beliefs from the literature to what is actually done and observed in specific detail, participants clarify beliefs and see ways to translate the beliefs into practice" (Fanselow, 1988, p. 123). It is hoped that through an investigation on this topic via examination (observation) and participant explication (teacher questionnaires and interviews), FLED might understand how and why some MS FL teachers conceptualize, practice, and support FL reading and writing instruction in the ways they do within this context. Moreover, findings here may

reveal why the theory of emergent biliteracy has held little place in FLED to date. Based on this data and that from ensuing reading and writing research in the MS FL setting, the field will be better able to meet the needs of its MS FL teachers and learners.

Research Questions

This study investigates the beliefs, knowledge, and practices of MS FL teachers' literacy-based instruction. It seeks to additionally consider its findings with relation to the theory of emergent biliteracy (Malloy, 1998) put forward for the MS FL context. This theory positions MS FL learners as developing FL readers and writers, whose formal FL literacy development is facilitated by certain instructional experiences. In so doing, an understanding might be formed of how MS FL teachers' beliefs and knowledge, might influence their practices in conjunction with the potential for transforming emergent biliteracy theory into practice. The intent is not to track or measure the emergent biliteracy process MS students might experience. Instead, this investigation will link what MS FL teachers believe, know, and practice and then consider these findings in relation to emergent biliteracy theory. Discussion follows as to whether or not the participating MS FL teachers could espouse the emergent biliteracy theory in their classrooms. The following questions guided this research study.

1. What are the MS FL teacher's beliefs and knowledge about FL literacy-based instruction?

2. How do these MS FL teacher beliefs and knowledge of FL literacy learning influence their classroom instruction?

3. Based on findings for RQ1 and RQ2, how do MS FL teacher beliefs, knowledge, and practices align with emergent biliteracy theory (Malloy, 1998)? Is this theory likely to be reflected in practice in the MS FL setting?

Basic Assumptions

There are certain assumptions that any researcher makes prior to beginning an investigation. These include assumptions about the research setting, how research shall be conducted, what might be found, in addition to how participants might respond. The following are assumptions made prior to beginning this study:

- Most MS FL teachers have not necessarily adopted the perspective that their students are emergent readers and writers. That is, teachers tend to adhere to the curriculum and the designated textbook and other ancillaries offered by the textbook publisher, which tend to present language learning as a mechanical process (Aski, 2003, 2005; Grossman, 1990).

- Most MS FL teachers extend only so far past their comfort zone and from their own (past) literacy learning experiences in the FL and tend to teach in the ways they were taught (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Grossman, 1990; Lortie, 2002).

- Most MS FL teachers tend to underestimate their students' abilities to learn and create meaning using the FL, especially at the introductory levels of language learning, such that they tend to exclude many authentic text experiences for fear of "overloading" their students. As such, they inadvertently deny their students an enriching language learning experience in purposeful and communicative ways (Malloy, 1997).

- MS FL teachers will be forthcoming about their own FL literacy knowledge, training, experiences, practices, and interests (Errante, 2000; Lincoln, 1995; Shacklock & Thorp, 2005).

- MS FL teachers believe in and are genuinely interested in expanding the literacy and language learning opportunities and experiences of their language students (Dorfman & Cappelli, 2007; Harwayne, 2000), but may not know how to go about doing so.

- MS FL teachers will be forthcoming in discussing their schools' language programs without fear of being criticized or of being seen as criticizing the district's MS language programs (Langer, 2001 – this study assumed ELA teachers would inform researchers without fear of being criticized).

- MS FL students have achieved a grade-or age-appropriate level of literacy in their L1 English such that a general conceptualization of written language – its forms, its uses, and its purposes – already exists for the

learner. Such a conceptualization serves as background knowledge for

students studying a FL.

- MS FL students may experience either negative or positive transfer of L1

  English literacy skills to the FL. It would seem that the potential exists for

  either or both kinds of transfer to occur in this setting. It would also seem

  that it is the contexts in which the learning of reading and writing occurs

  that most influences the learner's biliteracy development (Hornberger,

  1989).

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the present research study is that it is a qualitative case study of

a small group of MS FL teachers (N=4). This means that it is impossible to generalize

from the findings herein to a larger population (Stark & Torrance, 2005). However, the

complexities rooted within individual contexts are examined. As such, deeper inquiry

with each participant in their individual settings was afforded, creating rich data.

Another limitation stems from the number of available MS French and Spanish

teachers in the particular school district where research was conducted. Out of the

district's twenty middle schools, only seventeen offer any kind of FL course, and only

eleven offer either a French or Spanish yearlong course. As Spanish is the predominant

language offered at the MS level, there were fewer potential French-teaching participants.

At the same time, despite the greater number of potential Spanish-teaching participants,

only one Spanish teacher decided to participate, which resulted in a narrower representation of teachers of this target language as well as in less data for analysis.

Another factor that impacted the potential number of participants came out of school district policy. There are actually three levels of approval in this school district: (1) the district's research review committee conducts a formal review of applications to conduct research within their schools; (2) school administrators can then be contacted via phone or e-mail, and must be provided a copy of the committee's approval letter, for consideration; and (3) the classroom teachers are then given the research recruiting materials. Thus, even after receiving approval from the district, administrators may elect to not permit their teachers to participate. The other scenario is that the district approves the research study, the administrators approve participation, and then the teachers may also elect to not participate. Only those FL teachers who received permission from administrators and who felt they had adequate time to participate in this study did so. This resulted in only one Spanish teacher and three French teachers agreeing to participate, with a participation rate of fifteen percent of the entire MS FL teacher pool (27 total) who teach a yearlong FL program in this district.

Definitions of Terms

Several terms shall be used consistently throughout this study. In the interest of maintaining a clear and common understanding of what these terms mean, they are operationally defined as follows:

- *Agency* – the perspective that people are "self-organizing, pro-active, self-regulating, and self-reflecting" (Bandura, 2006, p. 164), meaning that they contribute to their life circumstances, including their professions.

- *Beliefs* – a personal truth, which Nespor (1987, p. 318) argues has four characteristics: (1) existential presumption (things are beyond individual control), (2) alternativity (creation of an ideal situation which differs from reality), (3) affective and evaluative loading (knowledge and feelings of a domain differ but impact behavior), and (4) episodic structure (previous episodes/events color the comprehension of subsequent events).

- *Emergent Biliteracy* – a proposed pedagogical theory (Malloy, 1998) that considers MS (grades 6-8) students as actively constructing FL reading and writing abilities based on their abilities to read and write in English. FL literacy development can be pedagogically guided through extensive interaction and exposure to authentic children's texts.

- *Emergent Literacy* – a developmental theory where it is believed that both formal and informal experiences with the written and oral forms of a language prepare young children (from birth to school age) for using that language with communicative intent (Clay, 1973; Lancy, 1994).

- *Knowledge* – "It is difficult to pinpoint where knowledge ends and beliefs begin" (Allen, 2002, p. 519). Pajares (1992) suggests that belief systems and knowledge are intertwined. Research in general education reveals that

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knowledge of teaching is influenced by personal background and

experiences, experiences with school, and with formal, pedagogic

knowledge. Shulman (1986) suggested teacher knowledge be

distinguished among three categories: (a) subject matter content

knowledge; (b) pedagogical content knowledge; and (c) curricular

knowledge (pp. 9-10).

- *Literacy* – "Literacy means very different things to different people"

   (Pellegrini & Galda, 1994, p. 21). Generally, literacy is a cultural practice

   that includes encoding and decoding print, which is then used to convey a

   message of shared meaning for a group or individuals in a particular

   context (Pérez & Torres-Guzmán, 2002). In this work, literacy shall refer

   to the ability to read and write in one language with communicative intent.

   It is presumed that this ability exists on a multidimensional continuum and

   is understood to vary across time based on interactions and experience

   with texts.

Summary

Introduced in this chapter were the purpose, significance, and motivations for this

study on the beliefs, knowledge, and practices of Middle School Foreign Language

teachers as they instruct reading and writing in the MS FL classroom. Also introduced

was the conceptualization of FL literacy praxis. Basic assumptions and limitations were presented for this qualitative case study.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter one includes an introduction to the focus of the investigation, objectives, basic assumptions, and limitations. Several key terms are operationally defined to provide background information for the reader.

Chapter two reviews the literature pertinent to this study. Background is provided on teacher beliefs, knowledge, and practices. These areas are positioned in relation to theories stemming from research in ELA, SLA, and FL on teacher learning, knowing, and doing in the classroom. The unique characteristics of middle grade learners are portrayed. Malloy's (1998) grounded theory of emergent biliteracy for the MS classroom is presented as chapter five will discuss the findings of this investigation as they link to emergent biliteracy theory.

Chapter three describes how a qualitative research approach is best suited for an investigation of teacher beliefs, knowledge, and practices. A description of the research methodology is provided for all steps of data collection and analysis.

Chapter four presents participant profiles, a cross-case analysis, and a materials review. Analysis reveals the match-mismatch of the participants' FL literacy beliefs and knowledge with their practices, and shows how other influences play a role in the ways literacy instruction in the middle school foreign language classroom is constructed.

Chapter five includes a synthesis of the research findings, a discussion of pedagogical implications, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

<u>Overview</u>

This study investigates the beliefs, knowledge and practices of four MS FL

teacher's reading and writing instruction. A connection exists between teacher beliefs,

their knowledge, and their practices. But what is the nature of that relationship? As

Rankin and Becker (2006) put it: " Our study suggests rather that knowledge…is not

simply accumulated and then put into action. It is processed and filtered through layers of

experience and belief, rendering the outcome far less predictable than a simple

transmission model would suggest" (p. 366). The purpose of this chapter is to look at the

research related to teacher beliefs, teacher knowledge, literacy-based instruction, and

emergent reading and writing in the MS FL setting.

Hornberger's (1989) conceptual framework of "continua of biliteracy" is

introduced as a way of understanding the nature of becoming biliterate, in general.

Developmental and learning theories from the fields of education and psychology are

presented as background for deeper discussion of teacher beliefs and knowledge. This

review reveals the interrelatedness of theories of teaching and learning and the ways in

which these theories and teacher beliefs (Pajares, 1992; Nespor, 1987) combine to

influence FL literacy praxis. Hornberger's (1989) framework influenced the understanding of how MS FL teachers might conceptualize FL literacy-based instruction, and thus shaped the design of this study, which is detailed in Chapter 3.

Once that connection is examined, this study goes on to relate it to a theory specifically catered for the MS FL setting – emergent biliteracy theory (Malloy, 1998). The principles of Malloy's (1998) theory of emergent biliteracy are presented as background for later discussion, but briefly, this theory positions MS FL learners as developing FL readers and writers (emerging biliterates), whose formal FL literacy development is (a) based on their current abilities to read and write in English, and (b) facilitated by instructional experiences with authentic children's texts. By examining MS FL teachers' beliefs about FL literacy learning, by inquiring as to their personal and professional knowledge of this topic, and by observing how these beliefs and knowledge influence their literacy instruction, FL educators can discuss the possibilities (e.g., pedagogy, practices) within the theory of emergent biliteracy for the MS FL classroom in a more informed manner. In turn, this might lead the field to a discussion on the greater understanding of MS FL students as emerging readers and writers (emerging biliterates). A case for understanding MS students as being unique and meriting separate consideration and study is presented.

The subsequent chapter shall provide this research project's design for examining teacher perspectives on practicing literacy-based instruction through case study

methodology, while chapters four and five shall discuss the research findings and pedagogical and curricular implications.

A Continua of Biliteracy: A Heuristic

Biliteracy is the "conjunction of literacy and bilingualism" (Hornberger, 1989, p. 272). Due to the distinct traditions of each field, however, "there is a paucity of research on becoming literate in two languages, or more" (Moll, Saéz, & Dworin, 2001, p. 436). Yet a time when biliteracy can be seen worldwide (Hornberger, 2004; Hung, 2007; Moll, Saéz, & Dworin, 2001; Tabors & Snow, 2002), it is important to the bilingual and language educator's knowledge base to elucidate this complex subject. As such, heuristic devices are quite useful in fostering an understanding of those concepts they model.

Hornberger's (1989) "continua of biliteracy" is a heuristic for drawing "attention to the continuity of experiences, skills, practices, and knowledge stretching from one end of any particular continuum to the other" (Hornberger, 2004, p.156). This model implies that the more the learning contexts and the contexts of use allow language learners (ESL, EFL, or FL) to draw from across an entire continuum within each area of biliteracy (contexts, development, content, and media), the greater the chances are for their "full biliterate development and expression" (Hornberger, 1989, p. 289) to be realized. In the language classroom, this means that consistent opportunities for students to utilize and interact in the second language (with its oral and written forms) will lead to a fuller development of a learner's biliteracy abilities.

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It is difficult to represent a complex relationship accurately in a two-dimensional figure. Hornberger's model (1989, 2004) intended to capture the nested and intersecting relationships between the contexts, development, content, and media of biliteracy, however, the original representation reads in a rather linear fashion, thereby giving the reader a les than accurate understanding of her multidimensional concept. Figure 2.1 is adapted from her original work. Although this representation has its flaws in its two-dimensional form, the intersection and interplay that exists between each continuum and their relationship to biliteracy development is somewhat clearer than when presented in list form.

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                    CONTEXTS                         DEVELOPMENT
                   Micro – Macro                  Reception – Production
                   Oral – Literate                    Oral – Written
            Bi(multi)lingual – Monolingual               L1 – L2




                                    BILITERACY




                    CONTENT                              MEDIA
        Simultaneous Exposure – Successive Exposure   Minority – Majority
          Dissimilar Structures – Similar Structures  Vernacular – Literary
           Divergent Scripts – Convergent Scripts  Contextualized – Decontextualized
```
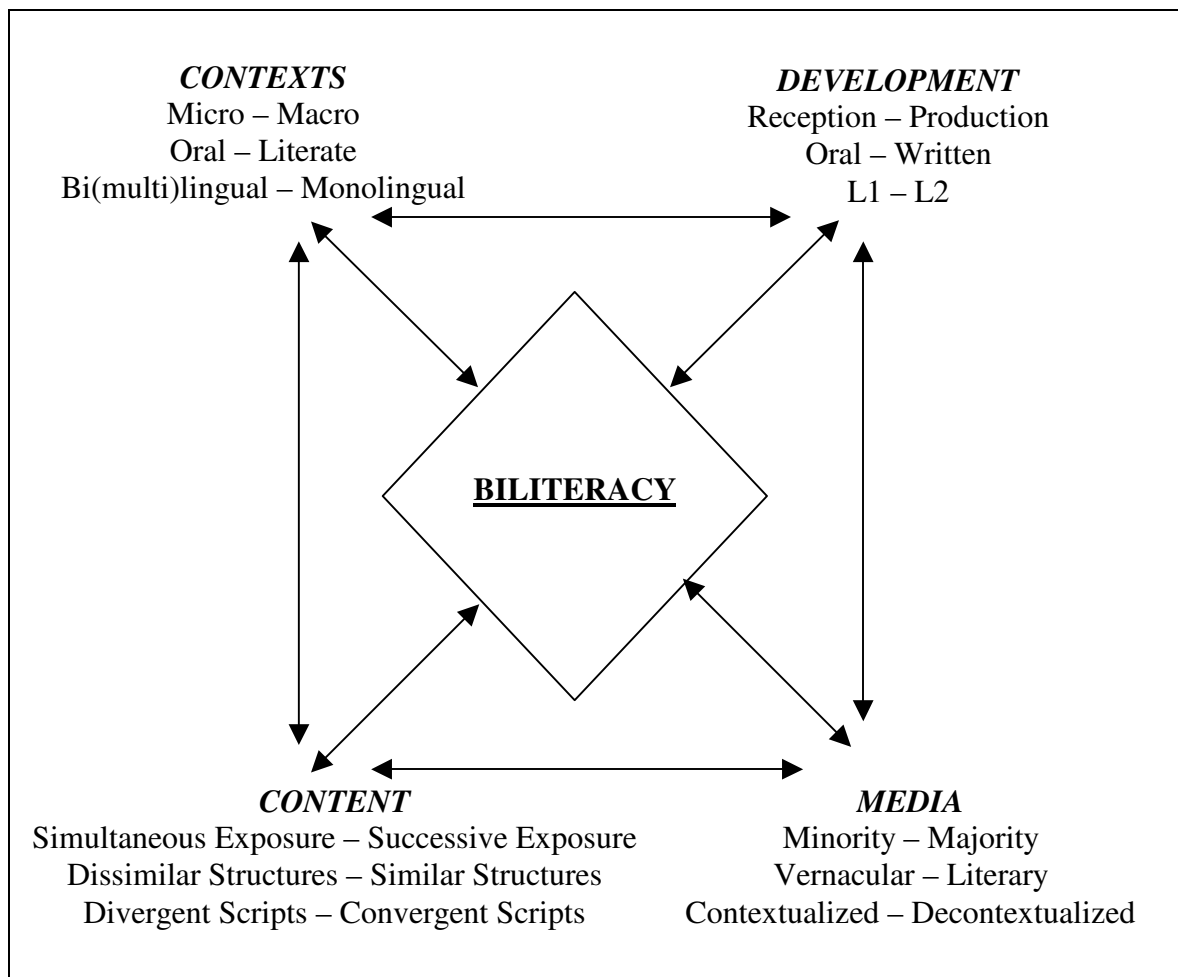
Figure 2.1: Continua of biliteracy
Adapted from Hornberger, 2004, Figure 3: The continua of biliteracy, p. 158

A strong example of this heuristic is found in Maguire's (1999) longitudinal study

of Heddie – a young Iranian girl who spoke Persian (her L1) at home, read the Koran in

Arabic (her L2), and attended a Canadian bilingual elementary school in French (her L3)

and English (her L4). Her study demonstrates "that children's biliteracy accomplishments

must be conceptualized as situated sociocultural conversations that vary across and within contexts" (p. 116).

Heddie's experiences with language and literacy moved along each continuum Hornberger (1989) proposed: as the contexts and purposes of literacy changed (school-home, Iran-Canada); as her personal literacy development evolved in her L1, L2, L3 and L4 (oral-written, reception-production); as the content of her multiliteracy varied (scholastic-religious, formal-informal); and as the media of biliteracy (divergent-convergent scripts, simultaneous-successive exposure, dissimilar-similar structures) required her to construct her socially-mediated multiliteracy. Indeed, her story, along with that of other bi(multi)lingual and bi(multi)literate individuals (Ní Dhomhnaill, 2003; Lim, 2003; Sebbar, 2003) reveals the personal and often political complexities of "life with two (or more) languages" (Grosjean, 1982, my parentheses). These stories are evidence of the multidimensionality of the continua of biliteracy because individual instances of biliteracy are best understood when considered in conjunction with all instances of biliteracy.

This conceptual framework of biliteracy honors and highlights the multiplicity of learning contexts, individual learners, and literacy sources such that the reading and writing process might be viewed as developmental, instead of necessarily linear, because such a process involves "backtracking, spurting, or criss-crossing" (Hornberger, 2004, p. 166). Whether in the ESL, EFL, or FL context, reading and writing in the L2 must be supported in various ways, using various texts, and must provide learners ample

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opportunity for self-expression over an extended period of time (Flores, 2007; Franklin, 1999; Hudelson, 1984; Lin, 2007; Schwarzer, 2001, 2003; Urzúa, 1999). Hence reading and writing in any L2 must be understood by researchers, teachers, and even students to be an ever-developing process that takes time to evolve and which must be nurtured.

As Hornberger (2004) notes, it is important for language educators to extend their knowledge base "in response to the demands of policy and practice in today's ever-evolving schools, in the US and worldwide" (p. 155). For the MS FL context, this heuristic device can assist teachers in understanding how biliteracy is fostered, in general, as well as how their individual classroom instruction supports biliteracy development. With this specific context in mind, several questions might be posed and investigated: Do MS FL teacher beliefs, knowledge, and instructional practices, generally speaking, provide students appropriate opportunities to explore the target language in a socially-mediated process wherein the students' personal experiences and abilities in L1 English are honored and utilized as a foundation for FL reading and writing development? Are students learning the FL through persistent exposure to varied authentic texts and by participating in target language activities specifically geared toward enhanced reading and writing experiences, such as storytelling and story writing? Why or why not? Or, are MS FL teacher beliefs, knowledge, and instructional practices directed toward a more rigid and linear notion of how biliteracy development proceeds with a (pre)scripted notion of how to get there?

Once teacher beliefs and knowledge of FL reading and writing have been explored, links to the theory of emergent biliteracy for the MS FL context might be explored as well: Could MS FL teachers espouse the principles of the theory of emergent biliteracy of reading and writing development? Can they envision this theory being reflected in their classroom practices? By utilizing the continua of biliteracy model, FLED will be able "to situate research, teaching, and language planning" (Hornberger, 2004, p. 155) in all of its diverse contexts.

<u>Intersections of Definitions, Philosophies, and Practices</u>

While the literature on (bi)literacy studies conducted in an ESL or EFL context abounds, a paucity of research in the FL context exists (Hung, 2007; Moll, Sáez & Dworin, 2001). Even bilingual studies, which are primarily conducted with elementary students, cannot always be applied to the MS FL setting in the U.S. due to the social and cognitive stages of the students themselves (e.g., five-year olds are rather different from thirteen-year olds), or because they consider the situation of a language minority group within the academic construct of a language majority (e.g., heritage language speakers in mainstream North American, English-dominated classrooms and schools) (Flores, 2007; Franklin, 1999; Moll, Sáez & Dworin, 2001; Pérez & Torres-Guzmán, 2002; Tabors & Snow, 2002). The research on the reading and writing development process of MS FL students is nearly non-existent. Thus, the majority of literature addresses only one of two areas critical to this study: FL literacy instruction or MS students. This served to make

the theoretical frameworks for this study necessarily diverse. This section presents those key concepts, theories, and philosophies that have bearing on this investigation. They are: reading and writing in L1 and L2, emergent literacy, whole language literacy praxis in L1 and L2, biliteracy, MS students, teacher beliefs, theories of human agency, and emergent biliteracy theory for the MS FL context.

Reading and Writing in L1 and L2

Whether one reads in an alphabetic or phonographic system (where characters represent a set of sounds), or a logographic-syllabic system (where characters represent words or syllables) (Bernard, 1999, Birch, 2007), reading is the personalized process of translating these visuals into meaning that is socially and culturally relevant. This is to say that reading is a phenomenon involving the connection between graphology and phonology (Emmitt, 1998) in order to produce meaning as it links the spoken and written word. It is generally agreed upon that reading is a process involving such components as: phonological awareness, word reading, word knowledge, and comprehension (Adams, 1994, 1999; August, Calderón, & Carlo, 2002), in addition to cognitive processes such as memory (short- and long-term), learned skills (e.g., skim, scan), and strategies (e.g., read for gist, read for details) (Phakiti, 2003). Even with explicit instruction, reading is an ability that takes years to hone in one's L1, let alone in one's L2.

Writing "is more than the mere transcription of speech" (Omaggio Hadley, 1993, p. 290). Writing coveys meaning through encoded messages. But "the mastery of writing

requires an understanding of the purpose and nature of symbolic representation" (Pérez & Torres-Guzmán, 2002, p. 37) as socially mediated. Omaggio Hadley (1993) suggests that writing in the FL classroom be viewed as "a continuum of activities that range from the more mechanical or formal aspects of 'writing down' on the one end to the more complex act of composing on the other" (p. 291). This idea is echoed in Shafrir's (1999) distinction between the acquisition and development of writing skills, where acquisition begins in the early school years and development occurs in adolescence and adulthood, with the process often continuing throughout one's life. In this way, writing might be understood to develop through fundamental beginnings and advance through practice aimed at communicating a myriad of messages with varying intents for multiple audiences.

Elbow (2004) challenges educators to think about talking and writing (learner output) as the way that students learn because they are psychologically and physically involved in the meaning-making process. Being active in hypothesis making and hypothesis adjustment, in fact, is what he suggests leads the active mind toward clarity of meaning. He submits that when students have more writing opportunities, they will be more attentive to how they read. If extended to FLED, FL writing exercises should also help FL learners in their FL reading tasks. As instructed SLA uses both writing-as-process and writing-as-product approaches (Curtain & Pesola, 1994; Shrum & Glisan, 2000), there are opportunities for FL students to "focus on form" and to "focus on meaning" in the FL. Past FL writing studies have examined process and product oriented

approaches, genre instruction, story writing, as well as writing for communication or academic purposes (Reichelt, 1999). Research suggests that it is through a combination of varied purposes, tasks, and goals that students will be assisted in moving along the "continua of biliteracy." But where does such instruction begin, and how is it sustained?

There has been debate over the years in SLA as to whether problems students encounter in L2 literacy are due to the Linguistic Threshold Hypothesis (LTH) – stating that a certain linguistic ability must first be achieved in order to read in the L2 – or the Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis (LIH) – positing that one's reading performance in L2 relies largely on one's L1 reading ability (Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995; Clarke, 1980; Lee & Schallert, 1997; Pichette, Segalowitz, & Connors, 2003). Bernhardt and Kamil (1995) and Carrell (1991) posit that problems stem from some combination thereof. As such, FLED (in the MS setting) often tends to rely on the transfer of existing L1 English abilities, and certainly takes the stance that, at beginning levels of language study, learner comprehension (or lack thereof) is due to a lack of linguistic knowledge (LTH). Hence, the focus of instruction has generally been on learning vocabulary, grammatical structures, and idiomatic expressions primarily through drills as seen in textbooks (Aski, 2003; Swaffar, 1991). This has led some beginning level FL instruction to take a more mechanical approach.

But recently, some proposals have been made to introduce more complex texts at the introductory level of language instruction in the post-secondary setting (Maxim, 2006; Shook, 1996, 1997). This suggestion implies that in lieu of separating the

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instruction of language from that of literature – as is often the practice in post-secondary classrooms – from early on, students should be allowed to see the integration of texts and communicative language and how they are "interwoven into larger social practices" (Kern & Schultz, 2005). This suggestion seems reasonable for the MS FL setting as well if consideration is given to the age of the learner when selecting texts.

Research across the disciplines of ELA, ESL, and SLA suggests that reading and writing skills support one another (Grabe, 2001; Hudelson, 1984; Jabbour, 2001; Tchudi & Tchudi, 1999) because readers see examples of language in use and writers develop important writing skills through their understanding of the reading experience. As Pérez and Torres-Guzmán (2002) put it: "If children learn to write, they will learn to read; but it is through extensive reading that their writing will develop sophistication" (p. 40). It is through interaction with quality texts that language students see models of different genres, uses of grammar, conventional spelling, and so forth, thereby expanding their understanding and knowledge of literacy in the L2. Indeed, there seems to be general consensus on what "good writers" do when composing, or how they might differ from "poor writers," with regard to levels of planning, rescanning, and revising (Omaggio Hadley, 1993). Likewise, "good readers" tend to utilize certain strategies and skills (Elbow, 2004; Phakiti, 2003) that "poor readers" neglect to use. All students need guidance in learning the what, how, when, and why of biliteracy practices. As such, our goal as biliteracy educators is clear as Belcher and Hirvela (2001) declare: "Our job, as teachers and researchers, is to help students learn to link these literacies in ways that are

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empowering to them as readers and writers and effective within the discourse realms or communities in which they use them" (p.3). In order to assist students in becoming biliterate, as teachers and researchers, we must first examine those influences (teacher beliefs and knowledge) that affect classroom practices. Such an evaluation will lead to a better understanding of the ways in which biliteracy development is promoted in the classroom. In short, we need to better understand why and how MS FL teachers can move their students along the "continua of biliteracy."

Emergent Literacy

In a literate society, the concept of emergent literacy (EL) can exist. In L1 English literate societies, this concept places the beginning of literacy learning shortly after birth (Lancy, 1994; Malloy, 1997; Wardle, 2006). This viewpoint proposes that literacy begins long before formal reading and writing instruction starts. It also posits that the language skills of reading, writing, and speaking are interrelated and occupy every waking moment of a child's life (Lancy, 1994). Dickinson and Beals (1994) describe the experience as such: "Learning to associate print with speech sounds is a major hurdle in early literacy development, but reading also demands a lot from children's oral language resources" (p.30). Additionally, the EL perspective prefers not to classify children as being "readers or non-readers," but rather "to consider their literacy development as being on a continuum of increasing competence" (Strickland & Cullinan, 1994, p. 427). This developmental process is a key facet of this perspective on literacy learning. What is

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more, the EL perspective states that, "over time and with appropriate stimulation, the competencies required for reading and writing emerge" (Wilson, 2002, Defining Emergent Literacy section, para. 2). This perspective is being promoted to parents and caregivers in child care and child development facilities through print, media, and Internet sources, and through national programs such as Head Start (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2006) because links between children's early exposure to literacy and school readiness (improved performance) in Kindergarten have been shown when compared to those children without such exposure.

The three notions that make this EL perspective particular also make them applicable to the study at hand: (1) notions of language integration; (2) notions of stimulation – through exposure to language through a variety of means as well as production thereof; and (3) notions of continual growth, where competence will increase over time. Are MS FL teachers familiar with this perspective of FL literacy learning? Do they think it could be applicable to their students? The clear limitations to directly applying this theory to the MS FL setting include the ages of the learners (11-14, not 0-5) and the fact that MS FL students typically have none to limited oral language resources in the target FL language upon which to necessarily fall back. Hence, additional learning theories and practices must be considered when framing the MS FL biliteracy instruction.

Whole Language Literacy Praxis in L1 and L2

Atwell (1998, 2002), Calkins, (1986, 2001) and Egawa (n.d.) all emphasize the ways that writing can support the development of reading skills as well as how writing helps develop thinking and learning in general in the L1 English classroom. As students expand their repertoires of writing experiences (through varied genre exposure and communicative intent) their mastery over form and content increases alongside the development of personal voice and facility of self-expression. Over time, students begin to participate in diverse discourse communities to become more accomplished in a variety of social worlds (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Egawa, n.d.; Walker, 1998). In general, this thinking echoes the basis of whole language instructional practices, which are practiced in the ELA, ESL, and FL settings and whose perspectives align with the continua of biliteracy model.

Whole language (WL) in ELA instruction is described as a "professional theory in practice" (Rigg, 1991, p. 523), a "perspective-in-practice" (Edelsky, 1993), or a "philosophy about teaching and learning" (Schwarzer, 2001) that uses a holistic approach to student-centered learning. Based on the work of Dewey (1997/1910) and Piaget (1972) and on research conducted in the 1970s and 1980s on (a) learning development, (b) oral language development, (c) reading development, (d) writing development, and (e) alternative evaluation (Schwarzer, 2001), this philosophy could be appropriately applied in a myriad of settings and with learners of various ages because students are viewed to be active participants in the learning process. Teachers are seen as facilitators of this

learning by creating an environment where students' backgrounds, skills, and abilities are honored, and where opportunities abound for language to be used for the construction of meaning.

Another element to this perspective/philosophy is that those teachers who use whole language approaches are reflective practitioners, and in effect, are action researchers who, alongside their students, are deeply engaged in critical examination of their classroom learning. Simply put: "Whole language isn't something one *does*; whole language is something one *believes in* and something that guides one's research, one's learning, and one's teaching" (Strickland & Strickland, 1996, p. 19, original italics). Watson (1994) envisioned a model of WL philosophy to be made up of three non-hierarchical categories: (a) practice, (b) theory making, and (c) belief formation (p. 603) (see Figure 2.2). In this representation, beliefs are inherently tied to philosophy and action, to perspectives and practices. This WL philosophy model is important to this study as it clearly depicts that a relationship exists between teacher beliefs, knowledge (theory), and practices. But what this model also depicts that remains to be explored in the MS FL classroom is the level of reflection that its teachers apply to their literacy practices. In what ways do MS FL teachers reflect upon the what, how, and why of their reading and writing instruction?

Inactive

THEORY

Active

Inquiry

Inquiry

Evidence

Unexamined

BELIEF

Examined

Inquiry

Borrowed

PRACTICE

Owned
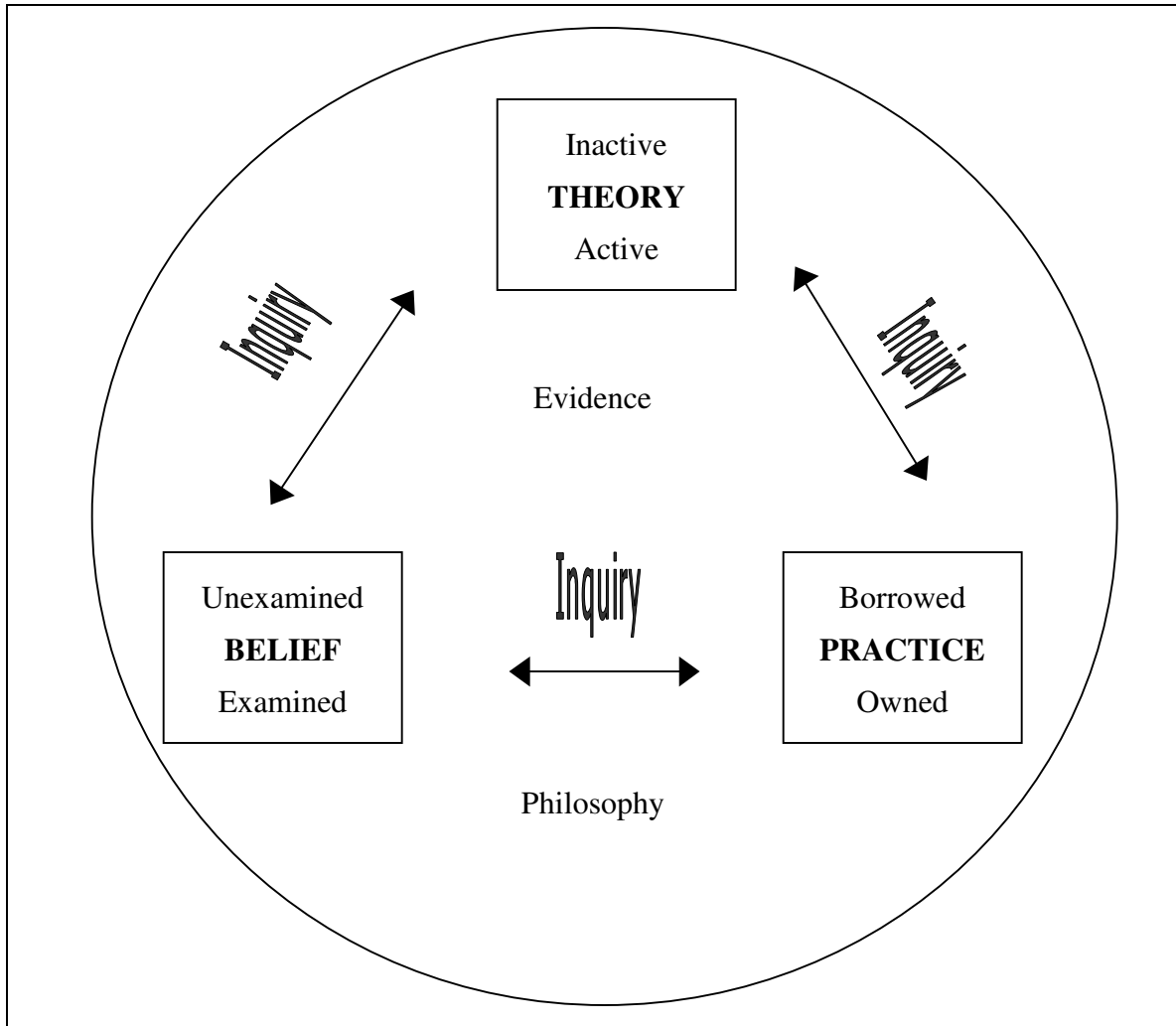
Philosophy

Figure 2.2: Whole language philosophy model
Adapted from Watson (1994), Developing a whole language philosophy, p. 603.

WL approaches have been studied with elementary level ESL learners (Edelsky,

Draper & Smith, 1983; Lim & Watson, 1993), and with elementary level FLES (foreign

language in the elementary setting) learners (Redmond, 1994). Conclusions indicated that

an extended, contextualized, meaning-filled curriculum offered the greatest learning rewards for teacher and student. In the FL post-secondary classroom, an approach has been developed based on eight theoretical principles grounded in definitions of WL classes (Schwarzer, 2001, 2003; Schwarzer & Luke, 2001). These principles are: (1) Authenticity; (2) Inquiry and negotiation-based curriculum; (3) Holistic perspective; (4) Developmental perspective; (5) Alternative assessment; (6) Social perspective; (7) Multicultural education; and (8) Critical pedagogy. But because WL approaches in the FL classroom have only been studied with either elementary students (Redmond, 1994) or with post-secondary language learners (Schwarzer, 2001, 2003), MS FL students have been bypassed. This clearly leaves this particular group of learners underrepresented in the literature.

Biliteracy

If literacy is the ability to read and write in one language (Elbow, 2004), then biliteracy is the ability to read and write in two languages. Biliteracy, as Hornberger (1989) discusses, moves along a continuum, resulting in differing abilities and proficiencies at various points in time based upon varying experiences and interactions with the L2. In their work on an integrated Spanish-English biliteracy approach to instruction, Pérez and Torres-Guzmán (2002) use the term biliteracy to mean "the acquisition and learning of the decoding and encoding of and around print using two linguistic and cultural systems in order to convey messages in a variety of contexts" (p.

60). As such, being bilingual and biliterate inherently involves being bicultural, for the meaning in oral and written messages is derived and created by their social and cultural contexts.

There is continued discussion on the politics of bilingualism and biliteracy here in the U.S. and abroad, and on the identities of bilingual-biliterate authors (de Courtivron, 2003; Grosjean, 1982). For the purposes of this investigation, sociopolitical influences shall not be the focus. [See Street (1995, 1999) for a discussion of ideological versus autonomous models of literacy, which can also be connected to models of bilingual education; see Freire (1993) and Moraes (1996) for a discussion of dialogic pedagogy which, when linked to the process of literacy, can be understood to be "an endless as well as a social and political process" (Moraes, 1996, p. 103); see Cope and Kalantzis (1993) for a discussion of genre theory and access to varying discourse communities (power and authority structures) through literacy experiences.] However, I would like to recognize that the sociopolitics behind educational administration do influence this study to the extent that national and regional issues impact local decision making on the academic programs offered in the schools. In other words, a school district's bilingual and FL program offerings anywhere in the U.S. are related to the localized "atmosphere" and region's situated history.

Multiple theories of learning, including schema theory (Anderson, 1994; Bransford, 1994; Birch, 2007; Rumelhart, 1980), cognitive/metacognitive theories (Carrell, Gjadusek & Wise, 1998; Garner, 1994; Light & Littleton, 1994; Paris, Lipson &

Wixson, 1983; Pressley, Johnson, Symons, McGoldrick & Kurita, 1989; Schoonen, Hulstijn & Bossers, 1998; Shraw & Moshman, 1995), and Vygotskian sociocultural theory (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978), might ground both ELA and SLA classroom practices. They also ground bilingual/biliteracy instruction. In this light, the development of reading and writing in L1 and L2 recognizes the internal and external processes an individual experiences with print in addition to the sociocognitive facet of reading events (Heath, 1983), where two languages and two culture systems are integral to linguistic and cognitive development. In a bilingual context, both the classroom and daily uses of literacy are understood to impact literacy development in both the L1 and the L2 (see Gadsden, 1999; Rowe, 1994; Stevenson, Lee & Schweingruber, 1999). As such, it is through the exploration of reading, writing, and oral expression as mediating social functions in and out of the classroom that children's biliteracy will flourish. Hornberger's (1989) conceptual framework is useful in understanding how all of these personal and collective variations of actors and actions intermingle in complex manners to bring about L2 reading and writing development. What lacks in the literature is the distinct connection between MS FL programs and theories of biliteracy.

Middle School Students

     As the setting of this study is the MS FL classroom, it is important to know what distinguishes this group of learners. Many have noted the particularities of the students at

this level, and have suggested that this age group exhibits many advantages (Anders & Pritchard, 1993; Met, 1996).

In general, MS students display "unique social and psychological characteristics" (Anders & Pritchard, 1993, p. 612) that can be optimized for learning. Just as Piaget's (1972) theory of cognitive development plays a role in elementary level bilingual education (Pérez and Torres-Guzmán, 2002), his work is often cited when understanding and qualifying this period in human development as "unique" for his work recognizes that developmental stages occur in early adolescence. At this stage, students fall between the stages of concrete and formal operations (Anders & Pritchard, 1993; Caskey & Anfara, 2007; Met, 1996). This means that MS students are able to shift between inductive reasoning and what Piaget termed "hypothetico-deductive reasoning" (Bee, 2000, p. 188), where possibilities and unseen options are considered as a means for deriving logical outcomes. When connected to FL learning, students are then able to "de-center" themselves by no longer having to rely on observable facts or specific experiences, meaning that they can imagine (hypothesize) what life in another country and culture using another language could actually be like. This cognitive ability then opens their minds to understanding the similarities and differences that exist between groups of people throughout the globe – one of the goals of The National Foreign Language Standards (National Standards In Foreign Language Education Project [NSFLEP], 1996) – and the ways that FL learning influences their understanding of other subject areas (e.g., ELA, social studies) and the world in general. As such, we can

conceive of the MS FL student as constructing her or his language learning, because Piaget's concept of development frames children as "active thinkers" who are "constantly trying to construct new strategies and advanced understandings" (Bee, 2000, p. 187). Using the perspective of the MS student as actively employing varying degrees of cognitive and social engagement permits FL educators to understand the importance of adapting MS FL instructional practices to meet these students' particular needs. Furthermore, this perspective coupled with the MS philosophy of developing positive student affect in a supportive and challenging academic environment implies "careful attention to the what and the how of instructional practice" (Verkler, 1994, p. 20).

The National Middle School Association was begun 1973 and is the only national educational association exclusively dedicated to those in the middle level grades (National Middle School Association [NMSA], n.d., About NMSA, para. 1). Among their goals is providing "vision, knowledge, and resources" (NMSA, 2004, para. 1) to all who serve young adolescents. They state the importance of middle level educational needs in the following manner:

> …many middle level students receive an inadequate education. National attention has focused almost exclusively on the early grades in the belief that giving students a strong start would put them on a path to success. More recently, policymakers have sought to improve high school education by raising graduation requirements and aligning curricula to better prepare students for college and careers. Yet the United States still does not have a cohesive national policy for the middle grades, which represent one-third of a student's K-12 education. (NMSA, 2006, p.1)

Many educators, administrators, and psychologists understand this stage of the life cycle to be special and worthy of targeted attention.

Anders and Pritchard (1993) assert that MS ELA curriculum should emphasize the "recursive nature" (p. 612) of language development through the integration of all forms of language (speaking, listening, reading and writing), a notion echoed by authors such as Harwayne (2000), Harvey and Goudvis (2000), Taberski (2000), and essentially by WL practitioners (Strickland & Strickland, 1996). Moje, Young, Reading and Moore (2000) promote adolescent literacy instruction from an ecological stance, where listening, speaking, reading, and writing are intermingled through interpersonal and personal dimensions such that adolescents are able to relate their literacy learning to the world in which they live. Some MS educators have proposed a way to remedy concerns over reading literacy in the ELA classroom by increasing reading instruction, reading opportunities (e.g., designated self-selected reading times), reading comprehension checks (oral and written), as well as by increasing the number of trained reading teachers available for students (Humphrey, 2002). Researchers and practitioners in ELA see a necessity to renew focus on the literacy needs of adolescent learners in ways that are socially, cognitively, and personally relevant, and in ways that ask students to be actively involved in their learning be it through interdisciplinary connections or analytical critique. It is only logical that similar focus be given in the FL classroom as well.

When carried to the FL context, research indicates that FL learners need vast and varied exposure to the FL in order to begin to move along the continua of biliteracy.

However, the MS context is unique because of time and L1-FL language skills. First, the timeframe in which students are expected to begin their bilingual-biliteracy learning is quite condensed. As students are no longer in a self-contained classroom for the entire school day for the duration of the school year, FL instruction in the MS context is constrained by the number of minutes per week students attend class. Second, for the majority of MS students, this is their first exposure to formal instruction (oral or written) in another language. Reading and writing in L1 English "will, of course, give access to new lexis and syntax, but this is layered on a foundation of native oral fluency which is normally lacking in the FL student" (Maun, 2006). However, by expanding upon the WL and EL ideas as a way to pedagogically support FL learning (and of reading and writing development in particular) through approaches with which students are already familiar, it is possible to understand MS FL students as unique, active participants in the construction of their own FL reading and writing development process and language learning experience, who are in need of guided interactions with the target language. But what do MS FL teachers believe and know about emergent literacy, biliteracy, and whole language? Do these theories and perspectives influence their instructional practices? This study investigates MS FL teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices, as this is the first among many steps to devising FL literacy curricula and appropriate MS pedagogy.

Links Between Teacher Beliefs and Practices

It is commonly agreed upon that teachers' beliefs bear on their classroom instruction (Bell, 2005; Dewey, 1997/1910; Laminack, 1998; Lacorte, 2005; Linek et al., 2006; Pajares, 1992; Rankin & Becker, 2006): "Few would argue that the beliefs teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgments, which, in turn, affect their behavior in the classroom" (Pajares, 1992, p. 307). Conversations on beliefs intertwine such words as attitudes, values, opinions, ideology, perspectives, conceptions, and personal theories (Pajares, 1992, p. 309), and as such, have led to confusion primarily on the distinction between beliefs and knowledge. Because of the constant interplay between beliefs and knowledge, scholars have found it difficult to separate them for the purposes of investigation. Pajares (1992) provides a distinction between beliefs and knowledge: beliefs are based on evaluation and judgment, while knowledge is based on objective fact. While knowledge may be gained through readings or course work for example, and is thereby more easily altered, beliefs, on the other hand, tend to stay fixed until a "gestalt shift" (p. 325) occurs that initiates a reassessment process. But there is still much discussion as to whether beliefs and knowledge can ever truly be examined and understood in isolation.

Several studies have sought to link teacher beliefs and instructional practices in both the ELA and FL classroom settings, primarily with pre-service or entry-year teachers, in hopes of (a) ameliorating teacher education programs (Bell, 2005), or (b) encouraging teacher self-reflection as a tool for improving classroom instruction (Harste

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& Burke, 1980; Lacorte, 2005; Rankin & Becker, 2006). Langer's (2000, 2001) study focuses on the literacy (reading and writing in English) achievement (based on standardized tests) of middle and high school students in lower and higher performing schools in the U.S. over a period of five years, and how the professional lives of teachers supported student achievement. She found that the "overriding contributor to success was the whole-scale attention to students' higher literacy needs and development throughout the curriculum, which shaped what students experienced on a day-to-day basis in their regular classrooms" (p. 877). Her data suggest that the following factors play an important role in student achievement: (a) teacher perspectives on pedagogy and on students' abilities; (b) the level of support teachers receive (e.g., school/district support, professional organizations, none); and (c) teachers' faith in their own abilities to engender change. (Concepts of human agency shall be discussed later in this chapter.)

Linek, Sampson, Raine, Klakamp, and Smith (2006) investigated the development of literacy beliefs and practices with pre-service reading specialization teachers in a field-based program. Using a Philosophical Orientation to Literacy Learning (POLL) questionnaire administered as a pre-, mid-, and post-data instrument, their analysis reveals that professional development (e.g., course work, seminars, mentoring meetings) in addition to classroom experience can shift teacher perspectives. They noted "cognitive and experiential dissonance are obvious in pre-service teacher comments and essential to confronting one's beliefs and acknowledging the necessity of modification for instructional effectiveness" (p. 207). Recalling the suggested reconceptualized Cochran-

Smith and Lytle (1999) framework (*beliefs*-for-practice, *beliefs*-in-practice, *beliefs*-on-practice), it seems plausible that any "cognitive and experiential dissonance" would allow MS FL teachers to move between these beliefs-and-practice concepts. Indeed, this is as Pajares (1992) suggested. But is there a difference in the level of dissonance required for less experienced and veteran teachers in order to change their beliefs?

On occasion, research has looked beyond the beliefs of the pre-service or entry-year teacher. Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver, and Thwaite's (2001) study examined eighteen experienced ESL teachers in Australia in order to "discover the relationships between teachers' thinking and actions" (p. 470). Through observations and interviews, the researchers suggest that despite individual differences in classroom practices and "personal dispositions that guide it, there appears to be a collective pedagogy wherein a widely adopted classroom practice is, from their perspective, an expression of a *specific* and largely distinctive set of principles" (p. 496, original italics). It was presumed that a "sense of plausibility" (p. 496) was the result of the language teachers' actions and their pedagogic rationale evolving "in constant inter-relation" (p. 496). Principles uncovered by their study include: (a) accounting for individual differences, (b) enabling students to remember and recall new information, and (c) optimizing the learning environment. Despite various practices implemented by teachers that could be categorized under one principle or another, or even multiple principles, the researchers felt that the data revealed that "*as a collective* there is an underlying and consistent pattern between the ways they think about their work and the ways in which they act in the language class" (p. 496,

original italics), but that experience does generate individual variation in pedagogy. Does a similar collective pattern of beliefs, knowledge and practices exist for the MS FL teacher? How do individual variations in pedagogy influence literacy-based instructional practices? Knowing that teacher beliefs and attitudes influence their instruction (Bell, 2005; Lacorte, 2005; Pajares, 1992; Watson, 1994), this study considers the "perspective-in-practice" viewpoint, the teachers' perspective of FL literacy-based instruction in the MS classroom.

Based on the literature, it appears that there is still much to understand as to how an instructor's beliefs and knowledge influence her biliteracy instructional practices. Figure 2.3 depicts my interpretation of the complex interplay of the elements involved in biliteracy development including, an instructor's beliefs, knowledge, and practices. From this graphic depiction, it is understandable that more research is required in this area in order to better understand the nature of the relationship that exists between biliteracy instruction and biliteracy instructor.

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │   Biliteracy    │
                    │   Instructor    │
                    └─────────────────┘
                             │
┌──────────────┐    ┌─────────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐
│   Beliefs    │    │   Biliteracy    │    │   Theories   │
│  Knowledge   │◄--►│  Development    │◄--►│   Methods    │
│  Practices   │    │                 │    │  Materials   │
└──────────────┘    └─────────────────┘    └──────────────┘
                             │
                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │   Biliteracy    │
                    │  Instruction    │
                    └─────────────────┘
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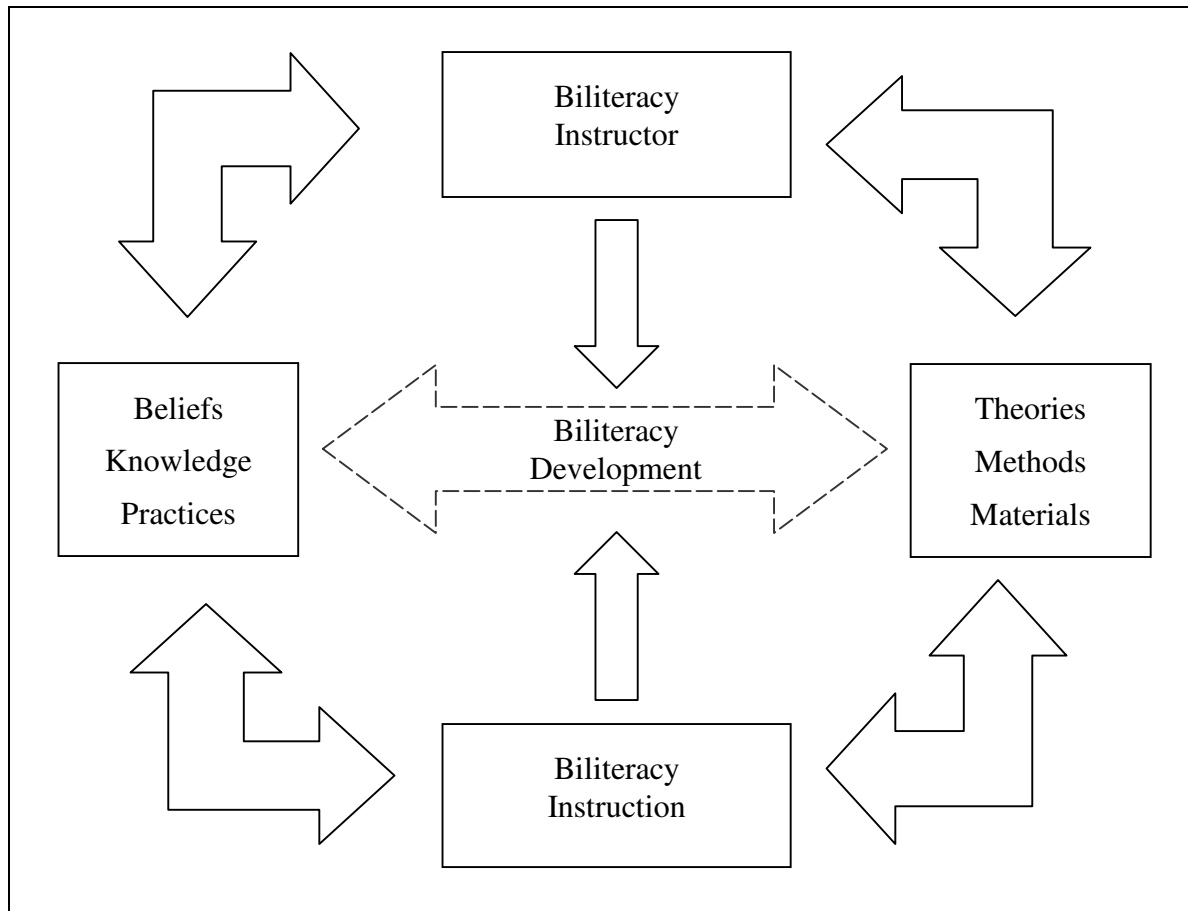
Figure 2.3: Conceptualization of the interplay of biliteracy development

Theories of Learning and Human Agency

　　　　Human agency is a concept that philosophers have explored for quite some time.

This concept rejects the notion that humans are merely products of their environments or

of any deterministic processes "[b]ecause judgments and actions are partly self-

determined," and therefore "people can effect change in themselves and their situations

through their own efforts" (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175). Bandura (1989) explains that human agency has been conceptualized in several ways: as autonomous agency, mechanical agency, or emergent interactive agency. Autonomous agency repudiates "any role of self-influence in causal processes;" mechanical agency is "an internal instrumentality through which external influences operate mechanistically on action, but it does not itself have any motivative, self-reflective, self-reactive, creative, or self-directive properties;" and emergent interactive agency recognizes that persons make contributions to their own actions and motivations within a "model of reciprocal causation," where "action, cognitive, affective, and other personal factors, and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants" (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175).

How does the concept of human agency connect with MS FL teachers' literacy-based instruction? Firstly, it is possible to make connections between these three conceptualizations and broad categories on theories of learning. Autonomous agency might be linked with behaviorism, mechanical agency with cognitivism, and emergent interactive agency might be linked with social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory recognizes both the mental and affective facets that make us human. Furthermore, it is differentiated from other theories of learning in that it values observational learning (modeling) and intrinsic reinforcements (rewards) (Bee, 2000). With this understanding, it is possible to view how MS FL teachers' personal language learning experiences as well as their professional knowledge base may be more deeply or less deeply tied to one or more of these conceptualizations of agency. Secondly, "people's beliefs about their

capabilities to exercise control over events that affect their lives…function as an important set of proximal determinants of human motivation, affect, and action" (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175). In other words, because self-efficacy beliefs influence goal setting and levels of commitment, if MS FL teachers self-appraise their FL literacy-based instruction capabilities as low or limited, their commitment to such instruction will reflect such a belief. Likewise, "a high sense of efficacy fosters cognitive constructions of effective actions, and cognitive reiteration of efficacious courses of action strengthens self-perceptions of efficacy" (Bandura, 1989, p. 1176). This is consonant with Langer's (2001) findings where ELA teachers' confidence in their own abilities to engender change influenced their classroom actions.

Applications of sociocultural theory in the language classroom also recognize that agency matters (Donato, 2000; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). "That is, learners bring to interactions their own personal histories replete with values, assumptions, beliefs, rights, duties, and obligations" (Donato, 2000, p. 46). For the purpose of this study, we might replace the word "learners" with "MS FL teachers" in order to understand how instructors' agency also influences the language classroom: "That is, *MS FL teachers* bring to interactions their own personal histories replete with values, assumptions, beliefs, rights, duties, and obligations." Langer's (2001) study found that the more successful schools fostered the belief in students' abilities, and in teachers' capabilities (agency) by providing a supportive context of literacy learning for students and professional growth for teachers (e.g., work groups). Such "bidirectionality" (Bandura,

1989, p. 1176), where perceived self-efficacy and cognitive simulations affect each other, implies that teacher agency plays an important role in FL classroom literacy-based instruction.

Grounded Emergent Biliteracy Theory in the MS FL Classroom

The goal of SLA is bilingualism (Pavelenko & Lantolf, 2000). One of the goals of instructed SLA is biliteracy. Researchers have proposed multiple theories in attempting to explain how learners might achieve these two goals. Mary Ellen Malloy (1998) used the term "emergent biliterate" in her doctoral dissertation on grounded MS emergent biliteracy theory. Put simply, this theory takes the perspective that MS FL learners, who already have a foundation in L1 English literacy, are in the process of becoming literate in another language. As developing readers and writers in another language, these students are called "emerging biliterates." It is proposed that the FL studies of middle schoolers can be enhanced through extensive interactions with target language children's texts serving as linguistic and structural models (similar to their L1 English experiences as emerging literates) along with other pedagogically guided instruction.

As teacher-researcher, Malloy (1998) used discourse analysis to examine the classroom interactions she had with her MS German students at two K-8 Catholic schools in Ohio during the course of several years. Her data included classroom interactions where students explored language and cross-cultural differences via German children's picture books and one cultural evening with the community at large. Their FL classroom

literacy work, as she called it, was social in nature, included collaborative negotiations at

times, and integrated the students' existing L1 English oral language, reading and writing

skills, and background knowledge with their ever expanding German oral language,

reading and writing skills, and cultural knowledge.

She describes two special circumstances that made her research possible. Firstly,

she was completely in charge of her curriculum. There were no state or school mandates

imposed upon her. She was not "teaching to the future" per se; that is, she was not

preparing her students for the next level of German study at the high school (where her

MS students would most likely attend) because German was not even offered there.

Secondly, her elementary level colleagues were researching the use of children's

literature in the classroom. They encouraged her to consider using children's books and

even invited her to a children's literature workshop:

> That session will remain with me forever. Chris [ ] proceeded to pick up a
> beautiful children's book, show it to us, ask us to tell her about the cover,
> open it, and begin reading it with us….My head started spinning, and I
> reached for a pen and paper….I could hear how basic phrases repeated
> themselves, enabling comprehension, and I realized this textual fact would
> make the teaching and comprehending of a German storybook just as
> accessible. It was also clear that I, an adult, was not put off in the least by
> a children's book, on the contrary was mesmerized by it. Children's
> picture books, as I was to continue realizing the more I used them, are
> incredibly sophisticated art forms with interesting and useful language,
> which reader-listeners come to really want to repeat and learn and make
> their own. (p. 120)

This workshop was life changing for Malloy. She had an epiphany, and never looked

back. However, some adjustments were necessary she said "since my readers are learners

of their L2" (p. 121). What was paramount was that she "had finally made the mental move of realizing how such an activity could actually be done" (p. 121).

As she began purchasing more and more children's books, she felt it necessary to create the four basic criteria she would use in choosing picture books. Briefly, these are: (a) the author, language, and publishing company should be German; (b) the language should be contemporary and pertain to the images used; (c) the images/pictures should be high quality artwork that reveal cultural differences between the U.S. and Northern Europe; and (d) the character(s) should be people going about their typical European activities (pp. 125-130). Sharing the criteria specifically for selecting children's books is clearly quite helpful to the field. Prior to this, only generic selection criteria had been offered for choosing textbooks and other curriculum materials for K-8 FL students (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004).

Malloy's (1998) social action perspective in a highly situated setting posited the need for expanded FL programs offered to students throughout the U.S. as being beneficial to this age group of learners (adolescents aged 11-14), to the students' outlook on current and future global and multicultural interactions, and to a country whose founding was based on its polylingual, polycultural population. At the time, she noted that there were "few exemplars for my social action research in FL-ED (foreign language education)" (p. 35, my parentheses). She hoped that her model would provide other FL teachers with the ideas and inspiration for beginning their own language programs and

for seeing the possibilities of using authentic FL texts in the classroom as viable instructional tools.

Her dissertation is connected to this one because of the ways in which her beliefs and knowledge of FL education influenced her practices. She clearly stated several of her core beliefs:

> Having all students in this country be enrolled in FL class on a regular basis with the goal of acquiring the language and becoming a lifelong user of it is a core belief of my own about the "skills, knowledge, and critical awareness" that make up a truly multicultural education. (p. 45, original quote marks)

> At the core of my FL educational philosophy is the belief that all youngsters literate in the language they speak at home should be provided access to core curriculum FL instructions, during which they read children's literature, interact with an adult literate in the FL, and thereby extend their developing literacies. (p. 115)

Her knowledge of German language and culture spanned her personal experiences as a German student in the classroom and also while living abroad. Her professional knowledge as an experienced teacher of German and English in various settings (e.g., secondary, post-secondary), coupled with her academic knowledge in those same areas (as the recipient of a master's degree in both languages) generally molded the ways in which she taught German.

It was through her lack of knowledge, and lack of personal experience – in doing something different from what was handed down as typical praxis – that she pedagogically resisted using children's books with her language learners. "It would be *way too hard* for them. There's too much text and we haven't covered enough grammar

yet" (p. 119, original italics), she rationalized. Only later did she realize that "I did not

consider what I might be doing in the actual language and literacy lessons themselves to

instill in my students a desire to acquire German more fully and to become lifelong

learners of the language" (p. 116). She finally yielded her resistance after attending the

children's literature workshop. Malloy later critiqued FLED because, "we continue to

turn out few students who see themselves as competent FL users: as "literate" in the

sense that people consider themselves "computer literate" (p. 116, original quote marks).

Such was the gap she perceived in the field, yet she did not perceive the gap until she had

been introduced to new knowledge, and accepted it into her beliefs and practices. As

Lamme and Ross (1981) conclude, the factors of change involve (a) the degree of

internalization, and (b) the context in which change is attempted. Both factors were at

work in order for Malloy to conduct her personally motivated dissertation study.

     While the current study is not taking the social action stance Malloy's (1998)

work did, it does investigate literacy-based instruction; moreover, it does so from the

perspective of teachers who are not the researchers in search of theory. It then later

considers the connections between the teacher participants and emergent biliteracy theory

for the MS FL classroom. It is important to note that almost one decade later, there are

still few FLED exemplars using the concept of emergent biliteracy theory. In fact, this

perspective has since been so seldom used to conceptualize ESL, EFL, and in particular,

FL learners that a search of nine world dissertation and theses databases yielded only four

publications completed in the area of emergent biliteracy (Buckwalter, 2006; Connery,

2006; Hu, 2004; Su, 2005). All of these studies explored emergent biliteracy and its

curricular practices with children and students ranging from preschool to sixth grade who

were speakers of other languages (Chinese, Spanish) learning to read and write in

English. Thus, the MS FL student has not been considered in the literature for almost ten

years.

Moreover, these studies focused on the development of the individual students as

emerging readers and writers in their L2. None of these investigations considered the

teacher's beliefs and knowledge for utilizing, or not, particular practices that research

suggests will promote FL reading and writing development. In this way, this dissertation

is positioned to inform those interested in " the road not taken" (Frost, 1984) in FLED,

where teacher beliefs, knowledge, and practices of literacy-based instruction in the MS

FL classroom setting are investigated and examined.

Connecting the Concepts

How do we connect these various areas of language and literacy learning when

investigating MS FL literacy-based instruction? Research on emergent literacy and on

biliteracy indicates that (bi)literacy is "a process wherein individuals enter into a

meaning-making transaction with written text" (Hudelson, 1994, p. 130). Research

suggests this is a non-linear, socially mediated process. Second language learners need to

experience target language reading and writing, explore the functions of print, and make

grapho-phonemic connections in a socially constructed atmosphere. In such an

atmosphere, a variety of reading and writing opportunities are offered to students –
opportunities which honor students' prior experiences both in and out of the classroom,
which strike a balance between form and content, and which provide ample occasion for
exploration as mediated within students' social settings.

Just as in an ESL or EFL classroom, such biliteracy opportunities in the FL
context must be mediated through another language, which may use another alphabet and
other orthographic features (e.g., diacritical marks) not found in English (Escamilla,
2000; Koda, 2005). Emergent reading and writing in the FL context entails experiences
with and even explanations of differing cultural and rhetorical facets with which students
may not already be familiar; students must be guided in their biliteracy. FLED teachers
are therefore automatically engaged in connecting language learning to other areas
(subjects) of learning. Scholar-teachers like Met (1999) specifically point to the
interdisciplinary connections that might be made by the MS FL curriculum through
thematic units, curricular connections, and the development of thinking skills as
appealing reasons to include foreign language study at this age level. The National
Foreign Language Standards (NSFLEP, 1996) also promote the "curricular weave" (p.
33) as a way to bolster interdisciplinary connections so that students might see beyond
the classroom's four walls. Thus, it would seem that the recognition of the complexity,
possibility, and plausibility of pulling (at least) two disciplines (ELA and FL) together
exists. Yet, due to a lack of research in MS FL classrooms, it is unclear as to whether or
not this union is happening at all.

Certain emergent literacy and biliteracy practices occurring in ELA and ESL/bilingual classrooms have been identified through research (Edelsky, Draper & Smith, 1983; Hudelson, 1994; Malloy, 1997, 1998; Moll, Sáez, Dworin, 2001). These practices reveal that:

- The teacher seems to operate from a belief system that students are capable and responsible participants in their learning.

- The teacher serves to facilitate, mediate, and guide interactions, as opposed to giving teacher-directed lessons.

- The teacher models oral and written examples of reading, writing, risk-taking, genre awareness, self-expression and enjoyment in literacy activities.

- Students develop a sense of the relationship between symbolic representation of sound and meaning.

- Students demonstrate an understanding of the purpose and intent of written language (e.g., communication, storytelling), in addition to the ways it functions (e.g., directionality, punctuation, syntax).

- Students are given the opportunity to read and write for both self-enjoyment and directed purpose.

These practices have been identified through observations in elementary settings, wherein students and teachers were part of a community of learners and wherein their relationship had elevated to one of encouragement, trust, and mutual instruction (Edelsky, Draper, & Smith, 1983). These practices are also illustrative of a kind of philosophy that the teacher

brings to the classroom with regard to literacy teaching and learning. Are these also observable practices in the MS FL classroom? Will certain activities suffice (Redmond, 1994) in FL literacy development? Can classroom practices be linked to the teacher's personal beliefs and knowledge on FL literacy instruction? And, if such practices are not observable, how is FL reading and writing being developed in the MS classroom? It is hoped that this study might shed some light on some of these questions.

One decade ago Mary Malloy (1997) framed the concept of emergent biliteracy as a useful way to view the MS FL student. She based this reconceptualization of how MS students "can apply and further develop their sophisticated knowledge of text and their literacy strategies in English to learn FL effectively" (Malloy, 1997, p. 6) upon those notions established by emergent literacy and upon those classroom interactions she documented from her German language classes in a Midwestern MS setting. Her classroom research provides macro- and micro-examples of emergent biliteracy for the MS setting that demonstrate the holistic nature of this concept. The community at large was supportive of her and her practices; this included parents, the administration, and the school faculty. Students were interested in becoming biliterate (e.g., students asked about spelling and accent rules), in exploring the environmental print in the classroom or at home (e.g., students brought in old family letters or books), and in being surrounded by other biliterates. Students were active in creating purposeful, directed, and meaningful biliterate interactions whether it was through explicit graphemic-phonemic skill use or artistic/creative expression (e.g., role playing, music, drawing). "Biliteracy instruction is

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based on involving learners in authentic and functional reading and writing from the first day, in a FL print-rich classroom environment" (Malloy, 1998, p. 216). As noted earlier, her initial work has not been taken up since, so an opportunity presents itself here to find out why.

Summary

This chapter reviewed several key areas of research that bear on the conceptualization of biliteracy, of teacher beliefs and knowledge, and of the theory of emergent biliteracy. Among those areas of literature reviewed were Hornberger's (1989) "continua of biliteracy," reading and writing in L1 and L2, emergent literacy, whole language praxis in L1 and L2, biliteracy, middle school students as unique learners, links between teacher beliefs and practices, human agency, and emergent biliteracy.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

A Qualitative Study

Piantanida and Garman (1999) note that the "descriptor *qualitative* is troublesome because it holds different meanings depending upon what group of educational researchers is using the term" (p. xi, original italics). Having foundations in anthropology and sociology, qualitative research has been applied to educational settings only over the past thirty years (Hatch, 2002), where it has been gaining interest, momentum, and respect (Seidman, 2006). There are several characteristics that distinguish this sort of work (Hatch, 2002):

- *Natural settings* – the context where human behaviors occur (as opposed to a laboratory setting).

- *Participant perspectives* – participants' voices are prominent.

- *Researcher as data gathering instrument* – the researcher collects data (e.g., notes, observations, interviews, collecting artifacts).

- *Extended firsthand engagement* – spending lots of time in the field in order to gain better understanding of the research setting.

- *Centrality of meaning* – understanding the meanings individuals construct in order to participate in their social lives.

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- *Wholeness and complexity* – social settings are examined as being whole and complex and are detailed as being such.

- *Subjectivity* – the act of reflexively applying one's own subjectivities in ways to understand the motives and assumptions of the participants.

- *Emergent design* – in lieu of an a priori design, research questions, methods and other elements of the study are modified and shaped as the study unfolds.

- *Inductive data analysis* – analysis is grounded in the data and moves from specifics to more abstract generalizations.

- *Reflexivity* – the researcher's capacity to reflect upon her influences, emotions, and impact upon the research setting and its participants.

This study encompasses all of these characteristics. Because of the chosen research methodology, this researcher committed to conducting thoughtful reflection of her own personal beliefs of language learning and instruction in addition to being constantly aware of the responsibility to conduct ethical, complete, and meaningful inquiry during this investigation. As an occupational group, teachers have relatively little power or status (Hatch, 2002); sensitivity to this potential vulnerability was necessary. Member checks were essential not only as verification of information developed by the researcher (for the purposes of triangulation) but also as an ethical measure of a research study attempting to capture and represent teachers' voices and perspectives; their input was crucial.

Creswell (2003) identified five methodologies associated with the qualitative approach: "ethnographies, grounded theory, case studies, phenomenological research, and narrative research" (pp. 14-15). Inquiring after a teacher's beliefs, knowledge, and practices is personal work. As Erickson (1991) points out, interpretive methods are most useful when documenting the subtle detail of occurrences in the lives of participants and what those occurrences mean to them. This study was designed to last the majority of the academic year. Another advantage of a case study approach is this "attention to context and the ability to track and document change" (van Lier, 2005, p. 195) over the course of a given time period. Case studies are useful in providing especially descriptive illuminations on particular issues or topics. Thus, a qualitative methodology recognizes and celebrates the uniqueness of every context, and how its participants interact in particular ways within that setting. As Stark and Torrance (2005) put it, "case study seeks to engage with and report the complexity of social activity in order to represent the meanings that individual social actors bring to the settings and manufacture in them" (p.33).

The present study used a case study approach to examine the reading and writing beliefs, knowledge, and practices of four MS FL teachers during a six-month period (approximately October 2007-March 2008) in "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (Merriam, 1988, p. 21). Thus, the selected group and setting defines the "bounded system" (Merriam, 1988, p. 9), or a contextualized unit of analysis, identifiable in case studies. As such, this specification is

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"the key decision point in case study design" (Hatch, 2002, p. 30). The iterative cycles

(Piantanida & Garman, 1999) by which qualitative design, data collection, analysis, and

write-up are all conducted demonstrate the sensitivity to the issues being explored, and

the involved and personalized nature of such work. These cycles imply a process, an

interplay, a recycling of thoughts and interactions, as well as an interaction between

preparation and review that help refine the notions that emerged from the collected data.

As such, qualitative research, which is complex, personal, and systematic, is most

appropriate for examining those complex and personal issues ("perspectives-as-

practice"), settings (middle schools) and contexts (FL classrooms) in which they

transpire, as is the case here.

Goodman and Martens (2007) express the connection between early literacy and

qualitative methodology as such: "Interpretive research in early literacy builds sensitivity

to the range of literacy experiences in which children engage" (p. xi). Indeed, both

teachers and students come to the classroom having personalized histories with literacy,

and certainly, in the middle school setting, this history is rich and prime for investigation.

With this in mind, a qualitative case study approach is appropriate in order to build an

understanding of those teacher perspectives and practices of reading and writing

development in the MS FL classroom as gleaned through questionnaires, interviews and

observations. Corbin and Holt (2005) note that within qualitative research, there is an

open consideration of observed events: "In other words, it is not research participants per

se that are sampled but events that give greater understanding and definition to the

evolving concepts" (p. 50). This researcher wondered what would be revealed in this context regarding teachers' biliteracy perspectives and practices and how such perspectives and practices will give better understanding to the conceptualization of FL biliteracy in the MS FL classroom.

Research Setting and Participants

This study took place in the Archer County Schools district (a pseudonym). This county is located in the suburban area of a growing city in the southeastern portion of the U.S. Archer County Schools educates well over 150,000 students per year, and has over 100 school buildings in its K-12 system. The student population is diverse: White, African-American, and Hispanic groups make up the largest percentages, while Asian-American, American Indian, and Multiracial groups round out the total population. The school buildings in this district are set up into clusters of elementary, middle, and high schools, which are geographically grouped in close proximity to one another. Elementary schools comprise grades K-5, middle schools comprise grades 6-8, and high schools comprise grades 9-12. The variation of socioeconomic and ethnic diversity of the student population can range greatly depending upon the cluster of schools to which students are assigned; some clusters are more diverse than others.

In Archer County, language studies fall under two possible categories: core course, or elective course. In the two middle schools where the International Baccalaureate Programme is implemented, foreign languages are considered core

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subjects and are thus required. In the exploratory and yearlong models, foreign languages are considered electives, as are courses in health, physical education, art, band, choral music, computer science, drama, and careers. After the sixth grade, higher performing students (as based on grades, standardized testing, and teacher recommendations) are invited to take the two-year cycle of Level One language studies.

While some of the middle schools in this school district offered French, German, Latin, and even Chinese this past school year, Spanish is the predominant language offering when foreign languages are offered at all. Of the twenty middle schools, seventeen offer any kind of FL instruction: one offers Latin, three offer German, seven offer French, and seventeen offer Spanish. What is more, there is not one specific model of MS FL instruction in the district. In fact, there are three different course models offered in the district: Middle School International Baccalaureate Programme; Yearlong language courses; and Nine-week exploratory courses. This variety in courses leads to variation in staffing. The principals decide their staffing and curricular options based on the number of matriculating students and the school's annual fiscal budgets. As such, there may be only one or two FL teachers within one MS building who teach exploratory and yearlong courses in one or several languages, or there might be three to four teachers who instruct just one of the languages offered at one school (as seen at those schools with a Middle School International Baccalaureate Programme).

Archer County Schools has put into place its own research proposal review committee. This committee meets once monthly throughout the school year and reviews

all research applications, which request essentially the same information that the university Institutional Review Board does. Anyone wishing to conduct research within the district, whether an employee or not, must first go through this review process prior to collecting any data. Once approval for this study was given, administrators at only those eleven schools offering yearlong language courses were contacted with recruitment materials to be distributed to their FL teachers (potentially twenty-six teachers). However, even after the research review committee has approved the research proposal at the district level, school administrators and teachers may elect not to participate in the study. This actually proved to be a small hurdle to overcome as this researcher lacked an "entrée" (Burton, 2004) to this setting. In other words, as an outside researcher having no connections whatsoever to the district, it was difficult to begin data collection. Several administrators and teachers elected not to participate in this study. Some administrators (and a few teachers) cited time constraints and high teacher responsibility loads as reasons for not participating; others declined without stating specific reasons. In all, only four FL teachers from this district ultimately contacted the researcher about participating in this study once school administrator consent was given. However, in the end, the small number of participants allowed for deeper investigation and more frequent observations of each teacher. The small number additionally made it possible to "negotiate relationships" (Katz, 2004, p. 85) with each participant, which is valued in qualitative research.

Of the four teacher participants (three French and one Spanish), only one French teacher taught in the International Baccalaureate Programme model; the other three participants taught both the nine-week exploratory (sometimes in several languages) and the yearlong French/Spanish programs. Observations of the French teacher in the International Baccalaureate program were of his sixth grade classes as International Baccalaureate students take yearlong language courses in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. Observations of the other three participants were of their yearlong courses with seventh and eighth grade students because the yearlong programs complete Level One language instruction over two years. Pseudonyms are used to refer to all participants and research sites in an effort to maintain anonymity in this write-up. Participants were compensated at the end of the study for their participation with an organizing folder and two books on biliteracy.

Data Collection Process

Data collection lasted approximately six months, between mid-October 2007 and the end of March 2008. This time period was selected for several reasons, many of which involve coordination with Archer County Schools schedules: (a) the district's research review board does not meet during the summer and gave approval of this project in early October 2007; (b) observations over an extended period of time wherein class projects, for example, might be started and completed, or whereby large chunks of instruction might be observed, noted, and analyzed were desired as they would lend validity to the

study; (c) having an opportunity to observe and interview participants over five to six months allowed for better understanding of teacher practices and how they related to teacher-stated beliefs; and (d) by early April, the eighth grade students are preparing to take state criterion-referenced assessments, and thus instruction is somewhat interrupted due to the testing schedules during this month. Appendix G, Data Collection Timeline, displays the approximate data collection timeline for this study.

Data for this six-month study came from the following sources:

- An open-ended initial questionnaire on teacher beliefs and knowledge of teaching FL reading and writing (see Appendix A, Teacher Questionnaire);

- A series of interviews conducted at various points in time: (a) an initial formal semistructured interview; (b) interim semistructured formal interviews; (c) post-observation informal interviews (to immediately expand understanding of teacher beliefs and practices, in addition to details on the schools' and district's MS language programs); and (d) a formal exit interview (see Appendix B, Guidelines for the First Formal Semistructured Teacher Interview, Appendix C, Guidelines for Interim Semistructured Formal Interviews, and Appendix D, Guidelines for Exit Formal Semistructured Teacher Interview);

- Monthly teacher logs of classroom reading and writing activities in the foreign language (See Appendix E, Teacher Log of Classroom Reading and Writing Events);

- Observations of classroom practice and time spent on teaching FL reading and writing development, in addition to any anecdotal information (See Appendix F, Researcher's Observation Log);

- A materials review of district textbooks, in addition to teacher-made materials used in classroom instruction.

Open-Ended Initial Questionnaire

During the first week of data collection, teachers were asked to complete a questionnaire (see Appendix A) about their school's FL program, their personal conceptualization of reading and writing instruction in the target language, and how they believe they foster FL reading and writing development for their students. This researcher-designed questionnaire served as a starting point for the initial interview and is fairly general in nature. It consists of nine open-ended questions and took participants between thirty to sixty minutes to complete.

This questionnaire was given directly to the teacher in an envelope and was collected within one week of distribution, at which time it was reviewed and used as the basis for the initial teacher interview (see Appendix B). Each questionnaire was carefully

reviewed and noted with attention given to responses where clarification and expansion were desired.

Interviews

> "To observe a teacher, student, principal, or counselor provides access to their behavior. Interviewing allows us to put behavior in context and provides access to understanding their action" (Seidman, 2006, p. 10).

Because the teacher's perspectives are central to this study (Breen et al., 2001), interviews were selected as a way to gather data. Interviews served as one of two primary data sources for this project (the other being observations). Formal semistructured interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) and informal interviews were conducted with the participants during the course of this study in order to "generate depth of understanding" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 30). In all, each participant completed an initial interview, at least two interim interviews, and an exit interview.

The initial formal semistructured interview (see Appendix B) took place at a mutually convenient time after the participants had completed the initial questionnaire. Because each participant's questionnaire responses were carefully reviewed prior to the interview, it was possible to generate deeper reflection during the face-to-face interview. This and all subsequent interviews (formal or informal) lasted no more than one hour. All formal interviews (initial, interim, and exit) were digitally recorded and then were

uploaded to a personal computer. Within three days of recording, the formal interviews were transcribed into electronic document format. As one participant was hesitant to be recorded during interviews, notes were taken instead and were transcribed into electronic document format. In all cases, a copy of the transcript was provided to the teachers as a form of member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) so they could have the chance to clarify or add to the transcripts' meaning as they felt appropriate. Afterwards, the transcripts were analyzed using inductive analysis for the duration of the research data collection period in addition to during the post-collection phase.

For the purpose of inductive analysis, participant comments were reviewed for patterns. Themes emerged from these patterns and the data were divided into three broad categories: (1) Beliefs; (2) Knowledge; and (3) Other Influences. (See Table 3.1.) As one of the objectives of this study is to investigate the beliefs and knowledge of MS FL teachers' literacy-based instruction, sorting data into the first two categories seemed appropriate. Direct questions expressly requested such information from the participants' through the questionnaire or during interviews. The third category of "Other Influences" stemmed from those influences that often seemed less transparent, and data that were sometimes gleaned anecdotally during informal and formal interviews (e.g., explanations of district programs). While these organizing categories helped frame the analysis, this researcher was cognizant that it was entirely possible that the data would reveal the need for additional categories, or even the nullification of some (Edelsky, Draper & Smith, 1983). To establish validity, two other researchers familiar with qualitative research

methods were each asked to code the initial and exit interviews of one participant selected at random. They were asked to use the same broad categories the researcher used when coding the interviews. They were each given the initial and exit interviews of one participant in order to have continuity and to create a better understanding of one participant over the course of the duration of this investigation.

Formal interim semistructured interviews followed approximately once per month beginning in December 2007. Due to school schedules and teacher availability, each participant completed two to three interim interviews (one participant's interviews were conducted over the phone). The interim interviews were to allow for teacher reflection on past, current, and future practices in the classroom regarding reading and writing. Interim interviews were recorded and were transcribed into electronic format within three days. Member checks were conducted to allow the participants an opportunity to clarify researcher understanding and to ensure validity. Appendix C was used to guide the interim interviews, and the interim interviews were analyzed in the same manner as the initial and exit interviews.

An exit interview was conducted at the end of March 2008 with all participants. The final interview was intended to review the data-based understanding of teacher beliefs, knowledge, and practices stated and demonstrated during the course of the study. Interviews were digitally recorded and were transcribed within three days of recording. As a final member check, each participant was then asked to review not only the

transcripts from the exit interviews, but also to review their individual participant profiles that were created based upon all collected data (see Chapter 4 for participant profiles).

Informal interviews served as a means of clarification or for eliciting initial reactions to classroom practices as perceived by the teachers themselves. These took the form of quick question-answer interactions before or after observations so that a recap of classroom practices and their link to personal beliefs and knowledge might be made. All informal interviews were recorded in writing. Notes from these informal interviews were transcribed into electronic format within three days. These notes were later verified with the teachers as a form of member checking. In this way, participants had a chance to clarify or revise information as was appropriate. All informal interview data were analyzed using inductive analysis for the duration of the research data collection period in addition to the post-collection period and were sorted using the interview coding categories (see Table 3.1). The informal interviews provided insight as to the rationales and connections between "perspectives-as-practice" (Edelsky, 1993) as stated in the teachers' own words (Breen et al., 2001).

BELIEFS	KNOWLEDGE	OTHER INFLUENCES
Students can learn to read and write in the target language	Pedagogical content knowledge: theories on learning - behaviorism, cognitivism, socioculturalism	District curriculum
Grammatical awareness is important in language learning	Professional organization information: newsletters, e-news/e-mails, journals, articles.	School year schedule (including testing, field trips, daily class schedule, State & district testing)
Reading and writing skills must be practiced and developed on a daily basis	Professional development opportunities/information: workshops, conferences, district-sponsored sessions.	Available materials and the funding for such materials
Reading and writing skills develop incrementally at the beginning level of language study	Undergraduate/Graduate course work inside or outside the subject area: literature, grammar, composition, reading instruction, education & methodological theories.	Perceived level of learner; student readiness
The essence of FL literacy (reading and writing) is comprehensible input and output	L1-L2 theoretical reading connections AND L1-L2 theoretical writing connections	
Reading and writing skills in the FL are influenced by L1 reading and writing skills	Subject content: grammar, vocabulary, linguistics, phonics, syntax, history, culture, geography	
	Personal experiences traveling and living abroad, studying a language, or teaching a language.	

Table 3.1: Interview coding themes

Teacher Log of Classroom Reading and Writing Events

Teachers were asked to keep a monthly log of classroom reading and writing events for the duration of the study. Each month, they were to document their biliteracy instruction for one full week (Monday through Friday) – see Appendix E. This log documented the biliteracy activities conducted with the students, the purpose of the activities, and any additional comments. Flexibility was given to the teachers as to when they would complete this log bearing in mind that in each calendar month of the academic year, the number of five-day weeks varies based upon such things as national or state holidays. This log was then collected the following month (e.g., November's log was collected in December). This data served as a source of information on the participant's beliefs and knowledge of the purpose of reading and writing practices in addition to the frequency of those practices (internal validity) (Creswell, 2003; Seidman, 2006). The log also enabled the eliciting of additional data on teacher practices for subsequent informal and formal interviews. In this way, these logs assisted the teachers and the researcher in capturing action as it happened, in addition to capturing "interpretations at points along the way" (Altrichter & Holly, 2005).

Observations

Observations served as the other primary data source for this study. The researcher's role in the classrooms was one of "complete observer" (Hatch, 2002, p. 73), whereby no intervention or participation on my part took place in order to preserve the

natural goings-on in each setting. Teachers were directed to conduct their classes as usual.

Visits to each classroom were made every day during the first two weeks of data collection. Due to the qualitative approach of this study, it was important to have a thorough understanding of the environment (the natural setting) of reading and writing instruction as maintained in these MS FL classrooms; this was achievable only through consistent observation (Almasi, et al., 1994). Because the theory of emergent biliteracy focuses on supporting the process of development, bi-weekly observations followed thereafter (with some allowances made for school holidays) until the end of the data collection period. Appendix F, Researcher's Observation Log, was used to capture data from each visit. Each participant was observed minimally with two different classes on at least twelve separate occasions.

The researcher's observation log was transcribed and put into an electronic document format within three days of being noted. Observations of the reading and writing development activities were first examined in relation to the teachers' self-reported beliefs and knowledge of FL literacy-based instruction. Observations were subsequently examined in relation to those grounded examples of emergent biliteracy theory provided by Malloy (1998), which speak to both the affective and concrete nature of reading and writing development (e.g., intrinsic value of biliteracy, grapheme-phoneme correspondence utilization). Keeping with widely accepted qualitative research practices, these researcher logs were reviewed for patterns and themes in light of the

task's overarching questions after each observation (Hatch, 2002; Johnstone, 2000; Goldbart & Hustler, 2005). Demonstrated practices were analyzed using the same interview coding categories. As suggested by Almasi, Palmer, Gambrell and Pressley (1994), once categories emerge, "assertions and hypotheses should be tested against the data" (p. 200). Evidence of convergence, inconsistency, and contradiction (Mathison, 1988) of teacher beliefs, knowledge, and demonstrated practices was sought within the data. Observational evidence is related as participant practices in Chapter 4.

Materials Review

Swaffar (1991), in a review of four first-year college-level language textbooks, found that the textbooks lacked an integration of recursive tasks (reading and writing) with beginning instruction in FL. She coded the text and exercise types for reading and writing activities using three broad categories: language production, language comprehension, and explanations (p. 258). The intent of her work was to illustrate two relationships: (1) the comparison between cognitively challenging literacy (reading and writing) work and an emphasis on sentence-level mechanics and practice; and (2) "the relative isolation of reading and suprasentential writing with respect to the other activities in the chapter" (Swaffar, 1991, p. 258). Swaffar excluded an examination of the accompanying workbooks of those textbooks reviewed because none of them offered "either longer authentic texts (that is, over five hundred words) or regular, systematic progression of activities culminating in creative writing or composition" (1991, p. 258,

original parentheses). Overall, she commented that, "the profession seems to be far from including top down processing in the first year of college instruction in a foreign language" (1991, p. 266).

Swaffar's (1991) estimation of the profession's misalignment between top-down and bottom-up processes was made over fifteen years ago using a more cognitive perspective on language learning. Recently, Aski (2003) conducted a content analysis of textbooks using a more sociocultural perspective of language learning. Using a typology of four categories (mechanical drills, meaningful drills, communicative drills, and communicative practice), she reviewed seven college-level Italian textbooks and noted that they have not been keeping pace with SLA research, "which calls for meaningful, communicative language in practice" (2003, p. 63). That is, the "disparity between theory and practice appears to be perpetuated by textbook publishers" (2003, p. 63). Mechanical drills (presented as writing or reading activities) continue to be popular and prevalent in textbooks despite research indicating that pattern practice and mechanical drills are "ineffective at the early stages of language practice" (Aski, 2005, p. 336) for they do not allow language learners to link meaning with form. Aski (2003) does, however, acknowledge that textbook publishers are not wholly to blame for the disparity. As she states, it is up to instructors to align their methodology with what is supported by the research. Nonetheless, if the textbook becomes the curriculum (Byrnes, 1988; Castronovo, 1990; Johnson & Markham, 1989; Lally, 1998), then it is possible to see

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how an individual teacher's praxis of FL literacy-based instruction based on the requisite

materials can be highly constrained despite her personal beliefs and knowledge.

The first review of the MS yearlong course French and Spanish textbooks used

the broad categories of Language Production, Language Comprehension, and

Explanation (Swaffar, 1991) for categorization purposes; course workbooks were not

reviewed. A secondary review of only the language production and language

comprehension categories was then conducted using Aski's (2003) typology of

Mechanical Drills, Meaningful Drills, Communicative Drills, And Communicative

Practice (See Table 3.2, Typology of Textbook Activities).

In all, the kinds of reading and writing tasks (e.g., authentic, edited, sentential,

multi-paragraph), in addition to a break down of the textbook activities by type are

presented graphically in Chapter 4. Copies of any other reading and writing handouts or

teacher-made materials underwent the same materials review. This kind of review lent a

light on the ways in which MS FL teachers instruct reading and writing with available

resources and where beliefs and knowledge converge (or diverge) with practices. This

kind of analysis can eventually be helpful to districts and staff members as they make

pedagogical decisions on how best to support MS FL reading and writing development in

the classroom.

TYPOLOGY OF TEXTBOOK ACTIVITIES

MECHANICAL DRILLS:
~ Learners do not have to understand the prompt
~ Learners need only substitute or manipulate forms
~ Only one correct response
~ Focus exclusively on form
~ Need only follow the model to successfully complete activities
~ Structure of answers is highly controlled
~ Main goal is to produce the correct form

MEANINGFUL DRILLS:
~ Learner must understand the meanings of the stimulus (input) and the answer (output)
~ Only one correct answer (like mechanical drills)
~ Learners do not generate and negotiate their own meaning in original constructions
~ Learners know the correct answer
~ No new information is being exchanged
~ Verb pool & translation exercises included in this category

COMMUNICATIVE DRILLS:
~ Answers contain information that is new and unknown to the person presenting the prompt, so there is no right or wrong answer
~ Highly formulaic and structured format
~ Part of the activity is prompted, but the rest is left to the personal opinion and creativity of learner
~ Goal is to practice a particular grammatical structure, although new information is produced in the answers
~ Oftentimes yes/no response format

COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE PRACTICE:
~ Requires attention to meaning in order to generate form
~ Goal is to immerse the learner in a meaningful context in which s/he is motivated to interact
~ Typical examples include task-based, information gap, and role playing

Table 3.2: Typology of textbook activities (based on Aski, 2003)

<u>Data Analysis</u>

As multiple sources of data were compiled to provide an understanding of the how, what, and why behind teacher beliefs, knowledge, and practices of FL reading and writing development in the MS FL classroom, a case study approach seemed to be the most appropriate way to go about capturing this data and exploring this topic.

Triangulation is a strategy that assists in eliminating bias and dismissing plausible rival explanations so that some "truthful proposition about some social phenomenon can be made" (Mathison, 1988, p. 13). The multiple data-gathering procedures used in this study were used to lead to an understanding of the research questions by examination of convergence, inconsistency, and contradiction (Mathison, 1988). Moreover, validity was addressed through member checks after interviews and observations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) as well as through outside expert coding verification (which was similar to researcher coding results on average 80% of the time, subsequently no coding recalibration occurred). As an additional member check, all participants were provided a copy of their individual profiles and were asked to review them for accuracy in order to maintain the validity of this study.

In this case, the triangulation of these data was intended to analyze teacher beliefs and knowledge regarding FL reading and writing instruction in the MS FL classroom using the following guiding questions:

1. What are the MS FL teacher's beliefs and knowledge about FL literacy-based instruction?

2. How do these MS FL teacher beliefs and knowledge of FL literacy learning influence their classroom instruction?

3. Based on findings for RQ1 and RQ2, how do MS FL teacher beliefs, knowledge, and practices align with emergent biliteracy theory (Malloy, 1998)? Is this theory likely to be reflected in practice in the MS FL setting?

Due to the nature of the study, inductive analysis was ongoing throughout the full period of data collection. Data analysis continued through the fall of 2008. See Table 3.3 for a summary of the ways in which collected data corresponded to the research questions and Figure 3.1 for a visual representation of data collection and analysis.

	RQ1: What are the MS FL teacher's beliefs and knowledge about FL literacy-based instruction?	RQ2: How do these MS FL teacher beliefs and knowledge of FL literacy learning influence their classroom instruction?	RQ3: Based on findings for RQ1 and RQ2, how do MS FL teacher beliefs, knowledge, and practices align with emergent biliteracy theory (Malloy, 1998)? Is this theory likely to be reflected in practice in the MS FL setting?
Questionnaire	√	√	√
Formal Interviews	√	√	√
Informal Interviews	√	√	√
Teacher Log	√	√	√
Observations		√	√
Materials Review		√	√

Table 3.3: Research questions and data collection

Initial
Questionnaire

Interviews
(Formal & Informal)

Observations

Review for
themes

Initial
Interview

1st Interim
Interview

Teacher
Classroom
Reading &
Writing Logs

2nd Interim
Interview

Exit
Interview

3rd Interim
Interview

Materials
Analysis
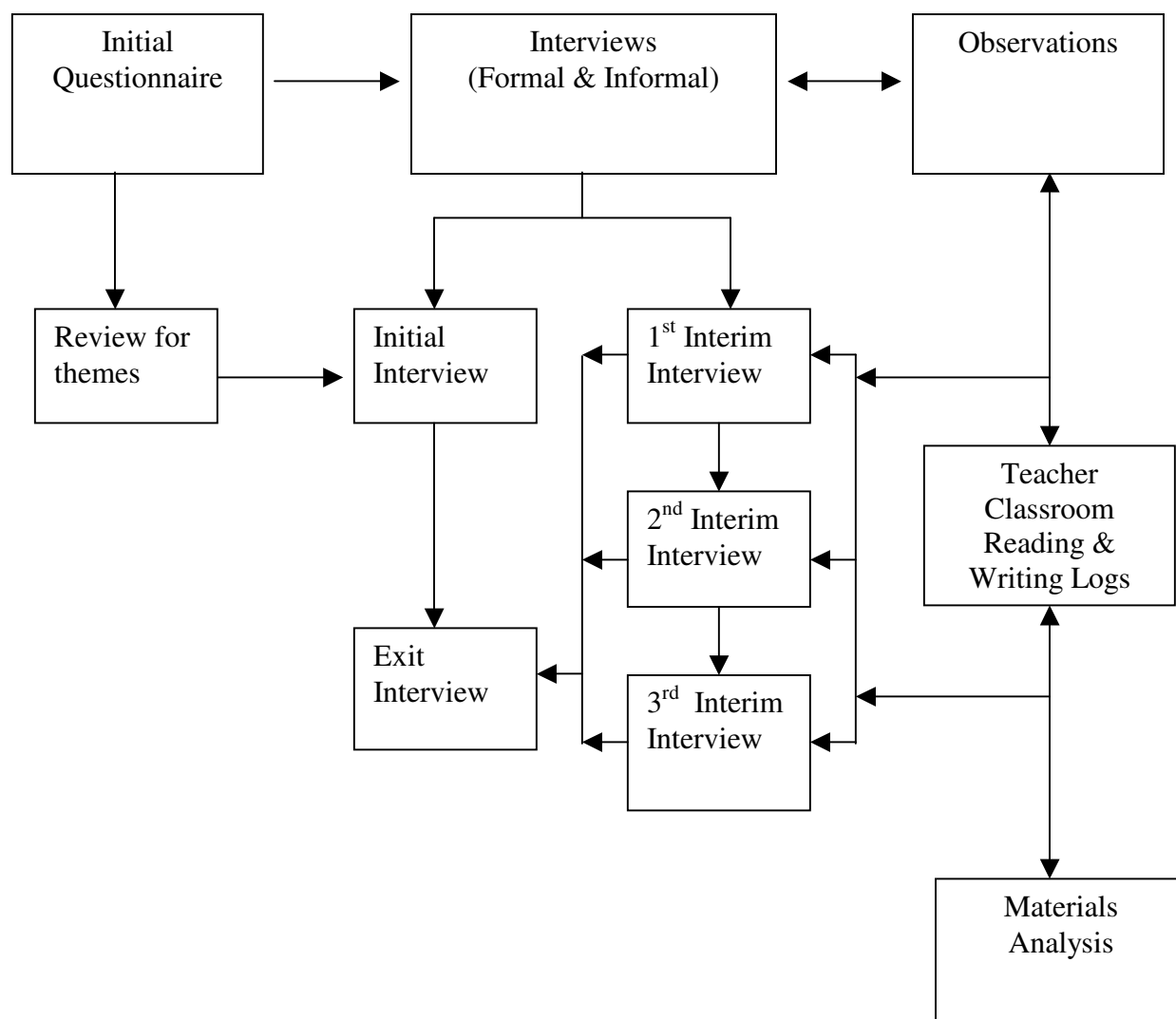
Figure 3.1: Research data collection and analysis flowchart

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

<u>Overview</u>

This chapter presents the analyses and findings of the collected data. For ease of
discussion, the chapter is divided into several sections: (1) participant profiles; (2) cross-
case analysis; (3) materials analysis; and (4) summary. The participant profiles present
each teacher individually – his beliefs, his personal and professional knowledge, and
examples of observed classroom practices of literacy-based instruction. The cross-case
analysis considers those larger themes seen across the participant pool. The materials
analysis focuses primarily on analyzing those textbooks used in the French and Spanish
classrooms, but also examines other materials (e.g., handouts) distributed during lessons,
in order to explore (a) any match-mismatches with stated teacher beliefs and knowledge
of literacy-based FL instruction, and (b) notions of teacher agency with regard to creating
or selecting classroom materials supporting biliteracy development. Finally, the summary
section recapitulates the findings of this investigation.

Pseudonyms have been used for all participants, schools, local professional
organizations, and geographic locations named herein. All FL phrases presented in these
findings have been translated by the researcher, and have been verified for accuracy by
other FL teachers of that language; English translations are set off by parentheses
immediately following the FL phrase.

<u>Participant Profiles</u>

Four teacher participants were involved in this study: Benjamin, Rémy, Thomas, and Victor. While they all teach in the Archer County Schools district, they are in different schools, which have varied instructional time models (e.g., block periods, forty-minute periods). Benjamin teaches Spanish, while Rémy, Thomas, and Victor teach French. They are all experienced classroom teachers with teaching experience ranging from seven to twenty-eight years; for this reason, they shall be referred to as seasoned or veteran teachers throughout the rest of this dissertation. Yet their tenure in this district varies from entry year to nearly twenty years. Three of them taught high school students prior to teaching middle schoolers (Benjamin, Thomas and Victor). Two of them currently teach more than one of the language offerings at their schools (Rémy and Victor). Only one of these participants has taught exclusively in the MS context (Rémy). All teach a yearlong language course: one to sixth graders, the other three to seventh and eighth graders. As to their formal training, among the participants, two hold a Ph.D., one has a Master's Degree, and the other a Bachelor's Degree. Table 4.1 presents a summary of the participants' teaching experience and educational backgrounds, along with the program models and languages they currently teach.

New technology was provided to all of the classroom teachers in Archer County this past year in the form of a new LCD projector. In the past, teachers have had access to technology through the computer lab, but this is the first year that they have had the ability to connect their classroom computer to a large screen projector. In the main

classrooms, these projectors have been affixed to the ceilings and automatic screens have been installed; in the mobile classrooms, the projectors are encased in a lockable, rolling cart and teachers use the standard pull-down screens. Two of the four participants (Thomas and Victor) also have an option to bring in a set of classroom laptops for students to use during the class period should the classroom teacher elect to stay in the classroom as opposed to going to the school's computer lab. Participants use this new technology to varying degrees, as will be discussed later.

Data collected from the participants (surveys, interviews, teacher logs, observations) were reviewed for patterns and themes of the teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices of literacy-based instruction. Data analysis was continuous throughout the duration of the investigation. Validity was established through outside expert coding.

In this section, each participant is presented individually in alphabetical order. Participant beliefs, knowledge, and practices are examined and discussed in that order. In these narratives, the reader will remark four major concerns that are discussed by the teachers about their literacy-based instruction in the MS FL classroom: (1) finding level- and age-appropriate materials such that the student interest in literacy-based activities would be high; (2) feeling the need to justify to themselves the idea of "venturing off from the textbook as curriculum;" (3) finding the time to include resources beyond the textbook and its ancillary materials; and (4) having theoretical and practical knowledge of literacy instruction. These individual profiles are followed by a cross-case analysis, which integrates the spectrum of teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices so as to

provide a broader understanding of the how, what, and why of MS FL classroom literacy-based instruction in this particular research context. Interview and questionnaire data provided evidence of teacher beliefs and knowledge, while data from the many classroom observations, and teacher logs provided evidence of teacher practices as they related to stated beliefs and knowledge.

	Total Years Teaching	Total Years in School District	Total Years Teaching MS Level	Languages Teaching (2007-08)	Curricular Model Used at School	Highest Degree Earned
Benjamin	7	2	2	Spanish	Exploratory, Yearlong	B.A. (Spanish)
Rémy	12	12	12	French, Spanish	Exploratory, Yearlong	Ph.D. (Educational Policy)
Thomas	18	1	1	French	Exploratory, International Baccalaureate Yearlong	Ph.D. (FLED)
Victor	28	19	11	French, Spanish, German	Exploratory, Yearlong	M.A (French)

Table 4.1: Participant demographics

Benjamin at Logan MS

The only Spanish-teaching participant is Benjamin, who has a B.A. in Spanish and Latin American studies with a literature focus. Benjamin has been a Spanish teacher

for over seven years. He has taught middle and high school students in a few different school districts. He has traveled, lived, and taught abroad. In fact, he taught Spanish to Spanish and English speaking children in an English school while living in Central America for one year. He began taking foreign language education classes as a requirement to receive his state teacher's license, which he received prior to the start of this study; he taught on a temporary license for six years. Prior to that, he had never been exposed to foreign language education courses.

The student population at Logan MS is growing quickly every year. In the 2007-2008 school year, there were fourteen mobile modular classroom units on the school's grounds. There are plans to add four mobile modular classroom units per school year until the school building is slated for remodeling in 2012. Benjamin's classes currently meet in one of these mobile classrooms. At Logan MS, FL studies are considered an elective course. Benjamin teaches Spanish to sixth, seventh, and eighth graders.

As the yearlong classes (seventh and eighth grades only) have a maximum number of thirty-three students, the seating is especially tight in the mobile classroom setting. This restrictive classroom size inherently limits the amount of movement students are able to do in each class meeting, and at the same time emphasizes how classroom management and noise levels are important factors in the day-to-day teaching experience. With the high number of desks placed in the mobile classroom, there are certain vantages from which it is quite difficult to see the board, or to see and hear the teacher. These factors have led Benjamin to switch student seating every two weeks. Even though the

classroom has a portable LCD projector, it was stolen midway through the year so he could no longer use certain ancillary materials provided by the textbook publisher (e.g., DVD). For instruction, he primarily uses the overhead and white board, and on occasion a CD player. Considering his use of TPRS methods this year, this setting is not ideal. [For readers who are unfamiliar with the acronym TPRS which is well known in FLED, the following description should be helpful: "TPRS, an acronym that once stood for Total Physical Response Storytelling, is now known as and is more accurately described as **T**eaching **P**roficiency through **R**eading and **S**torytelling." (Gaab, 2005, para. 1, original bolding).] When students act out the stories, there is limited space in which to create the scene. Visibility of the enactment is hampered due to desk arrangements for thirty-three students, and it is often difficult to hear the students speaking Spanish.

"Classroom environments provide strong messages to students about the use and importance of print and literacy" (Pérez & Torres-Guzmán, 2002, p. 216). Despite the size limitations of his classroom space, Benjamin has made a concerted effort to provide a FL print-rich environment that can assist his students in their biliteracy development (Malloy, 1998; Pérez & Torres-Guzmán, 2002; Redmond, 1994). There are several travel posters and a few grammar posters displayed around the room. A large sombrero, examples of Mexican crafts, Benjamin's guitar, and a serape are scattered throughout this tight space as well. Above the white board is a banner with the word "*Bienvenidos*!" (Welcome!) with each letter printed in a different color, and on the white board itself are magnets or index cards with basic Spanish vocabulary and their English equivalents: days

of the week, months of the year, and question words (who, what, when, where, why). Student work is displayed on the back wall's bulletin board. The visual and print environment relays a message to students that this teacher values written Spanish language, its grammar, and Latino culture.

Benjamin is not currently active in any professional organizations, although he feels he should be. He says he relies on others in the district to share professional information with him on FL instructional practices and ideas. He does attend workshops and occasionally seminars, but only when it is required or when the district pays any fees. Nonetheless, Benjamin is incredibly open to "experimenting" in his classroom with new ideas and approaches, and he embraces opportunities to try something different, as long as he feels it will benefit his students. This year happens to be one of those experimental years: "My teaching is going through a transition towards a more TPRS classroom because of my own experiences and because of a lot of the research I've read and anecdotal evidence."

We discussed on several occasions the fact that had this study fallen on another year, the data here would be quite different. Table 4.2 presents a summary of Benjamin's beliefs, knowledge, and practices of literacy-based instruction. It provides an overview of the narrative that follows, in which the reader will see how comprehension motivates and shapes his instruction.

	Beliefs	Knowledge	Practices
Benjamin	• Reading input must be comprehensible • Writing demonstrates what students have internalized or memorized • Grammar skills will eventually develop • Comprehension of texts will lead to confidence in using FL, which will lead to becoming literate	• Undergraduate Spanish language & literature major • Never had specific training in teaching reading or writing in Spanish • FLED courses for licensing requirements • Workshop addressing FL proficiency through literacy • Not a current member of any professional organization • Father of a toddler • Lived, traveled & taught abroad	• Reading & writing warm-up exercises • Storytelling through TPRS • Group readings • Translation work • Free writes • Seventh grade students read short novel written for FL students

Table 4.2: Summary of Benjamin's FL literacy beliefs, knowledge, and practices

Benjamin's Beliefs on Literacy-Based Instruction

Benjamin stated his beliefs on literacy, and specifically on reading and writing in Spanish at the MS level through the initial questionnaire and through our interviews. Below in his own words are his current beliefs, some of which are more established than are others:

I don't believe in making students read something that they don't understand at least 90% of. The reason is because they must stay interested and be able to get the meaning. Also, an understandable reading provides reinforcement and more input for vocabulary that the students understand while providing comprehensible context for vocabulary that is not understood.

Reading should be an input exercise that is comprehensible. Students should understand most of what is written, but also see it written in a grammatically correct context.

As far as writing goes, I'm really not sure what I truly believe yet. I am experimenting with just giving students a topic or a couple of vocab. words and 10 minutes to write as much as they can….I try to use writing as an assessment tool more than a teaching tool though, so the topics are always somewhat familiar to the students.

For me, writing is a way of assessing how much the students have put into their long-term memory. I try not to mark off for things like grammar deficiency because I believe that correct grammar will eventually develop.

Despite a lack of training in FL reading instruction, Benjamin's beliefs on FL reading acquisition seem to be clear and defined, possibly a result of his teaching and parenting experiences. However, his beliefs on FL writing are less firm and are even in a state of transition because he is so open to experimenting with the format and purpose of writing assignments, so open to changing what he has tried in the past. He believes reading to be a source of linguistic input. Yet, he shared that his students don't typically use reading as a primary way to learn vocabulary, grammar, or syntax. He believes writing provides a window onto what students have digested and perhaps even mastered. But because he

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currently views writing as more of an assessment tool, his students are not using writing

as a vehicle for self-expression and personal meaning making, a source of meaningful

linguistic output (Swain, 2000). It would seem then that regardless of the state of a

teacher's beliefs (either fixed or transitioning), practices may, or may not, reflect those

beliefs at all. Indeed this supports the notion that beliefs are not always put into practices

(Borg, 2005).

Even though Benjamin has never taken a course specifically focused on FL

reading or writing instruction, when asked how he would conceptualize emergent reading

and writing in a FL, Benjamin wrote the following:

> I really think that very new students are able to read rather quickly as long
> as what they are reading is comprehensible and interesting. Reading can
> start with very short phrases and limited vocabulary. I recently saw
> something that said that over half of our adult vocabulary comes from
> reading, so reading is a very important tool for learning new words and
> phrases.

From these remarks, it appears that Benjamin believes in providing the MS language

learner with reading and writing opportunities that are manageable by the students. For

example, such opportunities means that literacy-based instruction consists of familiar

topics or stories and includes a focused amount of language (e.g., vocabulary, grammar)

such that a learner's level of confidence is built gradually over time as they are called

upon to use that language in context. For him, comprehension is the main objective at this

stage. Moreover, he believes comprehension is paramount in order for someone to

become literate in another language. This belief is evident again in his stated

conceptualization of the term "literacy" on two different occasions:

> I definitely think of reading, but I think of it more along the lines of
> comprehension than just being able to read a word. I could probably teach
> somebody how to read all Spanish words, like teaching them the phonetics
> of it, but I don't think they would be literate…unless they knew what it
> meant.

> I don't know that a student can learn to read and write if they can't
> understand anything they're reading.

Benjamin's Knowledge

Like all teachers, Benjamin's knowledge base includes personal and professional

experiences. For FL teachers, personal experiences not only include those experiences as

a student in a language classroom (see Grossman, 1990, and Lortie, 2005, for a

discussion of the apprenticeship of observation), but also as a traveler/student in a target

language country. Benjamin's language studies began when he was in middle school "in

a rather traditional way using a textbook," he shared. He continued his Spanish studies at

college. When he realized he couldn't speak or understand Spanish very well, he decided

to go abroad. Indeed, travel and study abroad opportunities have admittedly made him

who he is today:

> For me, I definitely don't think I would be the same person without that
> type of international experience. I don't think I would have near the
> amount of knowledge that I do have. I don't know if I would be able to
> teach as well as I do.

Not only have these experiences influenced him as an individual (a learner and speaker of

Spanish) in terms of proficiency and cultural knowledge, but also as a teacher with his

focus on building confidence and providing comprehensible input to his students.

> I was basically teaching the way that I had been brought up learning,
> which worked okay to an extent for me, but the confidence I was talking
> to you about, that I try to instill in my students, or I try to promote as
> much as I can in my classroom, was not there until I left the country and
> lived in Costa Rica for eight months or so. And, then when I came back, it
> was a whole lot easier for me…cause I had that confidence.

Being the father of a two-year old toddler also serves as a personal knowledge

base for Benjamin. As he observes his child develop his own abilities in language

(comprehension and production) in addition to developing reading skills (from concepts

of print to creative/dramatic expansion), Benjamin's teaching has been effected: "I think

having a child also has helped my understanding of how we learn language." As a result,

he sees possibilities with his students he had not considered before becoming a parent.

Professional knowledge, which includes general pedagogical knowledge, subject

matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986), as well as

knowledge of context (Grossman, 1990; Shulman, 1986), are most often constructed

through course work/graduate studies and are supported through professional

development opportunities (either voluntary or required) such as seminars, workshops, or

conferences. He stated:

> I didn't come from an education background, and I majored in Spanish
> and Latin American studies. And, so most of the stuff I learned was not
> from a teacher's perspective at all, it was from a student's perspective, and

> so the kind of classes I took were literature, linguistics, and history type classes, and not necessarily how to teach somebody Spanish. It wasn't until I was already teaching that I went back to school to work on getting my initial certificate… And, I definitely think that was helpful.

As Benjamin stated before, he began teaching the way he learned Spanish, and realized there were limitations to such an approach (Grossman, 1990).

Over the years, however, he gained teaching experience and had additional in-service training. But he prefers workshops because he gets "a lot more from hearing about stuff from other teachers than I have out of being in the classroom, learning about how to teach." While his education classes presented theory and some methodology, he never had any specific training in reading instruction in the foreign language. "And, there was not even a whole lot taught about reading. Thinking back…yeah, I don't remember even talking about input to reading."

In an article on reading research challenges, Bernhardt (2003) remarks that the "most pressing issue for reading instruction is the preparation of teachers to ensure that they have the knowledge or skill to diagnose and assess children's progress" (p. 115). If we accept the proposal from ELA researchers (Deford, 1985; Duffy & Anderson, 1984) "that teachers' choices of methods for teaching reading are based on their theoretical orientations toward reading instruction" (Ketner, Smith & Parnell, 1997, p. 213), then it seems reasonable to say that without any training or knowledge of reading theories and methods, it would be difficult for ELA teachers to make appropriate instructional decisions when

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conducting reading lessons in their classrooms. Likewise, without specific

training and knowledge of the FL reading process, it is more difficult for FL

teachers to adequately assist their students in their FL literacy work. For teachers

like Benjamin who acquire an initial license through an alternative preparation

program and not through a teacher education program, it is probable that without

such training, their instruction of reading in the FL is heavily based on the

provided classroom materials and the recall of their own learning experiences. In

other words, such teachers are at a particularly great disadvantage when it comes

to instructing reading in the FL because their theoretical knowledge may be very

limited. Benjamin did say that writing was addressed in the education courses he

eventually took, but indicated that it most likely was so because the production of

writing in the FL is a more transparent act than reading in it, and teachers can

assess students' writing abilities more easily than they can students' reading

abilities.

　　Benjamin attended a full-day seminar last year on improving student proficiency.

The packet he received included background on learning theories and then provided

multiple examples of how to incorporate activities focused around oral communication,

skits and dialogues, slang and idioms, reading, poetry, film, music, art, and games. At the

session, the presenter demonstrated several literacy-based projects in detail:

> I was telling [you] about the lady who did the reading workshop. She
> based a lot of her books on children's books like *Good Night Moon*. That's
> a great way to teach vocabulary through reading, or she had this one called

'This is a house', and it would start with, a door, just a door, in Spanish, and you'd be saying, "Is this a house? No, that's not a house, it's a door." And then it would have the door and window, "Is this a house? No, it's not a house, it's a door and window." So, yeah, I think it serves kind of the same purpose as asking seemingly obvious questions, while telling a story…. I think that the repetition of that definitely is useful, and you find that in children's books way more so than you find it anywhere else.

He said he attended because he was interested in the topic and the district paid for it. He not only enjoyed what was shared that day but also greatly benefited from it. In fact, many of the activities Benjamin included this year were directly built upon examples taken from this workshop. This suggests that focused literacy-based professional development opportunities for FL teachers should not only be offered, but also financially supported in order for teachers like Benjamin (who are perhaps less assertive about seeking out professional development opportunities) to take full advantage.

Benjamin's Practices

Every class begins with a warm-up activity called *¡Vámonos ya!* (Let's go!), which typically includes an overarching question, posed in either Spanish or English, followed by two questions. The students may have to respond to the questions, or translate them from English into Spanish. (All students kept a running log of their responses as these would be collected from time to time for grading purposes.) After a few minutes, Benjamin called on individual students to answer the questions – read what they wrote – and at that time, he could clarify any questions on vocabulary or sentence

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structure, ask students to translate, or even ask expansion questions, such as: *Porqué* (why)?, *Cómo* (how)?, *Quién* (who)?, *Qué* (what)?, and *Cuándo* (when)? Sometimes, this warm-up was conducted solely in Spanish, and sometimes it was conducted in Spanish and English. And while he always encouraged students to speak in Spanish, he also allowed students to use English to express themselves, which he would then translate into Spanish, so that communication could occur.

Research has revealed that learners need comprehensible input in order to create comprehensible output (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004; Krashen, 1989; Swain, 2000). One way of providing such input is by teaching in the target language, "a 'given' in the world of FL teaching" (Maun, 2006, p. 112, original quote marks). Yet the recommendations to the question of *How much of my instruction should be in the target language?* still vary from the specific terms of "exclusively" or "95-100% of the time" (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004, p. 33), to the generic "learners need to attend to large amounts of comprehensible input in the target language" (Shrum & Glisan, 2000, p. 133). As such, the FL teacher is ultimately left to promote and practice her or his own personal beliefs of how much target language to use. For Benjamin, the fact that he asked each student to begin his or her day in Spanish class reading, thinking, and writing in Spanish, and <u>fully understanding</u> what they just produced in the FL was most important. He always sought verification be it in English or Spanish that the students comprehended what was being asked of them in that day's warm-up activity because his belief in comprehension leading to language

development was stronger than his belief in any recommended amount of target language use in the classroom.

Because he read a book on TPRS (Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling) last year, Benjamin decided to experiment with this approach in his classroom this year.

> So…the reason I've been doing TPR storytelling, or at least trying to do it this year was pretty much just reading a little book on it. And, you know, I heard about it, and I've talked to teachers who've done it, plus our textbook does come with a little supplemental book that does have TPR stories for it.

Typically, there were a few new vocabulary words or phrases written on the board to assist students in understanding the story about to be told; these would be reviewed first. Ahead of time on note cards, Benjamin wrote out short stories he often created himself; they were maybe five to ten sentences long. He typically tried to make the stories humorous, or silly in some manner because "if kids think it's hilarious or funny, or memorable in some way, then I can stay with it." In other words, students stayed focused on the tale when it piqued their interest. Next, volunteer actors were requested to help act out the scene. The class was always invited to provide the name of important elements of the story, such as the names of characters, the places (e.g., restaurants), character preferences (likes/dislikes), and so on, which invests the students in the story and their learning (Redmond, 1994). Benjamin would read the story. The volunteers acted it out. Benjamin would intermittently ask comprehension questions during the entire

storytelling. Students asked final questions. A follow-up writing activity ensued (e.g., students translated the story from Spanish to English). The methods used in TPRS are an appropriate fit for MS students and their learning needs (Caskey, & Anfara, 2007; Verkler, 1994). Yet even as Benjamin utilized the TPRS techniques, which focus on providing a great amount of contextualized comprehensible input "along side gestures, visual imagery, spatial imagery, spatial memory aides, body language and voice inflection" (Gaab, 2006, para. 6), the mobile classroom hindered many of these exact techniques as the amount of space available to role play was limited while the vantage for viewing these performances was impeded from certain angles in a small classroom space filled with thirty-three students. From observations, it seemed clear that students enjoyed storytelling as a way of learning Spanish. While his practices here reflect his stated beliefs of making instruction highly comprehensible, he also sought justification for his decision to use TPRS by positioning its use as being aligned with the textbook's ancillaries. In this way, if any questions arose from stakeholders (e.g., parents, administrators), his choice would be justified as being grounded in the curriculum.

An alternative to acting out the teacher-read stories was a group reading. Often the class would read stories together from the overhead projector. Students were first asked to read the story silently. The teacher would then read aloud one sentence at a time and model the correct pronunciation. The students would repeat the sentence in order to work on pronunciation. Afterwards, a volunteer would translate that sentence into English. Benjamin then asked comprehension questions such as: *¿Quién canta?* (Who

sings?); *¿Cómo es la mujer?* (What is the woman like?); *¿Qué deben hacer?* (What should they do?). This repetition of basic questions allowed Benjamin to verify comprehension while also providing comprehensible input for all students, a critical component in his conceptualization of FL literacy. While this activity was more conventional, and certainly less entertaining to students, it is a better match with Benjamin's beliefs on reading and writing. When using TPRS, linguistic input stems from oral and visual cues, not written text. Both reading and writing are used as culminating activities, the written extension of understanding non-written input. Students receive oral input and physically demonstrate comprehension (either through acting out the scene appropriately, or by responding to comprehension questions during the storytelling), then they would read and write by translating the stories into English. In the alternate activity, written text and the act of reading are the sources of linguistic input. Comprehension stems from an interaction with text, which Benjamin hopes is 90% comprehensible to his students. While some in SLA agree with Benjamin's position on comprehensibility of texts (Krashen, 1989; Swain, 2000), there are others who claim that it is through authentic texts that language students gain the most linguistically (Malloy, 1998; Maun, 2006; Maxim, 2002; Swaffar, 1985) because students learn about the language and the culture simultaneously. Because he created all the stories himself, it seems that the use of authentic texts figures less prominently into Benjamin's belief system on FL literacy than does storytelling in general.

As the Spanish textbook offers an ancillary guidebook on using TPRS in the classroom, which is filled with ready-made stories along with images to be used for creating those same or new stories, Benjamin felt he was not venturing too far away from the district curriculum in taking a different approach this school year. But, he struggled with this experimentation in a few ways during the course of the study: (1) students were not used to this approach and this made him question whether it was a good choice as opposed to sticking to the more conventional textbook-based instruction; (2) if the story was of no interest to the students, they were lax in participating and this made it difficult to check their comprehension level of new vocabulary and grammar; and (3) the potential of taking this approach in different directions was great and thus exciting, however, he still had to make it work within the typical academic calendar (e.g., class schedule, holidays, grading periods) and district requirements (e.g., curriculum, textbook chapters). Student feedback to a teacher survey in December 2007 indicated an overwhelmingly positive response to learning Spanish in this manner, which encouraged Benjamin to nonetheless continue with this approach despite the afore-noted challenges.

Writing activities were also revamped this year in his class, in part due to the workshop he attended last year where he learned about different writing assessment tools. In lieu of asking students to write a piece using selected verbs and tenses a specific number of times, he began experimenting with timed free writes where students needed to meet a specific word count within a given time frame (50-80 words within 10 minutes). Students were free to write about anything using the language and structures

they already knew how to create. When he began doing this exercise in the second quarter, grades were assigned based on the number of words written; if the minimum word count was not met, points were deducted. When students made grammatical or spelling errors, no points were deducted as long as they met the minimum word requirement. Benjamin estimated that students would use the language they were most familiar with and most comfortable in using. He wanted the students to demonstrate the language they had already mastered so as to promote confidence in the students' use and understanding of Spanish. When asked how he felt they were doing as of the end of December 2007, he said,

> I'm pleased with the stuff they write. Most of it, it has fewer errors than I'm used to; most of it does. But it's also because it's pretty focused; they don't have as much language. But they know more how to use the language that they have.

In this way, he felt that the students were more accurate in their writing because he thought they more fully comprehended and had mastered the language they produced. Counter to Benjamin's understanding expressed in the quote above, however, student feedback to a teacher survey about the free writes led Benjamin to modify his approach in the third quarter. Students stated they felt so nervous about writing in Spanish as well as pressured to meet the word quota that they ended up writing the same kinds of sentences over and over just to fill up the page – the writing exercise became less about comprehension and confidence building and more about "getting a decent grade." In response to this feedback, Benjamin changed these writing activities second semester.

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Some of the changes included (a) giving more specific prompts, so as to better frame the writing piece for the students in lieu of just asking them to write about anything at all; (b) minimum word requirements were no longer enforced and more time was given to write; however, (c) points were consequently deducted for grammatical, vocabulary and spelling inaccuracies. These changes fell in line with Benjamin's general beliefs about writing. Because these beliefs in particular were less established, they were more flexible and open to being shaped because they did not require a "gestalt shift" (Pajares, 1992).

Benjamin often asked students to translate because he feels this activity allows them to demonstrate their vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. For example, as an individual activity, he would hand out a copy of the story the students had acted out, that he had read to the class, and which they had read together with partners. Each student was to then provide a translation of the story to the best of her/his ability. He feels that this kind of activity allows him to verify their comprehension, in addition to providing the students an opportunity to receive what he refers to as "an easy grade," after all, they are quite familiar with the story by the time they are assessed on their translations. Malloy (2001) discusses the value of translation work in MS students' biliteracy development. Her discussion centers around the benefits that students at this age glean from moving between languages, seeing that one-to-one relationships do not always exist when translating texts, and learning that different peoples have different ways of expressing similar things (e.g., talking about the weather). However, while Benjamin's use of such translation activities embodies his belief in comprehensibility and literacy as

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essential in language acquisition, it is partially motivated out of the structure of grading, meaning that teacher beliefs and knowledge are not the only influences on teacher practices.

In sum, Benjamin's beliefs in comprehensibility of input and in the eventual development of grammar skills did not seem to be challenged in this year of experimentation. However, it seemed that his belief in the idea that comprehension leads to confidence and in writing as a demonstration of language ownership was somewhat challenged when students reported that their nerves and grade anxiety led them to use certain strategies and not necessarily to feel confidence or mastery when completing free writes. Nonetheless, he maintained his underlying goal of building students' comprehension of and confidence in using Spanish, particularly in its written form, throughout the year.

Three other things that seemed to heavily influence his classroom practices this year were: (1) he read a book on TPRS; (2) as a parent, he witnesses language development through reading every day; and (3) he attended a workshop that modeled specific reading and writing experiences. As such, his changing knowledge base affected his practices. However, other influences are visible in his activity choices, including assessments and grading as well as his need of validation in using a TPRS approach this year in contrast to a more traditional, textbook-driven approach. This was particularly interesting as it implies that personal and professional interests in varied instructional approaches may be constrained by the school's curriculum. As such, a teacher's

professional development may also become constrained and narrowed by, and thus

narrowed to, only those possibilities that may exist within the textbook or curriculum.

This inadvertent result seems to run counter to the premise of professional development.

Rémy at Milton MS

Rémy has been teaching MS FL courses in Archer County for twelve years and

has only taught at the MS level. His undergraduate studies were in French literature, and

he holds a higher degree in the area of educational leadership and policy. Rémy has lived

and studied in Paris, France.

On a rotating quarter schedule, Rémy teaches both French and Spanish as an

exploratory course available to sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. Additionally, he

teaches the yearlong French classes for seventh and eighth graders. Similar to Benjamin's

school, FL studies are offered as one of many elective course options. Pérez & Torres-

Guzmán (2002) mention the benefits of having a classroom where students have

opportunities to move around, to experience a print-rich language environment, and to

have tangible items available for visual and manipulative purposes. He teaches in a

classroom in the school's main building, which is separated from the adjoining classroom

by a partition wall. He is fortunate in that the sizeable classroom allows him to display

student work, along with multiple language and culture posters. There is also ample space

for storing different materials (e.g., paper, scissors, markers) and props (e.g., suitcase

with clothing) that might be needed when conducting lessons or projects. This year,

Rémy has enjoyed the addition of using the LCD projector as it allows him to share real-time materials without having to reserve the computer lab. For instruction, Rémy primarily uses the overhead, the white board, and the technology resources (e.g., CD-Rom, DVD, Internet).

Rémy is an enthusiastic teacher who thoroughly enjoys teaching students at this level. He often elects to participate in district staff development opportunities for continuous self-improvement, and he is currently active in national and local professional organizations for FL teachers. Rémy says he bases his current practice on past personal experience, ideas from colleagues, and ideas gleaned from teacher resources. Table 4.3 presents a summary of Rémy's beliefs, knowledge, and practices of literacy-based instruction. His communication-oriented instruction is grounded in "best practices" pedagogy, and his knowledge of the MS FL classroom setting is strong. Yet he lacks specific training in FL literacy-based instruction, and has been using the textbook as his curriculum. In the narrative that follows, the reader will note that some of the challenges he faces are not uncommon in the field.

	Beliefs	Knowledge	Practices
Rémy	• Literacy is the ability to communicate • Instruction should be solely conducted in the FL • Comprehensible input leads to language acquisition • Teaching involves (a) modeling, (b) practice, and (c) feedback	• Undergraduate French language & literature major • Ph.D. in educational policy and leadership • Never had specific training in teaching reading or writing in French • Knowledge of FLED based on professional development not through teacher training program • Twelve years teaching FL literacy to middle school students • Regularly attends district in-services (however, not many focus on FL reading & writing) • Active member of state FL educator organization • Lived, traveled & studied abroad	• Reading & writing warm-up exercises • Formulaic instruction; has been following textbook closely • Eighth grade students read short novel written for FL students • *Dictées* (dictations) • Class reading of online French newspaper

Table 4.3: Summary of Rémy's FL literacy beliefs, knowledge, and practices

Rémy's Beliefs on Literacy-Based Instruction

Rémy understands literacy in terms of overall communication. This position

seems to be built on his teaching experiences and on the district's current program focus

on oral proficiency. He stated:

> Literacy for me is the ability to communicate, whether it be through spoken or written language, and for the foreign language learner, I think that means giving skills to become proficient with speaking and writing and reading…at the appropriate level.

> If I'm getting meaning across, I think that's the key. And to me, that's part of the definition of literacy especially with foreign language, students are able to circumlocute, or if they can even substitute something that makes sense, for me, I'm okay with that.

While he mentions both production and comprehension skills as being a part of literacy,

it is important to note the inherent dichotomy of the teaching atmosphere. That is, both

the district wide French program and textbook focus more on oral production than on

reading and writing skills at the beginning level (see the materials analysis review later in

this chapter). Rémy also knows "a lot of these students are never gonna use this" once

they have completed school. As such, his conceptualization of literacy has developed into

one focused on the general concept of communication, of understanding and of being

understood in the language. Thus, those FL reading and writing skills that Rémy

considers as perhaps having the greatest longevity, in terms of students' future use, are

those that he does not focus on the most in the classroom.

> I personally think the reading and writing development piece would benefit them more later if they are those people who will never speak the

language again…I mean the reading and writing part might be the one thing they would use if they ever went somewhere…I'd like to interject more of the reading and writing, but I just, I have to work on that piece myself.

In this way, his more global concept of language as a means of communication, and the ways in which that communication might occur (oral and written) are constrained at this juncture such that one area is favored over another: "I have always kind of thought the speaking piece has taken a little bit more center stage." As such, Rémy's beliefs have been reshaped by the district's instructional focus, and his instructional practices then only partially reflect his beliefs.

Rémy believes in providing as much input in the target language as possible. Rarely, if ever, does he use English with his students in the classroom. His belief in the exclusive use of French (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004) is such a part of him that it has been a point of conflict this year as he has grappled with the idea of coming out of the target language in order to give guidance or instruction in reading and writing in French. This point will be revisited later under the "practices" section.

Rémy believes in using a simple formula when teaching: (1) modeling, (2) practice, and (3) feedback. This Input-Response-Feedback (IRF) approach (Wells, 1993, as cited in Shrum & Glisan, 2000) naturally shifts the focus of instruction from evaluation to communicative meaning making. As he puts it, "I try to give them, I think, an opportunity to practice before they get to an assessment kind of situation where it really kind of counts for more." For example, when describing how he conducts reading

activities with the class, he said, "I think I'm doing a little bit more modeling first, like reading a paragraph for them, and then having different volunteers reading the same thing over, and over, and over again." It is his belief that this scaffolding has helped students build the necessary foundation in language learning to move on and be successful at the next level. But it is interesting to note that these comments on his teaching formula are tempered with the reality of graded assessments; the academic system of grading student work simultaneously supports and imposes upon his beliefs of FL literacy instruction.

Rémy's Knowledge

As personal (e.g., experience as a teacher and learner of a FL) and professional knowledge (e.g., course work, workshops) interface to create the teacher's knowledge base, so too is it clear here that each is an individual in what he knows and how he came about knowing it. Professionally, Rémy's knowledge base centers around a few key elements: (1) he holds a higher degree in educational leadership and policy and not in FLED; (2) he has exclusively taught at the middle school level; and (3) he regularly seeks out professional development opportunities through the district.

Rémy holds a higher degree in educational leadership and policy; thus, his studies focused on an area other than foreign language pedagogy. When it comes to pedagogical content knowledge (Grossman, 1990; Lortie, 2005; Shulman, 1986) regarding the instruction of reading and writing, he admits,

> I never had foreign language pedagogy instruction with reading, or
> writing, to my knowledge. It was just always embedded into the

communicative nature of language learning. So I don't think in isolation I've ever received anything focused like that, which means perhaps it would be interesting to see a course with that particular focus.

Limited knowledge of FL literacy-based instruction, such as Rémy's, is of concern to the profession and to teacher educators at all levels. We know now that "subject matter knowledge must be coupled with learning subject-specific pedagogy, particularly understanding the critical role of representation in subject matter teaching and being able to construct and evaluate appropriate representations" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; p. 258). The capacity to construct appropriate representations demonstrates a deep intellectual and practical understanding of the subject matter one teaches. This is not to say that veteran FL teachers lack a deep understanding of their subject matter in general. However, this example here suggests that perhaps a deeper understanding of how biliteracy is developed does not fully exist, and neither does a knowledge of how to create a representation of biliteracy learning in the MS FL classroom. In other words, even veteran teachers may need explicit modeling of reading and writing instruction as taught from a "continua of biliteracy" (Hornberger, 1989) development perspective, which stands in contrast to a curriculum coverage perspective. It would seem that current situations still beg the question Shulman (1986) once posed: "How does the teacher prepare to teach something never previously learned?" (p. 8). MS FL teachers, like Rémy, need support in filling in those specific gaps that may exist in their subject-specific pedagogical knowledge.

The fact that Rémy has only ever taught at the MS level translates into an intimate

knowledge of this age group: 11-14 year olds. As Verkler (1994) discusses, differences

do exist between middle and high school pedagogy. Her study revealed:

> In general, middle school foreign language teachers, in accordance with middle school philosophy as well as current second language acquisition theory, appear to utilize a more personalized, communicative, and affective approach (with much interaction, physical activity, games, and integrated curriculum) than that employed by high school foreign language teachers. (p. 23, original parentheses)

Indeed, observations of his classes revealed a practiced yet intuitive balance of "fun" and

"work" that co-mingled humor, fairness, and high expectations of student accountability.

Having such knowledge of context (Grossman, 1990; Shulman, 1986), including a

familiarity with students at this age, Rémy is seemingly able to create a learning

atmosphere wherein students' affective filters are lowered (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004;

Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982; Omaggio Hadley, 1993; Verkler, 1994) and where

contextualized language is supported (Cummins, 1981; Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004;

Omaggio Hadley, 1993; Verkler, 1994). For example, when he decided to use the Lisa

Ray Turner and Blaine Ray book called *Pauvre Anne* (2000) in his eighth grade class, he

commented:

> I only read like the first chapter, intentionally, to kind of get their interest and capture their attention. And, they seemingly are into it, because even today, I heard a comment…which you know from middle school, when sarcasm comes out that it's something they enjoy; they want to know more of what's going on.

Another example came when he discussed a game students played one day in class: " It's really a competitive thing, which middle school is supposed to de-emphasize. But what I have learned is the more competition you can introduce, the more the kids love it." He has come to know and understand the MS learner.

Rémy takes advantage of professional development opportunities provided through the district by attending the monthly meetings held for MS teachers. He attends these meetings in order to glean ideas from colleagues so as to improve his own teaching. At these gatherings, MS FL teachers working in Archer County take turns sharing strategies, activities, and other ideas that they utilize in their individual classrooms. But as Grossman (1990) cautions: "Learning from experience may focus more on "what works" than on overall goals for instruction" (p. 16). It is thus important that shared teacher knowledge be grounded in the scholarly knowledge of not only how, but also in the what and why (Shulman, 1986) of FLED.

This school year (2007-2008), he has also been involved with a school-based initiative on writing, which was put together especially with the eighth graders in mind in order to help prepare them for the state's writing exams in the spring. However, Rémy has not been able to pull much from that development opportunity as an instructor of FL. That is, he has had difficulty in transferring that ELA information into practice when the teaching context is shifted to the FL classroom as he sees no correlation between the writing instruction he gives to his beginning level foreign language students and the writing strategies discussed by the writing committee meetings for eighth grade English

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students. Put another way, whereas eighth grade students have had years of training and experience in writing in English upon which they might draw for their writing assignments and assessments, his eighth grade FL students only began developing their foreign language writing skills in the seventh grade and their skills are therefore not as developed or practiced in French as they are in English. Thus, a disconnect exists between what he has been doing and learning about with this writing group and what and how he actually teaches in his French class. Even though Rémy had opportunities to meet with colleagues teaching ELA or a FL at the MS level, these interactions may or may not have been perceived as applicable to his particular classroom situation or student needs. This means that such meetings were centered more so on general pedagogical knowledge (Shulman, 1986) (e.g., cognitive benefits from writing) rather than on subject matter or content knowledge (e.g., how to teach reading or writing skills in the FL). As such, the "how," "what," and "why" (Shulman, 1986) behind the professional development opportunity become lost in the transfer from one discipline to another, and is seen to serve little purpose in the other context (e.g., the FL classroom). Such shortfalls become salient when supported by research such as that by Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman and Yoon (2001) who claim, "our results give renewed emphasis to the profound importance of subject-matter focus in designing high-quality professional development" (p. 936).

Perhaps Rémy has felt unable to pull directly from an ELA approach because of his personal knowledge and experiences as a FL learner.

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So then, it's kind of hard to reconcile my own previous language learning with what I'm currently doing 'cause they're to me completely different on the sides of the spectrum…I recall doing a lot of reading, but I don't recall any of that at the Level One…not what I'm thinking in terms of major things.…I just don't recall getting a lot of that myself as a Level One learner.…I guess I can't make the transfer at that level to the Level One that I'm teaching.

As Grossman (1990) points out, "conceptions of teaching a particular subject are unlikely to develop from the apprenticeship of observation" (p. 11). That is, students only see one facet of teaching (e.g., lecture, classroom activities, grading), and are not necessarily privy to the pedagogical theories, instructional strategies, or curricular guidelines that teachers use. Therefore students have an incomplete conception of what teaching fully entails and are therefore unable to appropriately conceptualize instruction. Based on his own past language learning experiences, Rémy now has difficulty merging those experiences as a French language learner with his role as a French teacher. In particular, he finds it difficult to reconcile his college-level experiences as a student who learned to read and write at more advanced levels in French (essays on the text analysis of French novels) with the language level he has been teaching for over a decade (initial vocabulary and grammar instruction focused primarily on oral proficiency with occasional paragraph writing). In this case, the post-secondary bifurcation of FL studies is evident; Rémy, learned French language in order to study French literature. When this instructional fork is coupled with the concept of the apprenticeship of observation (Grossman, 1990;

Shulman, 1986), then the bifurcation is perpetuated as language students become language teachers.

Some FL scholars have called for the reconsideration of the use of target language literature stating that it should not be reserved for upper level students. Maxim (2002, 2006) has proposed introducing Level One university students to the foreign language's literature as a means of bridging the divide between language and literature instruction in the post-secondary setting. This serves two purposes: (1) it introduces the target language literature that students will later study in depth in the higher level courses, thereby building up their background knowledge of the target language's literary world; and (2) it provides language learners with cultural, structural, and grammatical models of the target language in a contextualized manner that supports their biliteracy development. If the introduction of target language literature were to be adopted at the university level, then future FL majors would have a personal knowledge base of how to introduce reading and writing using literature in their own future classrooms. As it is not common practice, however, it is up to FLED teacher educators to bridge this gap for prospective as well as practicing FL teachers.

Rémy's Practices

Rémy begins each class with a warm-up activity called *Chose du Jour* (The Daily Item), which poses a question based on the vocabulary, grammatical structure, or expressions being learned in the textbook at that time. Students write their response in

their notebooks. (Occasionally then for points, Rémy asks students to turn in their responses from several days of warm-ups.) The teacher then calls on one or two students to answer the question and write it up on the board. This practice stemmed from his desire to include some short reading and writing exercises at the beginning of each class while also getting thirty-three students to focus on beginning their French lessons, taking attendance, and doing other similar administrative things at the start of each class period. The first few students to respond to the prompt are rewarded with (fake) *euros*. Students use these *euros* at the *marché* (market), which Rémy opens up every five to six weeks. At the *marché*, students may purchase token items such as pencils, or bracelets. He has found that if he rewards student participation not only with points but also with small items, they are more accountable and responsible in class. At the beginning of the class period, he appoints a *secrétaire* (secretary) who is to note the names of those students who participate orally during the class. This strategy developed out of a need to manage a class of thirty-three, while also out of a desire to encourage oral practice. These beginning-of-class practices demonstrate Rémy's intimate knowledge of MS students, as Verkler (1994) discussed. He holds students accountable for the course content (through The Daily Item and oral participation tracked through the secretary) and also rewards the students' participation through *euros* at the market as a tangible, fun way to learn the language.

Overall, Rémy feels he had a balanced language learning experience. Apart from one French teacher he remembers who made the students memorize dialogues, his

recollection of learning French involves the communicative and grammatical focus together, where one perspective did not outweigh the other. These personal experiences have guided him somewhat with regard to the way he teaches, which is sometimes different from the way in which he himself learned. As an example, he never has his students memorize dialogues or make presentations that are not entirely generated by the students themselves. Additionally, he feels he does emulate "some of the stuff that I remember being done," like using lots of visuals for the Level One learner. Again, the conception of how to teach (or how not to teach as filtered individually) can lead to practices that may be founded more so in personal preferences as opposed to research. Rémy has students create their own dialogues because he never did at this level. This decision is based on personal experience and not on SLA research.

Like the other MS French teachers in Archer County, Rémy follows a pacing guide set by the high school because the textbook is written for Level One high school instruction. Despite the fact that the district has been using its current text for over two years, the pacing guide has changed each year (and is to be revised again in the summer of 2008):

> That's why each year has been a little different, and I've kind of not veered off and done anything too creative, frankly, because I've just been trying to play the game of pacing as determined by the county to see how it fits with the middle school model.

This required pacing has shaped his instruction in two ways. Firstly, he is concerned and perhaps even constrained by covering the text's material per the

pacing guide: "I just didn't want to go off too far down a path and then miss giving the kids a big piece of curriculum that they would need to be successful in Level Two." Secondly, the textbook has become the curriculum: "I've in a sense been a little more formulaic following the textbook more as a curriculum, which I know is not the way to teach, but I have been doing that just to get my hands around the text." While Rémy believes that "reading is I think critical" and "with writing, it is practice essentially, scaffolding, starting with something and then adding to it," he is challenged to find opportunities to introduce reading and writing and to feel comfortable in doing so. That is, reading and writing instruction outside of the textbook and its ancillaries comes to be seen as "tangents" and "detours" over which Rémy is forced to make strategic judgments (Shulman, 1986) as to if, when, and how they might be interjected.

Another area where Rémy has felt fairly conflicted this year has been providing literacy-based instruction at the cost of coming out of the target language. As Krashen's input hypothesis has become well known and popularized in FLED (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004; Omaggio Hadley, 1993; Shrum & Glisan, 2000), it is a "given" (Maun, 2006, p. 112) that teachers conduct class in the target language for they provide the main source of linguistic input for students. If teachers do not do this, it seems that some, like Rémy, feel as if they have shirked an obligation:

> I think with reading, I will talk a little bit more in English about reading strategies first…trying to find cognates, trying to find the gist, using picture cues, or whatever it is…things that in the past, I wouldn't stress because I would come out of the target language to do that.

But this tension in the profession is not surprising given the assumption that "avoidance of the L1 is synonymous with good teaching" (Edstrom, 2006, p. 276) and the critiques of Krashen's hypothesis, among which are the generally untestable nature of comprehensible input and the diminished role of the learner when the teacher is highlighted as the source of said input (Omaggio Hadley, 1993; Shrum & Glisan, 2000). In the K-8 setting, this tension is evidenced in the opinions given by some experts who clearly state that teachers should not mix languages or translate (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004), while other scholars model how translating and connecting to a student's L1 English training can benefit them linguistically and culturally (Malloy, 2001). Rémy's personal struggle seems to be inherent in the FL profession, and given the different opinions in existence, it seems unlikely to be resolved without further research and discussion, including reflective teacher investigations of their beliefs, knowledge, and practices of using L1 for biliteracy instruction in the FL classroom (Edstrom, 2006).

With the new LCD projector in his classroom, Rémy tried to take advantage of the "real time" opportunities of language and culture learning that the Internet currently affords FL classrooms. When sharing French and Canadian web sites with his students, he often inadvertently engaged in the "translating

event" that Malloy (2001) so enthusiastically supports. For example, he enjoyed

sharing current news articles online from the renowned French newspaper, *Le*

Figaro. Even though the vocabulary was oftentimes beyond his students' current

level, and it was as he stated "a reality check," he also recognized "the fact that

they can comprehend so much of what is out there; I think it's a really neat

motivator, and a boost for them." Interestingly, Rémy did not seem to feel guilty

over coming out of the target language when sharing online current events,

perhaps because he viewed these moments as non assessment-oriented

opportunities to examine culture and language. It would seem then that FL

teachers need to reexamine (and perhaps be taught or guided in how to examine)

those available authentic text materials, be they online or in print, so as to fully

see all the existing possibilities in such materials. Indeed with the proposal to link

education and technology in every classroom (U.S. Department of Education,

2004), the area of linking technology with biliteracy development at the middle

grades level is in need of deeper exploration through further research. Perhaps

too, an investigation of the relationship of teachers' perspectives on biliteracy

development vis-à-vis graded assessments might be worthwhile.

Finding level-appropriate materials was identified as a challenge regarding

reading instruction for students. Rémy was not alone among the participants in

expressing a desire for better and more appropriate reading materials. The

participants indicated a lack of both time and guidelines for selecting such

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materials. This gave the researcher the impression that any outside text selections

were made based on what would work at the moment and on what students

already knew linguistically, what they could "handle." This perspective meant

that selections were made without reflecting upon the long-term biliteracy

development process and without extending students' learning beyond a

controlled textbook-driven experience. As Malloy (2001) suggests, there are

authentic texts (children's books) that FL teachers do not use, and which are not

outside the realm of biliteracy learning possibilities. In her dissertation, she

described the biliteracy learning experience with her students as such:

> The biliteracy lessons in my classes are not monolingually German, and
> the books we read contain much more vocabulary, grammar, and syntax
> than we have yet covered, but the students, nevertheless, are busy at real
> literacy work in an FL. (Malloy, 1998, p. 139)

It would seem then that the perspective that Rémy and other participants have

toward outside texts is heavily influenced by a lack of knowledge of authentic

texts and selecting them as much as it is by academic constraints such as

assessment and textbook requirements.

Rémy would like to find more ways to involve students in longer, more

substantial writing, but again, it is a question of timing. He has been using *dictées*

(dictations) more this year than in the past, and he does feel that students have

benefited from writing short paragraphs with a closer focus on orthography. With

regard to extended, multi-paragraph (suprasentential) writing, his ideal project

would be a play written and performed by the students. But it seems that Rémy

has not "done any direct instruction to the students on how to write" because of a

lack of training in teaching Level One French students to tackle such a task, and

because of his challenge in transferring personal learning experiences to the MS

Level One language classroom context. While he would like to find additional

opportunities to introduce some more open-ended writing projects, he is uncertain

not only as to how that might look within the context he teaches, but also when to

do such a project.

> I just have not felt like there's enough time at this point, for me to attempt
> that, because I haven't figured out how I would construct that or in what
> part of the year that would fit the best when you consider the other
> variables that are going on in the school, like with testing.

Rémy's level of instructional coping (Crookes, 1997) is then based on his lack of

knowledge in biliteracy development for the MS FL classroom as well as on

outside influences, like required state testing. Therefore, he has his students do

shorter writings of one to two sentences, with an occasional paragraph-level

writing assignment for exams or for other quarterly projects, because he

personally does not know how to go about creating a representation of biliteracy

development that works within the constraints of the school's schedule.

As biliteracy development is comprised of the environment as well as a

facilitator (teacher), one without the other is insufficient. An unfortunate finding

was that despite the large classroom size, the FL print-rich environment, and the

available props, Rémy rarely conducted activities that maximized the environment for biliteracy development. Students rarely took part in reading and writing activities (e.g., a reading corner, writing center) that permitted them to freely move around the room. As soon as props were utilized in lessons, they were immediately stored away. Only on a couple of occasions was he observed referring to the language and travel posters surrounding the students. From his comments and practices, it would seem that even experienced FL teachers need some guidance in making literacy-based instruction happen in their classrooms, thereby suggesting a gap in teacher education or professional development opportunities. Reading and writing workshops can greatly benefit MS students in their English classes (Atwell, 1998, 2002); it stands to reason that such instruction would also benefit them in their FL classes. FLED needs to help MS FL teachers envision such learning and feel empowered to bring such experiences to their students.

In sum, several factors seem to be at work either with or counter to MS FL teacher beliefs and knowledge of literacy-based instruction. Personal and professional conflicts, like Rémy's, over materials, target-language use in class, creating appropriate instructional opportunities (e.g., plays, writing workshops), and finding the time and ways to "fit in" more literacy-based instruction are not isolated concerns and should be addressed by the field. The ensuing question then

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is, how will the profession approach the particular challenge of helping MS FL

teachers work through such tensions?

Thomas at Evans MS

Thomas has been teaching for eighteen years. He has taught Social Studies,

French, and ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) in several states and regions

in the United States. He spent four years living and studying in Paris, France. He is

highly trained and has earned two higher degrees in the area of FLED. This makes him

unique in this group of four as his familiarity with relevant FLED research, theories, and

pedagogy is far greater than that of the other participants. Yet, he is always searching for

opportunities to expand his professional knowledge base through course work or other

professional development opportunities (e.g., workshops). This has resulted in the

addition of several endorsements to his teacher's license (e.g., gifted education). Thomas

is also currently active in a few professional organizations for foreign and second

language teachers. His teaching experience has been primarily with high school and

university students, in addition to adult learners in community courses.

This is Thomas's first year teaching in Archer County. This is also the first year

that Thomas has taught MS students. He was not offered a position in the high schools

where he applied, but was offered a position as a MS French teacher, which he decided to

accept even though his experience is with older students. He teaches in one of the

district's two middle schools where the International Baccalaureate Middle Years

Programme is implemented. The focus of instruction at Evans MS then is based on the five areas of interaction that the International Baccalaureate Organization has set forth: (1) Approaches to Learning; (2) Environment; (3) Homo Faber; (4) Health and Social Education; and (5) Community and Service (see www.ibo.org for additional information on this academic program). The aim of this rigorous academic program is to encourage students to become lifelong learners who are active and compassionate and who have intercultural understanding, respect, and appreciation. Entering students are placed onto different academic teams, and while most are placed onto an International Baccalaureate team, a non-International Baccalaureate team exists for those students needing additional support prior to joining an International Baccalaureate team. Traditionally, the non-International Baccalaureate students have performed below a certain score on standardized tests. Thomas teaches on one of the sixth grade International Baccalaureate teams. FL is considered a core class in the International Baccalaureate Programme.

His classroom is in the sixth grade hallway in the main building. While it is smaller than the other two French teacher participants' rooms, it is nonetheless equipped with exactly the same items: white board, filing cabinets, lockers, a bulletin board, tables, LCD projector, desks, and chairs. There are two small windows in the classroom, and doors that lead to the two adjoining classrooms. There is one poster on the wall, which lists the International Baccalaureate areas in the French language. Thomas initially used the bulletin board to display information about the International Baccalaureate Programme (the themes were written in French next to corresponding images), which he

changed second semester to display grammatical information (e.g., verbs, adjectives), alongside his personal mission statement: "Our goal is to prepare students using the best knowledge available regarding foreign language pedagogy and to adapt our materials and methods to achieve success for the greatest number of students." Student work was displayed in the corridor, as there were bulletin boards outside each classroom for such purposes. There were no other examples of French in the classroom environment for students to see or read daily. As such, this classroom environment fell short of the recommended designs for a classroom that encourages biliterate behavior (Pérez & Torres-Guzmán, 2002). Each day he teaches five Level One classes; the number of students per French class with Thomas ranges from eighteen to twenty-four.

Table 4.4 presents a summary of Thomas's beliefs, knowledge, and practices of literacy-based instruction. His beliefs in and knowledge of literacy are deep, yet his practices reflect many of his own beginning language learning experiences. The reader will see how a lack of knowledge of the MS setting and student presents Thomas with many challenges in the narrative that follows.

	Beliefs	Knowledge	Practices
Thomas	• Literacy involves all four language skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening) and culture • Teachers should model FL literacy practices to students • Theoretical underpinnings of FL reading and writing are schemata and interactive skills	• Ph.D. in FLED • Trained in teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) • First year teaching middle school students • First year teaching in district • Active in pursuing professional development opportunities • Active member in local and national FL educator organizations • Lived and studied in France for 4 yrs.	• Weekly proverb or idiomatic expression • Textbook chapter readings • FRED (Free Reading Every Day) program • Decontextualized sentence-level drills (writing) • Short paragraph writing using process writing steps

Table 4.4: Summary of Thomas's FL literacy beliefs, knowledge, and practices

Thomas's Beliefs on Literacy-Based Instruction

Thomas speaks of literacy in one's L1 or one's L2 in terms of using all language skills, yet recognizes that reading and writing are the main elements of the term "literate."

> Well, literacy, when I hear the term, implies reading, writing, speaking and listening, and even maybe some culture in the language, your maternal language. If you are literate in your maternal language, you are supposed to be able to utilize all of those skills.

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So yeah, at least it [literacy] would be based on the language skills, listening, reading, writing, speaking. And then sometimes culture, I think at least, that's what I know of literacy. And obviously the key component there would be reading and writing. If you don't know how to read and write, how literate then can you be?

As such, he understands and thus teaches with the entire picture of language learning in mind – from the mechanical side of the spectrum by "paying attention to phrases, idiomatic expressions and grammatical structures" to the functional side by "expressing personal opinions and desires" or "obtaining and reporting information for a variety of audiences." As he puts it: "Balance and flexibility are so important in helping students gain competence in the second language." He also believes it is just as important to include "*la francophonie* or what's happening beyond the borders of the United States; you have to be aware of what is going on." His global understanding of FL studies coalesces nicely with the goals of the MS International Baccalaureate Programme for promoting global citizenship.

He shared that "if you don't like to read and write personally, then…maybe you will pay lip service to those two skills." In this way, he believes that his own personal FL literacy practices and enthusiasm for FL learning, in general, serve as important models to students. This idea of leading by example goes hand in hand with Thomas's belief that teaching is his calling. Like many

teachers, he hopes then that his model will encourage his students in becoming

lifelong learners and FL practitioners:

> You have to plant the seeds.…you do, and I'm planting….because you
> never know….My love of learning, my love for the French language and
> the French culture…when I teach, I want for that to come through….and
> you hope something will rub off on them.

Thomas also believes that "[r]eading and writing a foreign language are

analytical skills." This cognitive process perspective seems to have developed out

of his knowledge of FLED research, his experience as a French language learner

as an undergraduate in France, in addition to his experience as a French language

teacher to post-secondary level students. He feels that an integral part of the

process of learning to read and write in a FL is tapping into the students'

schemata, about the world and language in general, so as to develop their literacy

skills in the target language. Indeed, this is supported in professional literature

(Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004, Omaggio Hadley, 1993). What has been particularly

challenging for him this year, however, with this group of students (ages 11-12) is

that "they don't quite understand English, so how would you want for them to

transfer that and make the connections?" As such, tying into the pre-existing

concepts of these learners has proven difficult in terms of linguistic and even

metalinguistic knowledge.

> You see, they are not there yet. They can't make the connection. They
> can't analyze things. Most of them do not know the elements of their own
> language, so it will be difficult for them in the second language classroom.

His beliefs in linguistic transfer and metalinguistic knowledge have been consistently challenged in the classroom this year.

As a profession, we often rely on one great assumption: our FL students have existing literacy knowledge (schema) upon which to base their new learning, and they can readily recall this pre-existing knowledge (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004). Certainly, research has borne out that L1 and L2 reading and writing connections exist. Multiple areas have been examined which might influence any transfer, including language script (e.g., syllabic, logographic), age of learner, academic background of learner, cultural aspects, genre or text type, attitude, and motivation, just to name a few (Ellis, 1994; Grabe, 2001; Koda, 2002; Lally, 1998). Thus, "theories of language, processing, learning, social contexts, motivation, and background knowledge" (Grabe, 2002, p. 20) are understood to influence the development of these two literacy skills. As such, MS FL instructors of languages that use the Roman alphabet might assume that reading and writing skills are adequately developed in the students' L1 English and that these skills automatically transfer then to the L2. But gaps can occur because "skills transfer is not uniformly automatic" (Grabe & Stoller, 2002, p. 53). When reading in the L2, students must recognize vocabulary, syntax, discourse cues, and be able to monitor these elements for comprehension. Meanwhile, the development of L2 writing skills presents particular challenges beyond knowledge of vocabulary and

syntax; that is L2 learners are often rather unfamiliar with those rhetorical and cultural aspects of writing, for which "deliberate awareness" (Grabe, 2002, p. 20) and consistent practice is required. Moreover, such gaps can exist not only in the learners' knowledge and experience base (e.g., grammar, phonemic awareness, reading and writing strategies, reading and writing practice), but also in the teachers' knowledge and experience base (e.g., instructing grammar, instructing phonemic awareness, instructing reading and writing strategies, instructing how to read and write). As Gascoigne (2002) and Bernhardt (1991) point out, even most trained teachers have had minimal hours of instruction in the teaching of FL reading, and are thereby ill-equipped to instruct students in a truly supportive manner. So the question emerges: How can MS FL teachers go about preparing to teach reading in the FL? The same might be asked about writing: Are MS FL teachers adequately prepared in the teaching of FL writing? And if not, how can they become prepared? Thomas said he felt secondary teachers are poor consumers of research. If this is the case and teachers are not looking to research for direction, then when and how can changes be made with respect to expanding MS FL teacher knowledge of FL literacy-based instruction? It would seem that discussions on specific FL literacy and teacher professional development opportunities are in order.

In this case, while it is true that sixth graders have had at least six, if not even seven or eight years of "school experience" (provided they attended one to

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two years in a pre-school setting), and have been immersed in the English language and U.S. culture for all if not most of their lives, they have been involved in reading and writing to varying degrees and in differing forms (e.g., emergent, independent) for many years (Landry, 1994). However, their literacy development process is by no means completed, nor has it necessarily been totally assimilated. Therefore, some assumptions must be made about the transfer of some language skills and abilities from the L1 to the L2 (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). If practitioners were precluded from making some assumptions, they might become overwhelmed with where and how to begin instruction. But, assumptions should be examined regularly in order to understand how they work to inform teacher beliefs and ultimately how these beliefs inform practices (Harste & Burke, 1980). This was perhaps an opportune time for Thomas to reflect on his assumptions considering he had never taught this age group before.

Returning to the topic of schemata, Anderson's (1984) discussion of strong versus weak schema can help the field to understand why these sixth grade students have fewer "rich representations during language comprehension" where "[w]ords and phrases are treated as instructions to locate specific cases in memory" (p. 8). Whereas comprehension using strong schema is "principle-driven and predictions can be thought of as being derived," comprehension with a weak schema is "precedent-driven" such that "[p]redictions are not so much derived as looked up" (Anderson, 1984, p. 8). Thus, it might be understood that

Thomas's students are having such a difficult time making linguistic connections due to a lack of appropriate context specific examples; they lack metaknowledge. To be fair to the MS age group, it should be noted that some post-secondary students lack metalinguistic knowledge and competence, as Vande Berg's (1999) study demonstrated. She concluded that teachers and textbooks should reexamine the grammar-driven approach as it places a double burden upon beginning level students. Therefore, despite a belief such as Thomas's in accessing students' background knowledge for FL literacy learning, it is important to remember that the MS age group is still building those blocks of knowledge, and that they need specific task experiences. What is more, the materials used with this age group (often the high school level version of the textbook) may be a poor fit. As such, it seems evident that a teacher's beliefs are but one aspect of FL classroom instruction, and indeed they do not and cannot act solo in support of learners in their beginning level of FL language and literacy studies.

Thomas's Knowledge

Having higher degrees specifically in FLED means that Thomas is well versed in the literature that surrounds the ways in which FL reading and writing develop. He was the only participant who stated that he read "frequently" outside of the classroom in the language he teaches, and was the only participant who reported reading professional literature (on the Internet) in the language he taught. In his response to question #5 of the

questionnaire (On what experiences and knowledge do you base your current classroom reading and writing instruction?), not only did he cite specific scholars, such as Bernhardt (1991) regarding reader interaction and mental processes, and Carrell (1991) regarding schemata, but he also stated: "For me, the theoretical underpinnings of reading and writing in the classroom are based on the above-referenced concepts: interactive skills and schemata." In fact, the responses he provided for the initial questionnaire use terms such as, "the Five Cs of the national standards," "linguistic proficiency," "effective instruction," and "integrative skills," terminology not used by the other participants. His professional and academic knowledge is deep, and while he strives to keep current, he seems to hold firmly to those theories he learned as a graduate student in the late 1980s.

Thomas feels that his past schooling and training have helped him to be "an effective teacher." He continues to be very active in keeping up on his formal education, be it through classes or district training. When planning his lessons, he then uses this knowledge to ask himself the key question, "What is my purpose or reason for presenting this activity?" He feels it is imperative to "actually know the research to be effective." Yet he recognizes a pervasive condition within the field: a gap exists between the research and the classroom.

> Well, maybe the foreign language teacher needs to know about the
> literature that deals with reading and writing and how they are applicable
> to second language learning….because if you do not know the literature
> and you do not know professionally what's available out there, then how
> effective can you be as a second language teacher, you know? So I would
> say you need to know the research base.

People [teachers] in middle school and high school…we are not good consumers of research, you know….I don't think that doing your own thing will be helpful and beneficial to the students though. So you need to actually know the research, to be effective.

One way he increases and maintains his knowledge base is through membership in the professional organizations of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), and by reading professional publications. Yet, this is certainly not the case for every FL teacher. As Allen (2002) discusses, one of the FL profession's challenges is "getting more teachers involved in professional organizations" (p. 525). Her study found 52% of respondents did not belong to any FL professional organizations. Although the number of participants from this small qualitative study (N=4) is not even near that of Allen's study (N=2,923), nonetheless, the findings are consonant with those results such that 50% of the teacher participants of this study are not active in any professional organization. Thus, it would seem that encouraging and supporting greater participation in professional organizations is not only worthwhile, but also necessary as both teacher and students stand to benefit.

Thomas's personal knowledge of French stems from time spent in the classroom and out: studying, living, and traveling in France. He said that he honed his literacy skills by being a risk-taker, by guessing through context, by working hard. He describes himself as "a self-directed learner" who explores "my interest in the French language/culture by speaking, listening, reading and writing in French at my own pace."

His personal knowledge and experience of language learning is one of dedication, determination, and persistence: many qualities that his young pupils have not yet adopted, developed, or experienced. This is also part of the challenge he faced this year. A lack of knowledge of the MS setting and learner, such as Thomas's, is part of the knowledge gap that must be bridged for FL teachers in this context.

Thomas's Practices

Because students at Evans MS are beginning their language study in the sixth grade as a content area course, the textbook that the other French teacher participants divide into two years is then divided into three years (sixth, seventh and eighth grades). Thomas and his colleagues are to instruct chapters one through four only in the sixth grade curriculum. While he does not necessarily care for the sequencing in the textbook, having only four chapters to complete in the academic year allows for recursive instruction, several project assignments, as well as instruction on Francophone countries.

Each week, Thomas introduces a new idiomatic expression to the students; these are often in the form of proverbs. They review the expression as a class, translate it into English, and students add each to a list in their notebooks. Thomas refers to it often throughout the week's lessons. These idiomatic expressions might serve to demonstrate verb conjugation, negation, possessive adjectives, or other grammatical points introduced through the textbook chapters. It is in this way that Thomas is not only able to support language acquisition through repetition and review of grammatical concepts in the FL

(e.g., noun gender), of vocabulary, and the like, but also to support FL learning through exposure to cultural knowledge. As an example, one week he presented the expression "*avoir le bras long*," which literally means "to have a long arm," but which culturally implies "an influential person." In such a case, directly translating offers a very limited understanding of the French language. But in expanding his students' view of language, by showing that it is more than mechanics, his practice directly reflects his belief of imparting a greater appreciation for language in general, and his belief in the importance of appreciating and learning the cultural component of the FL itself.

Thomas primarily uses only those French readings found in the textbook at the end of each chapter. Often, he will ask the stronger students to read paragraphs aloud while the others follow along in their own books. This technique "works" to varying degrees as some students may be more or less interested in the particular topic presented. Meanwhile some students may have forgotten their books, and others may simply pay less attention when an activity does not directly involve them. This makes the follow-up questions difficult to complete as a class. In December, he began a silent reading program called FRED (Free Reading Every Day) about which he had read in a professional journal one weekend. His students began reading at the beginning of each class for 5-7 minutes. The intent was to have students read in French, for example in their textbooks, but this proved inconsistent as many students typically forgot their books. Because he had no other reading materials in French available in the classroom (e.g., French magazines, French children's books), students often took to reading English language books for

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pleasure or to finishing their homework from other classes. The students protested when

FRED was later replaced by a group reading on the projector screen in the fourth quarter;

Thomas presented the world news briefs in French, and also wrote some short paragraphs

in French for the class to read together. Even though many students were a bit

disappointed about losing FRED, pedagogically speaking, the group benefited because

now they were engaged in the literacy act of reading French <u>together,</u> of negotiating their

FL comprehension (Malloy, 1998; van Lier, 2000).

When asked about including other kinds of texts, he stated that he has used a teen

magazine geared for beginning level learners, but that it was too limiting:

> [w]e did use *Allons-y* here a couple of times, but…you use it one day and
> the focus is on American issues, American styles…about half the time
> they talk about things happening in France and the French-speaking world.
> But it's so watered down, *le français facile* (easy French), and then you
> move on from there.

When asked about using French children's literature (authentic texts targeting a K-5

audience) in the classroom, his comments indicated a scholarly perspective and a

mechanical approach to how students might interact with such a text (e.g., their missing

vocabulary and grammatical structures). Thomas's past teaching experiences with

secondary, post-secondary, and adult learners have led him to approach literature from a

mature and academic perspective. His personal knowledge of French children's books

emerges from when he lived in France and noticed that French children's books often use

a broad vocabulary base and also use the literary simple past verb tense – a verb tense

only studied in upper level language courses in sheer preparation for reading and

analyzing literature. For him, French children's literature, or at least the term, is

indicative of a higher-level language learner, and is therefore appropriate for only those

who are prepared to "handle" the vocabulary and syntax therein. This makes it difficult

for him to consider using it in the MS setting. For example, when talking about the book

Le Petit Prince (The Little Prince) by Saint-Exupéry (1943), he said:

> But since it's really for French students, it would be very complicated for
> these students to understand it…some of the syntax and things could be
> very easy, but…some of the idiomatic expressions and things would be
> difficult for American students to grasp or comprehend…But, yeah…I
> don't have anything against it.

Even when asked about using poetry, his comments about students studying poets like the

famed French poet Jacques Prévert reveal how he associates the term "literature" with

"advanced learner:" "Maybe in French II or French III," he said. As such, instruction

using French children's literature and poetry are limited in his opinion for this group of

students. Due to his past experiences, Thomas cannot reconcile his knowledge with his

practices, similar to Rémy. Even though Thomas has had specialized training in FLED,

he saw fewer possibilities in using L2 children's literature than Benjamin who has had

substantially less FLED training. This would seem to support the notion that teachers

bring "personal theories" (Lacorte, 2005, p. 387) to the classroom, which are based on

"personal and subjective understandings of learning a language" (p. 387) and which may

clash with current pedagogic recommendations.

Overall, his comments regarding available materials and the selection thereof indicate an undertone of concern for the amount of time it takes to get those texts in the teachers' hands: "If you can look around, then you can find something, some literature out there that you can use in the classroom." Finding the time to research, collect, and amass appropriate reading materials is not just the concern of pre-service or entry-year teachers, but also one for veteran teachers. As such, a clear challenge exists for the profession: How do we go about disseminating information regarding resources on biliteracy development and how to access them in such a manner that even teachers who are not part of a professional organization (presumably around 50%) are able to do so?

Thomas asks students to write sentences each day, primarily through the warm-up activity or textbook exercises. He often uses dehydrated sentences where students are to create a completed sentence based on the elements presented – a mechanical exercise typically seen in textbooks and workbooks. As an example, he wrote the following on the board one day: *filles/Paris/sont/ne/les/de/deux/pas* (girls/Paris/are/not/the/from/two). From this, students were to create the sentence: *Les deux filles ne sont pas de Paris*. (The two girls are not from Paris.) As a French student, Thomas was asked to complete dehydrated sentences. As a teacher, he adopted their use. Even as this kind of decontextualized drill is understood by some in SLA to not contribute to "fluency and accuracy in communicative ability" (Wong & VanPatten, 2003, p. 416), it would seem nonetheless in some instances that "teachers tend to implement instruction that reflects the methodology they encountered when they were students regardless of whether or not

it meshes with best practices that they learned during teacher preparation programs or has a research base" (Linek et al., 2006, p.184).

Apart from such activities, throughout the duration of the study, he assigned several written projects where students were to write short paragraphs. One such assignment was *Mon Autobiographie* (My Autobiography) where students were to write two paragraphs, each containing at least five sentences. They were to write about themselves and about a friend using the vocabulary and structures they had learned to that point. Through professional development and his TESOL training, Thomas became familiar with the writing process, and even wrote about the instructional practices he believes support writing development in the FL classroom in the questionnaire: "Instructional practices for writing are: plan, draft, revise, proofread, and edit written communications." To help students with this project, he provided a sample in class one day that the group read aloud together from the projector screen. Over the course of several days, students were then given opportunities to work alone or in pairs on their writing, to share in small groups, and to receive feedback from the teacher prior to submitting the final draft. Even though Thomas incorporated his beliefs into his lessons, and followed a "best practices" approach to writing instruction for the projects, noticeably, few other opportunities for students to practice longer writing pieces outside of the projects were provided. This is, in part, due to the fact that they are beginning students who are going to complete only four textbook chapters in one academic year. In December, Thomas said:

[m]y students, they are doing only two chapters, so what can you say with just the verb *être* (to be)…alone?…They don't know even the verb 'to like' or 'to study' and so you still have to use the verb 'to be' and hope that, you know, they can at least communicate in three to four to five sentences effectively.

But one question to ask is whether or not limited language abilities mitigate limited reading and writing opportunities for MS learners. That is, at what moment is it "the right moment" to engage students in extended reading and writing experiences in the FL?

Researchers in ESL (Hudelson, 1984, 1994; Urzúa, 1999) working with elementary level students encourage teachers to reformulate the notion of instructing literacy skills into the concept of supporting literacy growth by encouraging literate behaviors. This means that students are given a variety of materials (e.g., books, magazines, newspapers) and purposeful occasions to work individually and in collaboration, in addition to opportunities to talk about reading and writing within the classroom. Interacting with others through reading and writing is the focus. Nurturing literacy is understood to be a long-term process; the "right moment" is now. FLED also understands that creating complex language takes coaching and practice over a long period of time. Working with post-secondary learners, Swaffar (1991) posits that beginning level FL students need consistent and early opportunities to practice cognitively demanding activities in any skill "because sophisticated language can only develop from sophisticated thought" (p. 270). When and how are MS FL teachers to introduce longer readings and multi-paragraph writing to their students? It is unclear from

which research base (either elementary level ESL or post-secondary FLED) MS FL teachers are to draw conclusions for their own classroom instruction. From these observations, it would seem that few opportunities for students to engage in longer reading tasks or to create multi-paragraph writings are in fact actually provided in the MS FL classroom. Thus, perhaps for MS FL instruction, a few elements might be missing in this concept of nurturing literacy, including articulated instruction from middle to high school, teacher knowledge of fostering a FL literacy environment that is cognitive- and language level-appropriate, availability of outside reading materials, and time to learn to talk about reading and writing in the FL. As there is currently so little information as to what this kind of instruction looks like and how it might work, more research is needed exploring MS FL classrooms where such work is taking place in order to provide teachers in this setting a better understanding of this conceptualization.

In sum, Thomas's conceptualization of literacy as including four skills plus culture suggests a global and integrated understanding of learning that coalesces with the International Baccalaureate curriculum of his school. While his knowledge of FLED and his love of teaching French is evident, this first year with sixth graders has presented challenges to his beliefs and practitioner knowledge base making it difficult for him to implement them in his practices.

Victor at Morris MS

Victor is a seasoned FL teacher with twenty-eight years experience of teaching primarily French, but also ELA, to middle and high schoolers in both public and private settings. He lived and studied in France while working on his master's degree. Over the course of his teaching career, Victor has continued to seek out occasions to learn about different instructional methods and teaching strategies through course work and professional development opportunities. This continuous learning was done not only because of licensing requirements, but also out of a true love of learning and a desire to always improve instructional delivery in his classroom. As a result, Victor has added endorsements to his teacher's license (e.g., gifted education). This past year, he has worked on obtaining his English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) endorsement. Victor has taught in Archer County for nineteen years, with eleven years at the MS level. As such, he has a great understanding of learners from this age group, and he says he enjoys teaching at this level.

Victor teaches in a large classroom in a school building that is only two years old. FL courses are considered electives at this school. In the classroom, there is ample space for multiple filing cabinets, student desks and chairs, lockers, bookcases, even a T.V. cart, but the walls are noticeably bare. Due to strict Fire Marshall requirements, he is only able to display a few posters (numbers 1-100, colors, and images of family members), and since he teaches quarterly rotations of two other foreign languages (Spanish and German), along with the yearlong French classes for seventh and eighth graders, these

posters are generic enough to be used with all classes. Unfortunately then, it is not possible to display the language and travel posters or even the student work he would like; this limits the opportunity to provide students with a FL print-rich environment (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004; Malloy, 1998) so valued in biliteracy development. Technology is often utilized for group work with web sites, as are the overhead projector and the white board. He regularly makes use of a CD player when conducting the textbook listening activities.

Victor is not currently active in any professional organizations but has been involved at various times in the past. He does try to attend the monthly meetings held by the district for the MS FL teachers. The time commitment for his ESOL course has been quite demanding this year and requires a summer internship once the weekly classes are completed in June. Due to this, Victor has felt particularly strapped for time this school year. Indeed, there were two main concerns Victor repeated throughout the course of this study: (1) having adequate time to implement the curriculum, and (2) having appropriate materials. Victor was initially interested in participating in this project because of its focus on reading and writing at a time when the French program emphasis has shifted primarily to oral/aural proficiency.

Table 4.5 presents a summary of Victor's beliefs, knowledge, and practices of literacy-based instruction. Victor believes in the general benefits of FL literacy for students; that is, he knows that learning to read and write in another language are cognitively beneficial skills. Yet decisions to incorporate deeper reading and writing

experiences are superseded by program requirements and time constraints. In the

narrative that follows, the reader will see how the textbook can become the curriculum in

the MS FL classroom.

	Beliefs	Knowledge	Practices
Victor	• Communication centers on a solid grammar base • Teachers should build up student skills to help them become independent language learners	• Master's in French • Becoming trained to teach English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) • Never had specific training in teaching reading or writing in French • Twenty-eight years teaching: 11 years teaching middle school students • Taught high school English in the district • Active in pursuing professional development opportunities • No longer active in local and national FL educator organizations.	• Strictly holds to district pacing requirements • Uses textbook as curriculum • Student portfolios for paragraph-level writings (2-3 per year) • Online workbook style activities • Group readings of textbook chapter selections in preparation for district testing • Occasionally uses activities from former textbook

Table 4.5: Summary of Victor's FL literacy beliefs, knowledge, and practices

Victor's Beliefs on Literacy-Based Instruction

Victor believes in incorporating reading and writing exercises "daily in conjunction with selections provided in the textbook." This belief stems from his many years of teaching experience, from seeing what helped his students. He also strongly believes in building up the skills of his students so that they are able to self-correct and self-monitor in order to advance their language abilities. That is, he believes in encouraging students to use what they know how to say first, or to use available resources (e.g., textbook glossary, notes) to seek out answers on their own. When asked or when necessary, he will provide additional information without jumping too far ahead linguistically or syntactically. He feels this scaffolding will help guide his students to expand their understanding and increase their eventual production in the language. But it is, in fact, this deeper belief in assisting students to become independent and responsible learners that shapes Victor's approach to every classroom activity.

Even though Victor feels that reading and writing are both very important skills, he finds he does more with his learners in the way of writing.

> I think that the students produce more in the way of writing because that's something that I can have in hand, and give a grade on, and I can assess then the progress more easily than I can in reading.

He thinks writing most likely takes the forefront in the FL classroom because there are always numerous written exercises in the textbook. However, he noted that depending upon the quality or quantity of reading selections in the textbooks, reading may not ever

be highlighted. In other words, if reading is not stressed in the textbook, then teachers will not necessarily emphasize it in the classroom. This comment speaks again to the power that a "textbook as curriculum" approach can have in the classroom, where teacher beliefs and knowledge may be supplanted as a result. While he would say that his current classroom textbook has "good reading selections," he preferred those from a former textbook. Nonetheless, he feels particularly obligated to thoroughly incorporate them in his chapter lesson plans because he knows that the year-end district exam will draw its reading selections directly from the textbook. In this way, his reading instruction is specifically tied to the textbook. Even though he would like to include more (other) reading texts in his instruction, Victor feels there is just not enough time to do so because of the curricular and pacing guidelines in place.

Generally, Victor believes that communication, centered on a solid grammar base, is the goal of language studies. His writing instruction focuses more so on students' self expression and not necessarily on correct orthography. As such, his goal is to encourage students in developing their FL writing skills and not to stymie their personal approaches to writing tasks. By not getting "hung up" on the orthography, he believes, they will feel freer to express themselves using the language they already know:

> I want them to produce language without too much hesitation, without too much fear and trembling, 'cause I don't want to make them feel under-equipped. I want them to feel, to let it flow, and I don't think spelling is as important as being able to converse and communicate.

Victor's sensitivity to the affective side of learning another language in MS is consonant with not only SLA research (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982; Omaggio Hadley, 1993) but also with MS educational tenets (Caskey & Anfara, 2007; Verkler, 1994).

Victor's Knowledge

As Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) claim, "[t]o generate knowledge that accounts for multiple layers of context and multiple meaning perspectives, teachers draw on a wide range of experiences and their whole intellectual histories in and out of schools" (p. 275). Victor's knowledge includes professional and personal experiences of learning languages and learning how to teach them.

Victor's professional knowledge base includes a Master's degree in French, course work for several license endorsements, including the ESOL course he is currently taking, in addition to workshops, meetings and conferences. As professional knowledge is based on various resources (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Grossman, 1990; Shulman, 1986), Victor's personal and professional knowledge is vast by choice:

> I've always been very open to the professional development requirements, because I really see that they benefit me in the classroom and benefit my students. So, I've really latched onto anything new that I could, with enthusiasm. And, I've sought certification not just seventh grade through twelfth, which is what I came out of college with, but went on and got certified in K-12, and then went back and got teacher certification in teaching educable mentally retarded and also gifted students, so that I could have a wide range of knowledge, a knowledge base on which to draw when I was teaching.

Over the years and based upon his continually growing knowledge base, Victor has come to use a variety of methods in the classroom: "I think variety is a key for success. Because if you have that variety in the way you teach, you're going to be able to reach that many more students with the different learning modalities." Yet, despite all of his training, he states, "I've never been given any training in how to teach reading per se. It's just been provided in the textbook." As has already been discussed, this is not uncommon in the profession, and certainly it is one of the challenges FLED must face (Bernhardt, 1991; Gascoigne, 2002; Graden, 1996). Even as adequate and appropriate materials (textbook or otherwise) are pondered for the MS FL classroom, so too must the teacher's comfort level in preparing such lessons be considered. That is, a teacher's subject matter knowledge of reading and writing, in this case, and his pedagogical content knowledge (e.g., reading instruction in the FL) must be developed enough in order for him to feel comfortable and confident in going beyond the textbook's offerings, or beyond making a sweeping assumption that students' L1 reading and writing skills will be adequate in the FL as well.

As a learner of French, Victor is most familiar with the methods of grammar-translation and the audiolingual method. He said that his teacher gave them a lot of *dictées* (dictations) where correct spelling and accent placement were of prime concern. As oral proficiency was not the main objective of the instruction he received, he had very little practice with the conversational facet of the language until he traveled abroad. These two experiences in particular have shaped some aspects of Victor's instruction, and

shall be discussed in detail in the next section. What is important to recognize is the fact that FL students who become FL teachers take certain aspects of their own learning experiences (the apprenticeship of observation as discussed by Grossman, 1990, and Lortie, 2005) and opt to include or exclude that kind of instruction into their own repertoire as a teacher in their own FL classrooms.

Victor's Practices

Victor always writes a list in French of planned activities for the class period. With eighty-minute classes every other day, this list helps keep the teacher and students on track and focused during the class period. Generally, Victor uses the target language during instruction but will use English when he feels it is appropriate or even necessary (e.g., discipline). Very often, the class thoroughly reviews the homework on the overhead. Sometimes, Victor writes the answers on transparencies, and at other times he asks students to come to the front to write out the responses (words or sentences) on the white board. He uses the white board regularly to present additional vocabulary, expressions, verb conjugations, and anecdotal information (e.g., historical names, drawings). This year, with the classroom LCD projectors and the large screens in place, he uses those tools when he can.

As Verkler (1994) states: "In order to accommodate the students' varied learning styles, innovative and diverse teaching strategies are of paramount importance during the middle grades" (p. 20). Victor typically provided his students with a variety of activities

that use all the skills each class period. Often the students play games, particularly when reviewing before a chapter test. The format varies – two or multiple teams, with book or without, multiple choice or question-response – but the students enjoy having the competition and come to realize what they know well and what they still need to review. The students practice their speaking skills with partners and might even present their conversation to the class. As noted earlier, based on his ESOL course work he has tried to find ways of including more conversation practice in his lessons so that his learners can grow more confident in their oral proficiency. Students listen to the textbook's CD for listening and speaking practice. Occasionally, Victor reads in French and asks the students to repeat in order to work on their pronunciation. He provides his students with opportunities to complete diverse and varied activities in their language learning experience. However, Victor's large classroom set-up was not maximized for facilitating students' biliteracy learning. The classroom is not a FL print-rich environment. There are few props or manipulatives available, and there is no reading corner or writing center where students might interact with French texts. But Victor tries to compensate for this in some of his instruction.

Written exercises are done individually, in small groups, and as a class. Victor has his students keep portfolios, an idea directly drawn from his experience in teaching ELA, to assist students in their FL writing development. He is always quick to remind students that although what they have written (or said) might generally be understandable, it is the "very good French" to which they must strive. In other words, Victor tries to prepare

them for the distinction between the familiar and formal, the colloquial and academic

ways to express oneself in French. Another way that his personal and professional

knowledge influence his practices is in the fact that Victor never gives *dictées* (dictations)

to his students. Instead, he wants to encourage students to work toward correct

orthography, but not make it part of their grades:

> I do encourage them to get the right spelling, and the right accents, but I only count it maybe for partial credit. If they get close to the right spelling, for example, and I see that they would be able to pronounce the word correctly, I usually give credit for that.

When he feels it is appropriate, Victor seizes those "teachable moments" that

present themselves in classroom discussions so as to provide historical, linguistic, or

cultural background information for his students – one day he spent twenty minutes

explaining in French about Joan of Arc because students were unfamiliar with her name.

At such times, he writes down those key (unknown) vocabulary words and important

phrases in French that he uses on the white board and asks students to take notes. He

enjoys these moments, despite the fact that it sidetracks them from his lesson plan,

because he wants to support the students in their hunger to learn. If they are interested in

learning certain phrases or how to express themselves, then he wants to grab hold of that

initiative and encourage it. During one observation of a seventh grade class where the

students were working on phrases and vocabulary for ordering in a café, Victor spent

fifteen minutes helping students learn to express themselves in creative ways. As an

example, one student asked, "*Comment dit-on* 'there's a fly in my soup'?" (How do you

say…), and Victor wrote on the board and said, "*Il y a une mouche dans ma soupe*."

(There is a fly in my soup.) Another student asked, "*Comment dit-on* 'it's gonna poison

me'?" (How do you say…), and then Victor asked someone to look up the word "to

poison" in a dictionary prior to writing the entire French phrase on the board. This

"teachable moment" actually turned into a review of what the students had already

learned (e.g., possessive adjectives, verb conjugation), and helped them realize that they

already knew how to say quite a bit in French. In this way, Victor guided students along

the continua of biliteracy, between contexts, development, content, and media.

Another teachable moment was observed in the eighth grade classroom. Victor

heard a female student comment that she felt "stupid" whenever she saw a reading and

thought she understood so little of it. Being sensitive to this student's affective filter,

Victor felt it was essential to address that comment right away and proceeded to spend

the next twenty-five minutes working in French with the class on going about

approaching a reading task that the students felt was beyond their current abilities. Victor

knew that by scaffolding this kind of reading strategy that he was helping the students in

their FL studies in a general sense, but also, he knew that this reading instruction would

come in use for the end-of-year district exam. This particular instructional moment was

influenced just as much by Victor's personal beliefs in assisting students in becoming

independent as it was influenced by the real and upcoming testing (curricular) situation.

While Victor voiced that he no longer takes the students to the computer lab

because it takes too long to get there from his classroom and it is difficult to reserve the

lab during his class times, he does have the option to borrow the school's laptops for use in the classroom, which he does upon occasion. His greatest discovery this year, however, was a FL teacher web site (www.quia.com) that he used for homework, practice activities, and quizzes. This web site's activities are in the form of mechanical drills and meaningful drills (see materials analysis later in this chapter). He reported being quite pleased with the students acceptance of doing work online and outside of classroom time. Victor also reported a noticed improvement in student grades, which he attributed to this additional online practice. Even though it took him some time to set up the student accounts and to email students their work on a weekly basis, he felt it alleviated somewhat the time crunch he feels in the classroom with regard to the textbook pacing. But as stated earlier in the chapter, there is debate in the field as to how these mechanical activities can support language acquisition (Wong & VanPatten, 2003).

      As the other French teachers shared, Victor does not really care for the current textbook. He has difficulty reconciling the sequencing and pacing of materials with the reality of the classroom. That is, he feels there are too many activities from which to select in each chapter and that there is too little time in which to have students do them all. Yet, he also feels that if he skips over anything, it will end up on the end-of-year district exam, and he does not wish to do a disservice to his students in that way. Thus, he feels particularly tied to the textbook (and workbook) and conflicted over it at the same time. The fact that this text emphasizes communicative skills runs counter to the way he has seen and how he intuits MS students learn and respond best to materials; it also runs

counter to the way in which he himself learned French. Thus, he admits that he tends to avoid the more openly communicative activities. However, by the end of the year, as noted earlier, he was trying to give students more guided conversation opportunities. Even though he occasionally brings in outside materials or creates his own, Victor tends to stick with the textbook and its ancillaries for all of his instruction. The textbook is his curriculum.

In sum, Victor believes in scaffolding student language learning in order to help them become independent and responsible learners; his practices reflect this belief. He believes that reading and writing are necessary and important skills to learn and practice daily in the MS FL classroom, and does his best to include such opportunities despite curricular constraints and other classroom concerns (e.g., materials, time). However, he generally feels that decisions to include literacy opportunities for FL classroom biliteracy instruction are typically superseded by those constraints, a situation often noted in the language classroom (Duffy & Anderson, 1984; Graden, 1996; Lamme & Ross, 1981).

Summary

The individual profiles were presented to familiarize the reader with each participant's beliefs, knowledge, and practices. The next section discusses the participants as a group of MS FL teachers, the similarities and dissimilarities that emerged from the data.

Cross-Case Analysis

The following analysis considers those beliefs, knowledge, and practices of all of the MS FL teacher participants. In so doing, the general nature and themes that emerged across those examples and counter examples gleaned from the data are discussed.

Figure 4.1 recapitulates those cross-case analysis themes of teacher FL literacy beliefs, knowledge, and practices found in the data. In it, some interesting gaps exist. There is no common belief in FL literacy instruction for the middle school level that emerges from the data. This might be due to a lack of reflection by the participants of their beliefs or to the variety of definitions of literacy expressed. Data reveal that knowledge of the middle school context is important yet sometimes is lacking. Moreover, there is a clear gap in teachers' specific knowledge and training in the instruction of FL literacy. Even veteran teachers then may have difficulty creating appropriate representations of biliteracy instruction in their classrooms due to this gap. Themes across the observed practices indicate that the textbook is often the curriculum and that the participants had difficulty in justifying any deviation from it. This naturally relegates their instruction to those materials and pushes practices in a direction that may or may not align with the individual teacher's beliefs and knowledge. Additionally, other circumstances including district pacing guides, state testing, and the academic calendar influence classroom practices such that strategic knowledge often supersedes pedagogic recommendations.

Themes of FL Literacy-Based Instruction Across Data	
Beliefs	• FL literacy studies benefit middle school students academically and potentially in future.
	• Literacy as a term has different meanings to different teachers (e.g., comprehension, communication, four skills plus culture, oral and written forms of language).
	• Some teacher beliefs on FL reading and writing are fixed while other beliefs are in transition.
	• Teachers may not reflect upon their FL literacy beliefs until specifically asked to do so.
Knowledge	• MS FL teachers do not necessarily have specific training in teaching FL reading and writing resulting in limited knowledge of appropriate representations of such instruction
	• Workshops/ in-services are sometimes beneficial if geared toward FL literacy. If not, it may be difficult for MS FL teachers to transfer general literacy knowledge to their settings.
	• Practical knowledge (past teaching experience) and strategic knowledge (what works) often supersede current pedagogic recommendations.
	• Knowledge of the MS context is important yet is sometimes lacking
Practices	• Reading written text aloud (by teacher and students)
	• Short writings (paragraph-level or shorter)
	• Translation work
	• Discussion of reading strategies (e.g., activating schemata, advance organizers, looking for visual cues)
	• Textbook as curriculum; difficulty justifying stepping away from it
	• Only occasional use of longer reading texts (e.g., short novels)

Figure 4.1: Themes of FL literacy-based instruction across data

Beliefs

Generally four themes emerged from the data regarding teacher beliefs: (1) the belief that FL studies benefit students; (2) the belief that literacy is important, but it can be defined by different teachers in different ways; (3) some teacher beliefs are firmly established, while others may be open to change; and (4) teachers do not always reflect on their beliefs of literacy-based instruction.

These MS teachers all hold a "bigger picture" conceptualization of learning a FL, just as is encouraged by the National Foreign Language Standards (NSFLEP, 1996). As such, these teachers hope to guide their students to envision their own individual language learning as going beyond the subject matter. They believe in the value of learning a FL and in the whole-person benefits that are afforded through such studies because studying foreign languages holds great personal meaning to each of them; it is therefore important to them to show how FL studies might touch the lives of their students, now and in the future. Excerpts from their exit interviews speak to this common belief:

> I feel like it's a really good time for expansion, of their brain and what they can do….it's also good for them because it's a different kind of class. It kind of gets them a little out of their comfort zone, and that's, I think that's a good thing for all students to be able to do, just learn how to cope with not understanding something; sticking with it helps them persevere. (Benjamin)

> I think it gives them the hook to perhaps studying it in greater depth later. I think it points to the idea that at this level, if you can get them in and

hooked, there's a real good chance that they'll build and scaffold into something meaningful. (Rémy)

The IB program talks about international awareness, the learner profiles, and the areas of interactions….So we try out different things to see what will actually capture their imagination and…kind of internationalize their learning or their learning of French….you just can't talk about foreign language learning and you don't talk about *la francophonie* or what's happening beyond the borders of the United States. (Thomas)

Studying foreign language in middle school prepares the students for high school and the rigor they will experience at that level. There is an overflow effect, such as reinforcement of English skills, and a broader perspective of the world, which helps them in their overall academic/thinking skills. (Victor)

Even in an educational climate where non-core subjects (meaning subjects that are not tested nationally or statewide) are given peripheral status, these MS FL teachers believe that studying foreign languages at this age level is worthwhile and beneficial. But what do they believe about the FL literacy component?

When the participants were specifically asked how they believed FL reading and writing skills benefit the MS learner, the general consensus was affirmative. However, the circumstances of the educational climate were a bit more apparent. In other words, in some instances, it appeared more so that outside influences were shaping their beliefs (and therefore their practices) in FL reading and writing instruction in their classrooms, as evidenced in these comments:

I think that's important to them to understand the people in their community. I think it's good because it teaches them a lot about their own

grammar. They think about that a lot more when they're writing stuff. (Benjamin)

…it [the textbook] does stress oral communication a lot more than reading and writing. However, I do think reading and writing are very important skills for this level….I think they're useful skills and of course reading is I think critical. I personally think the reading and writing development piece would benefit them more later if they are those people who will never speak the language again. (Rémy)

You know, whether you say it's the SAT [scores], or they [administrators] say learning a second language [has benefits], and be this international person [IB program], they [students] can look at it [FL literacy] and maybe start thinking about careers. (Thomas)

Reading and writing are very important skills to learn, particularly as they move on to the upper levels of language study. But right now the program's focus has been shifted more towards speaking proficiency, as are the textbook activities, so students concentrate more so on those skills. (Victor)

Harste and Burke (1980) found what the "teacher believes about the reading and writing process strongly affects both her choice of instructional activities and her handling of such activities" (pp. 172-173). Their data supported the position that "the teaching of reading and writing is theoretically based – that each of us as teachers has a theory of how to teach reading and writing in our heads which strongly affects our perception and behavior" (p. 173). The participants in this study had spent little time reflecting on their own theories of how to teach reading and writing, little time examining their beliefs about FL biliteracy until this investigation. Even if they had, their comments reveal that

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educational circumstances are a key part of FL biliteracy instruction. For not only can

teacher beliefs influence practices, but also other stakeholders (e.g., administrators,

district curriculum committee) can influence how FL literacy instruction is given in spite

of teacher beliefs (and knowledge). This conflicts with Harste and Burke's (1980)

statement that "in order to change behavior we must change beliefs" (p. 173); the

situation is not that simple. Evidence from this study supports Lacorte's (2005) findings

that many US teachers:

> …nowadays may find themselves trying to reconcile, on the one hand,
> recommendations from current pedagogic trends about learner-centered
> instruction, creativity and meaningful communication, and individual
> differences and diversity in the classroom; and on the other, issues related
> to previous experiences learning or teaching the FL or L2, management
> and discipline within the classroom, high ratio of students to teachers,
> students' lack of cultural awareness, lack of quality materials, inadequate
> in-service training, etc. (p. 397)

It would seem that sometimes practices change in spite of or even counter to one's

beliefs. Such a situation potentially puts teachers at odds with their role as classroom

language and literacy instructor and as school faculty member for they may be asked to

teach in ways that may not align with their individual beliefs and may not feel it is within

their power to make changes. Such a situation could also mean that the teachers'

classroom focus shifts from bilingual-biliteracy instructor to manager, where

administrative circumstances push teaching to the background. This researcher asserts

that it is those school circumstances noted by Lacorte (2005) and in this study that have

led some MS FL teachers away from theory and self-reflection in their efforts to simply find what works.

When asked to describe how they defined FL literacy, each participant provided a slightly different response: Benjamin defined it as comprehension; Rémy said it meant communication through reading, writing and speaking; Thomas referred to the four skills plus culture; Victor defined it as oral and written communication. Even as they recognized that reading and writing were the main components of FL literacy, this variation in definitions implies that the terms "FL literacy" or "FL biliteracy" are somewhat vague in the minds of language instructors. This would suggest that deeper discussions of these terms are merited so that teachers can make them relevant in their classrooms. In particular, it would seem that discussions about the meaning of FL (bi)literacy for students within the MS setting would be beneficial so that an image of how biliteracy for these learners might be proposed, an image in which MS FL teachers might believe.

Aside from the overarching belief that FL reading and writing skills are important, essential sources for extended learning and comprehension, there was no common belief in FL literacy instruction at the middle school level that emerged from the data. That is, no participants expressed the specific belief that FL literacy instruction was especially important for middle school students. Perhaps this was due to the overarching idea that FL literacy skills are important, which puts focus on the end and not the means. Perhaps this was due to the variety of definitions of FL literacy expressed by the

participants, for it would seem difficult to believe in something that is not clearly articulated in one's mind. Or perhaps this was due to a lack of reflection by the participants of their personal beliefs of FL literacy instruction for middle school students, for it would seem that unless specifically asked to do so, teachers tend not to reflect on or articulate their beliefs of FL literacy instruction. If we accept the notion that teachers instruct based on their beliefs, then it should come as no surprise to FLED that when teachers hold no specific belief in MS FL literacy, they tend not to focus on such instruction. Nebulous, unexamined beliefs on biliteracy instruction coupled with a textbook/curriculum that backgrounds FL literacy contributes little to the learner's biliteracy development in pedagogically sound ways; in effect, it perpetuates the bifurcation of FL instruction between language and literatures for opportunities are unlikely to be provided to students to bridge the two parts.

Knowledge

Four themes emerged from the data regarding teacher knowledge of literacy-based instruction: (1) even veteran teachers can lack specific knowledge and training for instructing FL literacy; (2) practical and strategic knowledge often supersede any pedagogical recommendations; (3) professional development opportunities need to be specifically geared toward MS FL literacy instruction, its conceptualization by teachers and its representations in classroom practice; and (4) knowledge of the middle school context is important and is sometimes lacking.

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Aside from Thomas whose academic background is in FLED, the other participants stated that they had not received specific training in instructing reading and writing in the FL. This seems somewhat surprising given that these are not entry-year teachers, but instead seasoned instructors. However, as noted before, this is the current state of our profession, where even highly trained teachers have had minimal training on literacy-based instruction and therefore lack the knowledge of how to teach something with which they are unfamiliar (Bernhardt, 1991; Gascoigne, 2002; Shulman, 1986). Clearly, professional development opportunities addressing literacy-based instruction for the MS setting are needed, and implicitly require additional research of this topic in this context in order to provide these opportunities to FL educators.

Beyond the required one or two courses, as mandated for licensing, these participants tended to consult their past teaching experience or that of colleagues for classroom instruction rather than research literature. Here then, it is apparent that in the daily act of teaching, personal practitioner knowledge is accessed more so than any theoretical knowledge base, which explains comments similar to Victor's: "I can't explain what I do; I just teach." As teachers are presented with greater classroom administration challenges that pull their attention away from pedagogy toward strategy, it is important to remember that the "why" is just as necessary as the "how" and "what" (Shulman, 1986). Even seasoned instructors need encouragement and support in connecting theory with practice.

Data revealed that specific knowledge and training for veteran MS teachers in FL literacy-based instruction is needed. Teachers cannot instruct what they do not know, even if they have a wealth of teaching experience. Conceptualizing biliteracy and FL biliteracy instruction takes focused work and needs to be tied to theory. More research is necessary to contribute to the conceptualization of MS FL biliteracy as well as to the ensuing professional development opportunities. Once FL biliteracy instruction has been conceptualized, individual teachers can work on developing appropriate representations within the middle school classroom setting. Such knowledge and training might come then in the form of professional development opportunities as provided by national organizations, by colleges and universities, or by the school district itself.

As Verkler (1994) states, a difference does exist between middle and high school learners. As such, a knowledge of MS philosophy and of the MS students themselves (e.g., cognitive development) is absolutely necessary. Such knowledge should extend past the "what works" approach (Grossman, 1990, p. 16) to an understanding of "what's going on" according to past and present research. This knowledge base would include theories of learning (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978), theories of development (Egan, 1997; Erickson, 1980), theories of brain development (Jensen, 1998), and adolescent literacy development (Moje, Young, Readence, & Moore, 2000). For seasoned teachers, and especially for those who may have switched from another teaching context, a revisiting of these theories, along with a review of current research-based recommendations, which are then explicitly linked to their middle school literacy-based classroom instruction, is

valuable. Although not new to the profession by any means, Thomas struggled to make the shift from high school to MS. For Thomas, the difference was marked and is evidenced through his statement: "I don't know what motivates these kids." The question then to pose to the profession is: How we can better support our FL teachers in the MS setting who work with a group of learners having distinctive characteristics? It would seem that more research is needed in this context in order to provide MS FL teachers a knowledge base from which to draw in the future so that professional development opportunities might be specifically geared toward middle school FL educators' literacy-based instruction.

Practices

Four major themes emerged from the data regarding the teachers' literacy-based instruction in the MS FL classroom: (1) finding level- and age-appropriate materials such that the student interest in literacy-based activities would be high; (2) feeling the need to justify to themselves the idea of "venturing off from the textbook as curriculum;" (3) finding the time to include resources beyond the textbook and its ancillary materials; and (4) having theoretical and practical knowledge of literacy instruction.

All of the teachers were consistent throughout the study in sharing their concerns about finding and using level- and age-appropriate materials. While not being totally satisfied with what the textbook offered, they often turned to those materials they could either find online or in teacher materials magazines, stories they wrote themselves, or

readings found in other textbooks. There were mixed reviews on whether or not to use targeted learner level materials (e.g., FL magazines by American publishing houses); for example, Benjamin and Thomas felt the language was too watered down (highly glossed) and American-culture biased. There were differing opinions on the use of the TPRS books *Pobre Ana* (Ray, 2000) and *Pauvre Anne* (Turner & Ray, 2000)*,* which Benjamin found to be too easy for his eighth grade Spanish students (because it only used present tense, not preterite or present progressive, which is grammar that the eighth graders study) while Rémy used it with his eighth grader French students because he felt his seventh grade students would be lost in the structures they had not yet studied. Even when Benjamin wrote the stories himself, he never knew whether or not the students would be interested and possibly motivated in their FL learning because "it's hard to touch on what's really gonna be important to the most kids and what's really not important." Yet turning to other texts, including children's books and poetry, posed different challenges as the grammar and vocabulary did not always quite match what the Level One classroom text presented; the teachers needed to either edit or teach new material that was unsupported by their classroom materials. It seemed a catch twenty-two. But, as Benjamin stated, perhaps the perspective that available materials are insufficient is a non-agentic stance.

> I think it's up to me to not be satisfied with how the students are learning until I really like feel they are interested in it. And, you know, I think that to say there's not enough resources is really saying that I haven't looked for them, far enough, or I'm not done looking for them. So I wouldn't use that as an excuse for why they're not motivated.

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In this way, it would seem that personal agency plays an important role in teachers being able to implement literacy-based instruction using materials beyond the classroom textbook and ancillaries.

Because the textbook often becomes the curriculum (Byrnes, 1989), it is not surprising that MS FL teachers might feel that doing something beyond the parameters of the textbook and its supplemental materials (e.g., workbook, CD-Roms) needs some rationalizing.

> …the reason I've been doin' TPR storytelling, or at least trying to do it this year was pretty much just reading a little book on it….plus…our textbook does come with a little supplemental book that does have TPR stories for it….So I don't feel like I'm going too far away from what they're supposed to know. (Benjamin)

> I think for me, at this point in the year, now that I know a little better with our pacing….I feel a little bit more like we can take a detour from the text and from the pacing of the curriculum as far as it relates to the text to go off and do some tangents… (Rémy)

It is intriguing that teachers who personally and professionally value FL literacy skills, who believe that the development of reading and writing skills are absolutely necessary on both macro and micro levels in one's FL studies would consider and talk about using literacy-based instructional materials (e.g., books, stories) as "going too far away" or as "tangents" of their FL curriculum. This tension is certainly ironic as it indicates the level to which MS FL teachers may have to compromise their beliefs and knowledge of FL

reading and writing instruction in order to fit into an academic mold. Indeed, this tension

leads to an understanding of how classroom teachers might focus only on "what works"

(Grossman, 1990, p. 16) rather than connecting with the how, what, and why (Shulman,

1986) behind instructional practices, because such tangents may not be viewed as

worthwhile: Is it worth the teacher's time to prepare new materials (or to seek them out)?

Is it worth the perceived hassle of rationalizing to parents and administrators any

deviation from the textbook? Is it worth the "lost" class time in an already tight academic

calendar? Remembering Bandura's (2006) definition of agency, it would seem that the

teachers' sense of contribution to their circumstances has been somewhat diminished.

Time, or the lack thereof, was an oft-cited concern of the participants. As seen

earlier in this chapter, a teacher's strategic knowledge comes into play in the decisions

being made regarding literacy-based instruction due to time constraints. Furthermore,

these time constraints extend across daily class period schedules and into the school's

academic calendar. In essence, teachers are stretched thin between the number of class

preparations (the number for participants in this study varied from one to six), faculty

meetings and duties (e.g., detention, lunch duty), club or class sponsorships (e.g., advisor

for student council), student help sessions, parent contact (e.g., calls, conferences),

grading, professional development plans such as attending workshops, in-services and the

like, and this is all outside of actually teaching and any class management issues that

might arise. Given the nature of the profession and its demands, it is not surprising that

this is perhaps the constraint most often cited by these participants as to why literacy-based instruction did not go beyond the textbook and its ancillaries.

Finally, three out of four of these experienced teachers stated that they lacked specific knowledge in teaching reading and writing in the FL. While this might suggest that some changes are needed in initial teacher preparation programs, given that these teachers are seasoned instructors, it also implies that professional development opportunities for the more accomplished educators are needed as well. In other words, there is evidence here in support of Glisan's (2001) suggestion that a FL teaching professional continuum be designed and implemented because,

> we have not recognized that the development of language proficiency, cultural awareness, and teaching expertise requires a life-long process that occurs over the course of a career, with ongoing study of content, interaction with target language communities abroad, and classroom experience (p. 186).

She submits that such a continuum would take teachers from the entry level to an accomplished one over time, acknowledging that teachers have never truly completed learning or developing in their profession. In order for MS FL teachers to consider taking Malloy's (1998) proposition of delivering emergent biliteracy instruction in their classrooms, they need to be prepared with the appropriate knowledge sources and resources to do so. As is currently seen from these participants, without such training and support, it is rather difficult to imagine let alone implement literacy-based instruction beyond the textbook offerings.

<u>Materials Analysis</u>

> "Using materials thoughtfully requires an understanding of the
> meaning and possible consequences of the way they are designed
> and what they include" (Ball & Feiman-Nemser, 1988, p. 420).

Overview

Another facet of the connection between FL teacher beliefs, knowledge, and practices of literacy-based instruction are those materials selected for use in the classroom. Aside from the classroom textbook and its ancillaries, resources may include teacher-made materials as well as those culled from other sources, such as online resources or even other textbooks.

Classroom materials were collected from all participants over the course of the study. The intention here was not to collect every piece of paper distributed by each participant throughout a six-month period. Rather, it was to gather indicators of the ways in which each teacher supported his instruction (what was used and how it was used), and to find out why they chose what they did. These materials included classroom textbooks, handouts, stories, worksheets, projects, quizzes, and tests. Some materials were teacher-made (purely created and crafted by the teacher), while others were photocopies from the current classroom textbook publisher's ancillary materials (e.g., TPRS images, vocabulary lists), from other textbooks (formerly used by the district, or from the teachers' personal libraries), and even materials from the Internet. Workbooks were not included in the materials analysis.

Each classroom material used for instruction was reviewed twice. The first time, materials were reviewed bearing Swaffar's (1991) broad categories in mind. The second review used Aski's (2003) typologies as a guideline in the analysis.

Classroom Textbooks

As noted by Lacorte (2005), there are influences beyond pedagogical recommendations that shape FL classroom literacy instruction. Textbooks are one of them. FL scholars have framed the relationship between FL teachers and textbooks as tension-filled. "The language teacher at all levels of instruction is, for better or for worse, intimately involved with his or her text" (Lally, 1998, p.307). With this in mind, I felt it necessary to thoroughly review the textbooks the participants used in their classrooms because as Byrnes (1989) states, "the textbook, for a variety of reasons, is both means and end" (p. 29). Every activity, exercise, cultural note, and reading selection in the French classroom textbook *Bon Voyage!* (2005) as well as in the Spanish classroom textbook *Realidades* (2004) were analyzed first using Swaffar's (1991) criteria (Table 4.6: Analysis A), and then again using Aski's (2003) criteria (Table 4.7: Analysis B). Archer County's middle school FL programs use the same Level One textbooks used at the high schools. The following textbook descriptions will give the reader a sense of the textbook scope and sequence. Afterward, an analysis will be presented.

The French textbook *Bon Voyage!* (2005) is a theme-based textbook. Each chapter's vocabulary, grammar/structure, cultural notes and reading selections are

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focused around the following topics: friends, school, after school, family and the home, restaurants, food and errands (shopping), clothing, air travel, train travel, sports, summer and winter weather and seasonal activities, daily routines, cultural activities, and health and medicine. The textbook is divided into a preliminary chapter (greetings and time) plus the fourteen theme-based chapters. Each chapter consists of thematic vocabulary, grammar explanations, exercises, pronunciation guides on specific phonemes, cultural readings with comprehension questions and reading strategy tips, supplemental readings and their comprehension questions, and extended connections (e.g., with other disciplines such as science). Each end-of-chapter listing of learned vocabulary and expressions provided no English translations. After every three to four chapters, review sections (e.g., Review of chapters 1-4) filled with exercises and grammatical reminders/explanations are presented; there are four of these review chapters in total. A literary companion section with four glossed and edited readings intended as an introduction to French literature follows the chapters. A Video Companion section introduces the characters students would see in the supplemental video materials and provides some pre- and post-video vocabulary or expansion ideas. The last part of the text is the Handbook, which contains InfoGap Activities for each chapter (all answers are provided immediately below all questions), a list of study tips, verb charts, French-English and English-French Dictionaries, and an alphabetical index. Including the preliminary chapter and the review chapters, there are a total of nineteen chapters in this French textbook.

The Spanish textbook *Realidades* (2004) is also a theme-based textbook focusing on the themes of: friends, school, food, pastimes, family and celebrations, the home, shopping, travel and volunteer experiences, and media communication. The textbook is divided into these nine themes (*tema* in Spanish), and each *tema* has two chapters. Each chapter contains vocabulary, grammatical explications, pronunciation guides on specific phonemes, in addition to a reading selection. Peppered throughout each chapter are cultural foundation notes (*Fondo Cultural*) highlighting Spanish language and culture (e.g., artists, writers). Text boxes providing strategy tips on reading and writing in Spanish are also pervasive. At the end of each chapter is a short reading selection and four to five comprehension questions, followed by a reading in English on living culture (e.g., mambo dancing), an oral presentation task described in English, and a reading task in English on the Hispanic world in chapters 1-8. Starting in chapter nine, this Hispanic world reading is replaced with a video story featuring a detective in Spain; the two pages are then dedicated to recapping the plot and to providing four to six post-viewing comprehension questions. At the end of each chapter is a review of all the chapter's vocabulary, expressions and grammar with English equivalents. Finally, tips on preparing for the chapter exam (listening, speaking, reading, writing, and culture) are given. Including the preliminary chapter, there are a total of nineteen chapters in this Spanish textbook.

Four dramatic differences can immediately be noted from the analysis of the two textbooks. Firstly, there is a difference in the amount of English translations given. The

French textbook does not provide the learner with English equivalents when it presents vocabulary at the beginning or end of its chapters. Students either need to understand the language from the context, or they are expected to search the textbook's dictionary or to consult an outside source. Directions for activities are often immediately provided in French and then translated in parentheses in order to expose the learner to the written language as soon as possible. An example taken from Chapter 1, exercise #1: "*Inventez une histoire* (Make up a story.)" (Schmitt & Brillié-Lutz, 2005, p. 20). Meanwhile the Spanish textbook, while first presenting new vocabulary without translations, does provide the English equivalents at the end of the chapter – a more conventional approach. In contrast again to the French textbook, the Spanish textbook delays giving exercise directions completely in Spanish until exercise #3 of its fifth chapter (*Tema* 3A): "*Lee las frases. Escribe los números del 1 al 6 en una hoja de papel y escribe C (cierto) si la frase es correcta y F (falso) si es incorrecta.*" [Read the sentences. Number 1 through 6 on a piece of paper and write either T (true) if the sentence is correct or F (false) if the sentence is incorrect.] (Boyles, Met, Sayers & Wargin, 2004, p. 127). Although not all directions are given completely in Spanish from that point on, when they are given, no translation appears.

Secondly, the difference in the average number of exercises per chapter is notable. The French textbook has an average of 45.5 exercises per chapter, while the Spanish textbook has only an average of 24.3 exercises per chapter. Considering both textbooks have nineteen chapters in all, the difference in number of activities from which teachers

may select, or even complete, is nearly doubled in the French textbook. This alone could explain why several of the French teaching participants felt pacing was particularly problematic.

Thirdly, an analysis of the textbooks using Swaffar's (1991) categories reveals differences in the activities. Table 4.6, Textbook Analysis A, illustrates the marked differences between the emphasis on Language Production, Language Comprehension, and Explanation found in the two textbooks examined.

	Language Production	Language Comprehension	Explanation
Bon Voyage	55%	32%	13%
Realidades	34%	36%	30%

Table 4.6: Textbook analysis A

It is clear that the French textbook emphasizes Language Production over Language Comprehension, where Language Production = 55%, Language Comprehension = 32%, and Explanation = 13%. With only 13% of the text dedicated to Explanation, this leaves it to the French teacher to fill in any resulting gaps, and at the same time implies that a more active and participatory role on the part of the learner is foregrounded or expected. With fewer explanations provided in the French materials, teachers may find themselves pressed for time in order to provide them in addition to presenting the grammatical and

cultural concepts from each chapter. Likewise, students might feel less equipped to complete the Language Production activities on their own without deeper explanation, and they may feel less ownership in their learning if the activities are mechanically focused. However, the Spanish textbook has a more even distribution between the categories, where Language Production = 34%, Language Comprehension = 36%, Explanation = 30%. This indicates that this textbook positions structural explanations as being equally important with language acquisition. That is, the Spanish textbook positions the students' understanding and comprehension of linguistic features as being just as important as the students' abilities to produce or comprehend the oral and written forms of the language itself. There is less of a burden then on the Spanish teacher to provide such explications. It seems apparent that set-up of the textbook figures prominently in the understanding of the ways teachers do or do not feel additional time pressures in their practices based on the available classroom materials.

Lastly, when analyzed using Aski's (2003) typologies, it is evident that the textbooks examined differ again in yet another way. Table 4.7, Textbook Analysis B, illustrates the dramatic difference in the nature of activities found in these two textbooks. It seems that the kinds of activities provided in the textbooks can become the instructional philosophy in the language classroom whether or not an individual teacher's beliefs and knowledge align with that philosophy.

	Mechanical Drills	Meaningful Drills	Communicative Drills	Communicative Language Practice
Bon Voyage	24%	39%	14%	23%
Realidades	7%	53%	35%	5%

Table 4.7: Textbook analysis B

Most of the French textbook exercises fall under the Meaningful Drills heading (39%); this percentage is noticeably greater than any other category (Mechanical Drills = 24%; Communicative Drills = 14%; Communicative Language Practice = 23%). This implies that the text mostly tries to provide controlled practice for the students, and yet almost one quarter of its activities are devoted to Communicative Language Practice, or open-ended language use where students are focusing on meaningful interaction. This suggests that somehow, learners are to make the leap from providing one correct answer to creating meaningful negotiation with little guided communicative formatting in between, as would be provided through Communicative Drills, which occurs in only 14% of the French textbook's activities. This is a textbook then that assumes either the French teachers or the students themselves will bridge this gap.

When examined in this same way, the Spanish textbook reveals a greater number of Meaningful Drills (53%) than even all the other categories combined (Mechanical Drills = 7%; Communicative Drills = 35%; Communicative Language Practice = 5%).

Thus, this textbook provides a controlled, yet somewhat personalized language learning experience to students because the overwhelming majority of activities are either Meaningful Drills or Communicative Drills. Therefore, while learners are rarely given the opportunity for open-ended negotiation of meaning (Communicative Language Practice = 5%), they are given ample occasions to use the language in a controlled, guided manner, which at the beginning level of language studies may provide a solid foundation upon which learners can extend their language knowledge at the next level in lieu of filling in gaps.

Classroom Handouts

Participants were asked to set aside copies of handouts they distributed in class. Using the same guidelines from the textbook review, these handouts were examined and analyzed. Samples included homework sheets, reading exercises, writing exercises, translation work, project guidelines, conversation prompts, quizzes, and even tests.

The vast majority of the handouts fell under the Meaningful Drills typology. That is, the exercises required the learner to understand the input and the output, without an exchange of new information, such that one correct answer would be provided. Translation exercises were particularly used by Benjamin as he considered this an important part of his belief in comprehension. The French teachers used this kind of exercise especially when practicing listening or reading comprehension skills.

The next most common type of exercises distributed in class was Mechanical Drills. With a sole focus on form, learners need only substitute or manipulate items in a highly controlled manner, which results in one correct response. Exercises predominantly involved verb conjugation, but also included gender-sensitive items like demonstrative adjectives, adjective agreement, and possessive adjective fill-in-the-blank or option items (e.g., circle/write the correct one in the blank). This type of exercise was prevalent on quizzes and tests, in particular, as grading can be facilitated since there is only one right answer.

With very few examples provided by participants, Communicative Drills were uncommon in the handouts. Even though this kind of exercise is structured and formulaic, often having an objective of practicing a particular grammatical structure, it does provide students an opportunity to create and produce some new information in the answers. Benjamin and Rémy assigned end of chapter projects that fell under this category. For example, Benjamin gave a story writing assignment called "*el día horrible de _____*" (____'s horrible day). He provided a list of useful phrases and other possible verbs and vocabulary students could use. While there were specific grammatical and story element requirements, he left it open to the students to create something meaningful and personalized. Victor was consistently providing such Communicative Drills prompts by the end of the study. He said that due to the influence of his ESOL class, he was trying to find ways to include more conversation opportunities for his students. Drawing upon the resources provided in a different textbook, Victor's students began asking and

answering personalized questions in a semi-guided format (e.g., *Quelle est la date de ton anniversaire?*/When is your birthday?).

Finally, Communicative Language Practice handouts were the rarest kind of all the handouts. Victor distributed situation prompts (photocopied from the classroom textbook's teacher ancillaries) to his seventh and eighth grade students and asked them to pair up to practice the scenarios aloud (e.g., You're at the airport; tell the ticket agent where you'd like to sit during your flight to Rome.). However, no other examples of Communicative Language Practice were ever provided by the other participants. Of course, this is not to say that those teachers never used such handouts, neither does it mean that they never engaged students in such activities; after all, the French textbook dedicates 23% of its exercises to Communicative Language Practice activities. It merely means that a copy of only two such activities were turned in. Nonetheless, considering that more than one hundred copies of handouts were received over the course of six months from four different teachers, it seems that Communicative Language Practice activities are rarely practiced in these MS FL classrooms. Based upon stated participant beliefs and knowledge, decisions to forego or include such activities are also based upon other influences like class size and management concerns, textbook sequencing, and academic pacing requirements.

The patterns seen in the distributed handouts are somewhat reflective of the textbooks used in the MS French and Spanish classes in this study: Meaningful Drills are prevalent; Mechanical Drills are occasionally used; and Communicative Drills are

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conducted but primarily for purposes of assessment of oral skills. Rarely were any

Communicative Language Practice exercises a part of these instructional materials.

The Connection of Teachers and Materials

For those FL scholars who espouse the development of communicative language

ability, this is disappointing, particularly as research indicates "drills do not lead to

fluency and accuracy in communicative ability" (Wong & VanPatten, 2003, p. 416).

Given that Archer County's current FL curricular focus is on building communicative

skills, these examples of traditional materials seem incongruent with this goal. However,

Benjamin, Rémy, and Victor particularly recognize the importance of minimally

introducing their students to these kinds of materials as they know that district testing

formats are similar: "I'm not sure I necessarily like those types of activities, but at the

same time, I want kids to understand them because I know that those are the kind of

things on tests" (Benjamin). Overall, the type of handouts these participants used in class

were incongruent with the "bigger picture" view of language learning they shared. But it

would seem that such incongruities in beliefs and practices are influenced by other

mitigating factors (e.g., district testing).

When this materials analysis is connected to the participants' beliefs, knowledge,

and practices of FL literacy-based instruction, some matches and mismatches are

apparent. Four major differences were found in the French and Spanish textbooks: (1) use

of translations; (2) number of exercises per chapter; (3) a focus of language production

versus language comprehension activities; and (4) the categorization of activities along a mechanical-communicative spectrum. Table 4.8 depicts the alignment of the participant's practices with the Spanish textbook, while Table 4.9 depicts the alignment of participants' practices with the French textbook. As these tables show, participant practices often did align, but not always, with the textbook's pedagogical philosophy. This gives the profession some insight on the participants' personal sense of agency as well as insight on some of the constraints under which they work. In the case of Benjamin, the textbook's pedagogical philosophy was not a source of tension. His practices aligned well with the textbook's activities and focus. This was not the case, however, for the French teachers, as is shown in Table 4.9.

	Use of English Translation	Number of Exercises per Chapter	Language Production vs. Comprehension	Mechanical-Communicative Spectrum of Activities
Realidades (Textbook Philosophy)	*Consistently gives English translations of directions & vocabulary*	*Average of 24.3 exercises per chapter*	*Emphasizes Language Comprehension, but Language Production and Explanations almost equally emphasized*	*Emphasizes Meaningful Drills*
Benjamin (Instructional Philosophy)	Regularly translates; does translation work with students	Feels unconstrained by number of exercises per chapter	Focuses on Language Comprehension	Instruction centered on Meaningful Drills activities

Table 4.8: Alignment of participant practices with Spanish textbook

	Use of English Translation	Number of Exercises per Chapter	Language Production vs. Comprehension	Mechanical-Communicative Spectrum of Activities
Bon Voyage (Textbook Philosophy)	*English translations avoided*	*Average of 45.5 exercises per chapter*	*Emphasizes Language Production*	*Emphasizes Meaningful Drills*
Rémy (Instructional Philosophy)	Avoids translating or speaking in English altogether	Constrained by number of exercises per chapter	Emphasizes Language Production	Instruction tended toward Mechanical & Meaningful Drills activities; only occasional use of Communicative Language Practice exercises
Thomas (Instructional Philosophy)	Connects translating to students' schema development	Unconstrained by number of exercises per chapter; but only teaches four chapters per year	Emphasizes both Language Production and Language Comprehension	Instruction tended toward Mechanical & Meaningful Drills activities
Victor (Instructional Philosophy)	Prefers to avoid translating, but not wholly opposed	Constrained by number of exercises per chapter	Emphasizes Language Production	Instruction tended toward Mechanical & Meaningful Drills activities; tended to avoid use of Communicative Language Practice exercises

Table 4.9: Alignment of participant practices with French textbook

The French teachers' practices aligned somewhat with the textbook's philosophy, however, several tensions were observed, including the use English for instruction, the overwhelming choice of exercises per chapter, and the tension of using Mechanical, Meaningful, or Communicative Language Practice Drills. While Rémy and Victor both admitted that the textbook was their curriculum, they related that considerations such as time constraints and district requirements (e.g., pacing, program focus on oral proficiency) had led them to such an instructional position. As such, Byrnes's (1988) statement is supported concerning "the powerful position textbooks have in foreign language pedagogy: they can virtually dictate what takes place in classrooms" (p. 34).

The notion of textbook as curriculum is not new, yet the suggestion made by many scholars that teachers analyze their own textbooks (Byrnes, 1988; Castronovo, 1990; Johnson & Markham, 1989; Lally, 1998) still goes unpracticed on a regular basis. However, Byrnes (1989) and Aski (2003) remind us that, as a profession, we have input in the materials that are provided us. It is up to instructors to make sure their voices are heard when it comes to selecting classroom textbooks and materials. Yet as evidenced in this study, the reality of the profession, its demands and time constraints, render these researchers' suggestions impractical for a few reasons: (a) teachers' schedules are stretched thin during the academic year; and (b) many teachers may not know how to go about making their voices heard or even feel empowered to do so. For example, three of the four teachers (two French, one Spanish) opted not to pilot one of the textbooks that the district was considering adopting three years ago – the third French teacher was not

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yet employed in Archer County. The three teachers simply could not see any benefit to the risk of altering all of their materials and lessons for a full year in order to use a textbook that they may or may not use the following year. Even as all three French teacher participants expressed a real dissatisfaction with the sequencing and activities in the textbook, the two who had the opportunity to pilot another textbook felt they had no right to complain because they were not willing to volunteer to pilot a new textbook when given the chance. As such, their sense of agency was taken away. Or rather, they opted to cede it. In short, the teachers' relationship with the textbook and whether or not it becomes their curriculum is a rather complex one as it is shaped by multiple personal and professional influences.

Comparing the Findings with Emergent Biliteracy Theory

As the initial motivation for this study was found in Mary E. Malloy's (1998) dissertation, the findings here will also be considered in relation to her proposed theory of emergent biliteracy. This theory positions the MS FL learners as developing FL readers and writers, whose formal FL literacy development is facilitated by certain instructional experiences. In comparing these findings and her proposed theory, an understanding of how MS FL teachers' beliefs and knowledge might influence their practices in conjunction with the potential for transforming emergent biliteracy theory into practice might be formed. The intent of the present study is not to track or measure the emergent biliteracy process MS students might experience. Instead, links between what the data

reveal of MS FL teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices shall be considered in relation to the potential applicability of emergent biliteracy theory.

Themes of beliefs, knowledge, and practices based on data from this study and from Malloy's (1998) study have been summarized in Table 4.10. When compared, the belief in the importance of FL learning for MS students was found in both studies. However, unlike Malloy's firm beliefs in FL biliteracy instruction, most of the participants in this study had not necessarily spent much time reflecting upon their personal beliefs of literacy-based FL instruction and were therefore either unable to articulate them (Victor) or felt they were in a state of transition (Benjamin) and thus open to experimentation. The personal and professional knowledge bases of the MS FL teachers in this investigation and those of Malloy herself are rather individual and vary greatly. Quite clearly, the knowledge gap that three out of the four participants state existed was a lack in specific training in teaching FL literacy. As such, the participants in this study relied on their contextual, practical, and strategic knowledge (Grossman, 1990; Shulman, 1986) more so than on any theoretical or pedagogical recommendations. This alone explains why the applicability of the theory of emergent biliteracy might be (has been) so limited because teachers in this context might not tend to look at the "why" (Shulman, 1986) or theory behind instruction on a regular basis, nor might they be familiar with the "what" or "how" of FL biliteracy instruction. Understood from this perspective, it is easier to see why this theory has not wholly been put into practice.

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Teachers tend not to teach what they do not know, and they tend to teach based on what has worked for them in the past.

As teacher-researcher, Malloy's (1998) beliefs, knowledge, and practices were highly situated. Her strong commitment to foreign language education for all students was apparent. She too was a veteran teacher, but the training she received at a particular workshop was the impetus to a shift in her instructional perspective. Her practices changed as a result, but more importantly, this was possible because there was no set curriculum or textbook in place to follow; she had complete instructional freedom, a rarity in the profession.

	Themes of FL Literacy-Based Instruction Data	Themes from Emergent Biliteracy Theory Data
Beliefs	• FL literacy benefits MS students now and in future • Literacy has different meanings • Some beliefs are fixed while others are in transition. • Teachers may not reflect upon their FL literacy beliefs until specifically asked to do so.	• FL learning is for everyone • FL instruction should be core curriculum • Children already literate in one language should have access to FL instruction, including literacy instruction, whereby they can extend their developing literacies
Knowledge	• MS FL teachers may not have training in teaching FL literacy, may not know how to appropriately create representations of such instruction. • Workshops/ in-services must focus on FL literacy, otherwise, transfer of knowledge to MS FL settings may be difficult. • Practical and strategic knowledge often supersede current pedagogic recommendations.	• Teacher had formal and practitioner knowledge of teaching English and German language and literature • Teacher attended a motivational and influential children's literature workshop • Teacher was completing a Ph.D. in FLED
Practices	• Reading written text aloud • Short writings focus on form and meaning • Translation work • Discussion of reading strategies (e.g., cognates) • Textbook as curriculum • Occasional use of short novels	• Reading authentic German children's books aloud • Short writings focusing on form, meaning, and cultural components of language • Translation work • No textbook and no curriculum to follow

Table 4.10: Comparison of current study with Malloy's (1998) emergent biliteracy theory study

As evidenced in this chapter, the teacher participants from Archer County believe in the value of foreign language and literacy learning, just like Malloy. Part of Malloy's (1998) hope was that the findings from her study might encourage other MS FL teachers to use children's literature in their FL literacy (biliteracy) instruction. But this theory may be too ideal for the vast majority of MS FL classrooms. The data in this study reveal that without specific training in using such materials (in addition to access to and the liberty to use them) in the FL classroom, it is unlikely that MS FL educators might incorporate emergent biliteracy instruction. Furthermore, the curricular freedom found in Malloy's study is rare in large school districts, and as such, is perhaps the greatest obstacle to realizing a wider acceptance and practice of the theory of emergent biliteracy in the MS FL context.

It would seem that Malloy's (1998) theory is currently limited in many ways for the MS FL classroom setting. In order for this theory to become classroom practice, two possibilities emerge: (1) shift the context: this theory might be more applicable in another setting, such as the elementary level FL classroom, where English literacy instructional philosophies coalesce with those of emergent biliteracy thereby making its implementation more feasible for the teacher; or (2) make revisions: this theory might be in need of reworking for the MS FL classroom in order for teachers to deem it feasible. In reworking this theory for the MS FL context, more research is necessary so that the conceptualization of FL biliteracy can be explored along with its age- and level-appropriate representations. With more research and more representative examples,

instructors might create a better understanding of what FL biliteracy is, what it might look like in the classroom, and how it can work within their individual school settings. It seems that if some kind of adjustment is not made to the emergent biliteracy theory as it is currently proposed, it shall remain only a theory.

<u>Summary</u>

Presented in this chapter were the individual and collective beliefs, knowledge, and classroom practices regarding literacy-based instruction of four MS FL teachers. Individual beliefs, in conjunction with their personal and professional knowledge of learning and instructing reading and writing, varied; yet participants stated a firm belief in the value of teaching literacy skills in the FL in the MS beginning level classroom. Opinion was mixed on the use of authentic materials (such as FL children's books) for literacy instruction because several participants struggled to reconcile their past experiences in reading and writing as an advanced learner of the FL with the beginning level of students they currently teach. That is, the teachers' academic conceptualization (and experience) of the term literature (Shook, 1996), or the notion of reading longer texts (greater than 500 words) (Swaffar, 1991) and writing longer pieces, was so far removed from their perception of the introductory language learning their students were experiencing that it was almost impossible for the teachers to contemplate using such authentic materials with this age group and level of learner. This mismatch was exaggerated due to the fact that three out of four participants had little to no training in

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instructing reading and writing in the FL they teach as yearlong courses. Because of this lack of knowledge, and out of obligation to school year time constraints, teachers tended to push away certain instructional possibilities, including methods and materials, thereby maintaining a "what works" stance. When the data from this study are linked with Malloy's (1998) study on grounded emergent biliteracy theory in the MS FL classroom, differences between teacher beliefs, knowledge, and practices are apparent. It seems that several unique circumstances, like specific teacher-researcher knowledge of literacy instruction and complete academic freedom, renders Malloy's theory too ideal and non-representative of MS FL classroom literacy-based instruction. As such, the possibility of a wider acceptance of that theory is unlikely unless it is either reworked for the MS FL context, or implemented in another setting.

A materials analysis confirmed that textbooks often become the curriculum. In this way, the approach the textbook emphasizes becomes the approach that teachers tend to use in the FL classroom even though their beliefs might not align with said approach. As such, MS FL teachers might have a diminished sense of agency as their personal beliefs and knowledge in literacy-based instruction may be supplanted by those instructional philosophies provided in the textbook/curriculum. Additional external influences (e.g., school schedule, academic calendar) also affect the amount of time that teachers are able to devote to garnering other materials that might better align with their beliefs and knowledge of literacy-based instruction. Addressing such tensions through research and deeper discussions might be helpful to the profession.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

> If FL specialists want to play larger roles in the US-American middle
> school, they must offer pedagogies that demonstrate more alignment with
> general educational goals, especially literacy, in the conviction that such
> teaching is, in fact, also good FL instruction. (Malloy, 1998, p. 214).

Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to connect the literature and findings from this

study on MS FL teacher beliefs, knowledge, and practices of literacy-based instruction to

the research questions, which are recapitulated herein. Because the initial motivation for

this study was found in Mary E. Malloy's (1998) dissertation, discussion of the

possibilities for wider acceptance and practice by teachers of an "emergent biliteracy"

perspective in the MS FL classroom are included. Implications for professional

development with a focus on the experienced teacher are presented, in addition to

recommendations for future research.

Revisiting the Research

As there is a dearth of research examining biliteracy and the middle school

learner, research from other areas was consulted in order to frame the present study,

including English Language Arts and English as a Second Language. Hornberger's

(1989) continua of biliteracy provides a framework for understanding how multiple experiences with any foreign language's oral and written forms contribute to the overall development of biliteracy. These experiences are drawn from across multiple contexts, through various media, using diverse content, and contribute to the development of biliteracy for the language learner. As researchers might use this framework to examine the development of biliteracy in the classroom, they would most likely consider how the delivered instruction might move students along these continua. However, prior to proceeding with such an investigation, researchers might wish to first examine the FL teachers themselves, their beliefs and knowledge and how these shape their literacy-based instructional practices. Such was the intent of this study: to examine the beliefs, knowledge, and practices of four FL teachers on their literacy-based instruction in the MS setting.

Teachers' beliefs influence their classroom practices (Bell, 2005; Dewey, 1997/1910; Laminack, 1998; Lacorte, 2005; Linek et al., 2006; Pajares, 1992; Nespor, 1987; Rankin & Becker, 2006). Teachers' pedagogical training also influences their classroom practices. Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) teacher learning framework of knowledge-for-practice, knowledge-in-practice, and knowledge-on-practice might be reworked to include beliefs-for-practice, beliefs-in-practice, and beliefs-for-practice such that the teachers' personal knowledge, experiences, and theories on literacy instruction might also be understood as (re)sources for classroom praxis decisions. Seasoned instructors are certainly in a different moment in their careers than are prospective

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teachers regarding their beliefs, knowledge, and resulting practices, but they are no less in need of reflecting on the what, why, and how (Shulman, 1986) of what they do. As FLED continues to investigate biliteracy development in various contexts, the inherent intertwining of the instructors and the instruction must be recognized.

Middle school students are in a unique moment of growth in their cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and academic lives. Children between the ages of 11-14 years are in middle school and psychologists have recognized that this is a distinct period in human growth (Bee, 2000; Caskey & Anfara, 2007). The National Middle School Association has contended for over three decades that this group of learners is deserving of particular attention from educators given that the middle school experience falls at a moment of such great change (NMSA, n.d.). Foreign language teachers are of course included among that group of educators who should consider the distinct nature of the middle school setting. But little research has been conducted in the MS FL context. Even less has been conducted where the beliefs, knowledge, and practices of the MS FL teachers are the focus of the investigation. It is hoped that the current study sheds some light on an area of FLED that merits attention.

Discussion of the Findings

This study posed three research questions. While a summary of the findings can be found in Figure 5.1, the following section shall discuss the findings of this investigation in relation to each of these questions.

	Study Findings
RQ1: What are the MS FL teacher's beliefs and knowledge about FL literacy-based instruction?	• Participants believe in value of FL literacy skills development • Participants believe in FL studies as generally benefiting MS students • Participants believe in being sensitive to affective side of developing FL literacy • Seasoned FL teachers have limited theoretical and practical knowledge of instructing FL reading and writing
RQ2: How do these MS FL teacher beliefs and knowledge of FL literacy learning influence their classroom instruction?	• Participants had students practice reading and writing in some way every day • Participants sought justification for literacy instructional choices not in FLED research, but from stakeholders (e.g., district curriculum) • Participants tended to do "what works" (Grossman, 1991) given their lack of knowledge of theoretically grounded practices and the parameters of the district's academic calendars, curriculum, and chosen textbooks. Strategic knowledge (Shulman, 1986) is often used to make literacy instruction decisions.
RQ3: Based on findings for RQ1 and RQ2, how do MS FL teacher beliefs, knowledge, and practices align with emergent biliteracy theory (Malloy, 1998)? Is this theory likely to be reflected in practice in the MS FL setting?	• Some observed practices aligned with the principles of the theory of emergent biliteracy, but not all, and not all concurrently. • No participants used authentic children's texts. • Assigned writing pieces focused little on the target language's cultural components. • Emergent Biliteracy Theory is unlikely to be regularly reflected in the MS FL setting based on this study: participants lacked specifically tailored FL literacy professional development; participants were constrained by textbook and curriculum.

Table 5.1: Summary of study

RQ1: What are the MS FL teacher's beliefs and knowledge about FL literacy-based instruction?

These MS FL teachers believe in the value of developing reading and writing skills in a foreign language. Even though they held varied definitions of literacy and they went about transmitting their individually held values of FL literacy skills to their students in different ways (Breen et al, 2001), they shared the same underlying premise that reading and writing skills are essential. This is evidenced in the fact that all four participants asked students to practice these skills every day. These experienced FL teachers also believe in the affective side of FL literacy skills development. That is, they believe it is necessary to be sensitive to the delicate and incremental nature of developing such skills, and especially with students who are at a particular moment of shaping their personal and cognitive selves. Yet overall, the participants' formal, theoretical knowledge of instructing FL reading and writing to this group of learners was limited. It was somewhat surprising that these veteran teachers (save Thomas) held no specific notion of how to instruct their students in developing foreign language reading and writing skills beyond what was offered through the activities in the textbooks, their ancillaries, and the occasional class writing project. That is to say that by and large these teachers held very generalized beliefs in FL biliteracy development, but did not believe in any specific literacy theories, nor did they believe in particular literacy developing methods. Because of this, the opportunities for students to regularly examine the language through self-motivated and creative exploration were limited.

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But the participants' admitted lack of knowledge in literacy-based instruction did not stem from an unwillingness to learn and improve their instruction; they were all involved in some form of professional development. Instead it seemed to stem from an oversight, which is perhaps pervasive within the profession, of self-examination, of reflection by seasoned instructors on their beliefs and practices of literacy-based instruction. This suggests that professional development opportunities for veteran FL teachers need to include specific theoretical links to the areas of teaching MS students to read and write in the FL, while also prompting the continuous practice of self-reflection of one's beliefs and knowledge base.

The participants in this study also expressed a belief that the development of FL reading and writing skills will not only greatly assist their students at the next level of language study, but also will assist them with the rigors of a high school course load. All teacher participants expressed the conceptualization that FL language studies lays the foundation for a worldly perspective and an appreciation of life and language beyond one's immediate borders, thereby serving to enhance the MS students' understanding of themselves and their communities. Just as their comments recalled the tenets and goals of the National Foreign Language Standards (NSFLEP, 1996), they made this researcher wonder whether such comments are not also partly grounded in the profession's effort to justify its existence to stakeholders, such as administrators and parents, in an educational climate where foreign language is often considered as a "non-core" subject. With the exception of those schools with an International Baccalaureate Programme, MS FL

classes are not considered core subjects in Archer County. Currently, oral proficiency is the focus of the district's FL programs, thereby relegating FL literacy to the sidelines, particularly at the beginning levels of instruction. Thus, while MS FL teachers may believe in the value of FL reading and writing skills development, it seems that such beliefs are supplanted by influences beyond the individual. Because of this, teachers may not feel encouraged to explore those areas of teaching and learning that extend beyond what they are required to teach in the curriculum (textbook). As such, teachers may not feel empowered to take an agentic stance and make changes in their personal and professional knowledge bases, which could lead to shifts in their biliteracy beliefs and instructional practices.

RQ2: How do these MS FL teacher beliefs and knowledge of FL literacy learning influence their classroom instruction?

Some of the ways in which these teachers supported the literacy skills development of their students was through such activities as storytelling and story writing (Benjamin), short novel study (Rémy), FRED and shared class readings (Thomas), and process writing (Victor and Thomas). Conceptually, the ideas of repetition, modeling, and practice held important roles in the classroom activities of all the teacher participants. However, with the exception of Thomas, whose formal background is in FLED, the other teachers "rarely justified their approaches by referring to research studies or any particular methodology" (Ebsworth & Schweers, 1997, p. 255). This data supports

Crookes's (1997) observation that "the nonuptake by FL teachers of much of the research produced thus far by mainstream SLA researchers, many more of whom work more with English than with other languages, should not be surprising" (p. 72). Yet this researcher finds it somewhat surprising. Even if one took the position that such evidence of "nonuptake" (Crookes, 1997) should not be surprising to foreign language researchers and educators, minimally, it should be considered disappointing, for theory without practice (and vice versa) provides only an incomplete understanding of the teaching and learning of foreign languages. The question that our profession must then ask itself is, Do MS FL teachers seldom turn to SLA theory because of a lack of knowledge of its existence, or because of a perceived disconnect with theories that do not directly speak to them as an audience? As a MS FL teacher, I wondered why the setting in which I taught was not represented more often in the research literature. Therefore, not only does more research need to be conducted in the FL classrooms, but also more research is necessary in middle school classrooms in order for MS FL instructors to feel represented and for them to make relevant connections between FL language learning theories, practices, and their own instructional contexts.

There were also several circumstances that hindered the teachers' support of the FL reading and writing skills development in this setting, including those influences that were beyond their control (e.g., time pressures, large classes), those that were willingly ceded (e.g., textbook selection and piloting), or those that could not be reconciled based on personal experience (e.g., the association of longer text reading with more advanced

language learning). Benjamin felt justified in using a TPRS approach in his classroom because the textbook publisher provided materials for such instruction. He felt that as long as he "covered" the required chapters by the end of the year and he taught with his students' best interests in mind that he could experiment as he deemed appropriate. However, the French teachers were extremely tied to a rigid pacing guide (weekly mandated chapter coverage passed down from the high schools) that inhibited their ability, and in essence their sense of freedom, to go beyond the required textbook publisher materials (e.g., CD-Roms, DVDs, workbook, CDs). This tension was expressed in the way they referenced extending reading and writing opportunities using words like "tangents" or "detours." Over a decade ago, Crookes (1997) stated, "much teaching remains at the level of coping" (p. 75). For the participants in this study, it would seem that this is still the case. Crookes goes on to suggest that any change in the way teachers teach will have to involve a revaluing of "the work of teachers vis-à-vis researchers" (p. 73). This revaluing is a reciprocal act. Researchers can demonstrate the value of teachers by focusing specifically on them in studies, by positioning them as knowers and contributors to the field. Likewise, classroom teachers can learn to value the work of the researcher by becoming acquainted with the ways in which their work contributes to the field. As such, action research should be encouraged in the professional development of seasoned instructors in order to build a stronger, more visible link between the foreign language educational theories and practices.

If we revisit the whole language philosophy model depicted in Figure 2.2, it is evident from this investigation that a relationship does exist between beliefs, knowledge (theory), and practice. It is also evident that MS FL teachers may not always reflect upon each of these professional elements. Therefore, continued and extended reflection of one's beliefs along with one's personal and professional knowledge base should be included in any teacher's professional development plan for these areas clearly influence instructional practices. What is also clear is that without reflecting on beliefs, knowledge, and practices, FL instructors might be teaching without implementing self-examination as a professional tool, without using theory as a guide for their methods, without forming an instructional philosophy, and without possessing any sense of agency.

RQ3: Based on findings for RQ1 and RQ2, how do MS FL teacher beliefs, knowledge, and practices align with emergent biliteracy theory (Malloy, 1998)? Is this theory likely to be reflected in practice in the MS FL setting?

Malloy (1998) posited a conceptualization of MS FL students as emerging biliterates. This perspective requires a shift from a grammar-driven curriculum to one based on student transactions with authentic FL texts. Her position was informed by her belief in providing FL learning opportunities for all MS students, her existing personal and professional training and knowledge in both English literature and FLED and a willingness to expand this base, in addition to her teaching context where curricular freedoms were afforded. Through her teacher-researcher project, she presented examples

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of biliteracy instruction "constituted of the informed effort by the FL teacher to prepare and sustain students linguistically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally as they interact with those readings as laid out in methodologies based on the content literacy model" (p. 189). In other words, the learning environment that she created and researched took a holistic stance on the ways in which MS FL students could go about learning another language through experiences with the written text. Her classroom strove to appreciate the qualities of the age group, to recognize that her students' personalized backgrounds contribute to their understanding and learning, and to encourage the exploration of the FL and students' own cultures and communities through the study of differences and similarities as understood through the German language stories and images found in children's books.

What separates Malloy's (1998) position from a skills-oriented one (where reading, writing, listening and speaking activities are practiced regularly and often integrated) is that it is based on a philosophy of how to make the MS FL learning experience richer by "involving learners in authentic and functional reading and writing from the first day, in a FL print-rich classroom environment" (p. 216). Malloy's initial resistance to adapting methods from emergent literacy (EL) theories required a shift in her understanding of how to perceive her young students in a more sophisticated way. Such a shift would necessarily allow the students to take more control and to be more active in how they learned and those ways in which they went about doing their literacy work. Watson (1994) speaks of the "journeys educators might take as they create their

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whole language philosophy" (p. 603) as their practice, theory making, and beliefs interact (revisit Figure 2.2 for a diagram). Malloy embarked upon her own journey, borrowed practices from EL in order to make them her own, asked questions along the way, and reflected upon her path, which at first glance seemed risky, but ultimately, she felt, became worthwhile.

As the findings to Research Questions 1 and 2 revealed, it would seem that without linking theory to practice and without continued reflection upon beliefs and practices, even seasoned MS FL instructors might be teaching without having a philosophy of biliteracy in mind. It is exactly Malloy's (1998) philosophical stance that makes her perspective unique and rather unusual for this context, and perhaps then inimitable. While the following observations on the participating teachers are in no way intended to be a criticism, they are intended to show how it would be a great challenge to realize the philosophy of emergent biliteracy in the MS FL classrooms on a wider scale here in the U.S. These comments are based upon the already-cited notion of a professional journey and where the participants seem to align their beliefs, knowledge, and practices with the principles of emergent biliteracy theory for the MS setting.

Of the four participants from this study, it would seem that Benjamin currently has the greatest potential for conceptualizing his MS students as emerging biliterates. That is, he seems to be farther along in his self-reflective journey than the other participants. His own child's English language development has helped him think about language learning from a new perspective. Personal inquiry has led him toward a story-

based (TPRS) approach, and he has seen how an emergent biliterate perspective has moved his students along linguistically in ways he had not expected:

> I do feel like through a lot of the storytelling and just the TPR activities in general, a really significant amount of vocabulary is gained pretty quickly, and so, if I had introduced all that stuff in the very beginning of the year, then I think that their comprehension would have been better earlier.

Benjamin's experiences at a hands-on seminar (where concrete, theoretically-grounded examples of FL reading and writing activities were provided) allowed him to conceptualize the ways in which he could bring storytelling and story writing into his classroom.

Rémy and Thomas, two very seasoned and highly educated teachers, seem to be held up along their paths as they find it difficult to reconcile their own learning experiences with the language courses they currently teach. It is in fact this mismatch that is challenging to them. Their academic understanding of what secondary and post-secondary students do with FL literature (namely analysis) does not fit with their current classroom materials and students. Although they are open to learning more and extending their knowledge and practices, they wanted to know how to make it work in their classrooms. That is, they need and want to see how such a perspective could be translated into the day-to-day doings of the classroom: "I'm not sure how to build that, how to scaffold that" (Rémy). In addition to the challenge of envisioning such a perspective, they are strictly tied to pacing requirements, which constrains their ability to create a different representation of French literacy-based instruction beyond what the textbook provides.

As for Victor, it seems that he has not yet begun his journey. His strict concern for adherence to the district curriculum and its pacing guidelines makes it very difficult for him to imagine such a perspective. His implicit trust in the publisher's materials neutralizes his agency in the classroom to create a literacy-learning experience based on the principles of emergent biliteracy.

> I rely on the structure of the book, thinking that the authors of the book have studied the way the brain processes information, and that if I rely on their structure, I'll be able to get the points across that need to be made so that the students will build the skills that they need.

This implicit trust in the textbook coupled with a lack of knowledge of such an instructional philosophy and its theoretical groundings (e.g., emergent literacy) make it all the more difficult for him to envision changing his current French literacy instructional approaches.

It would seem that the highly situated nature of Malloy's (1998) instructional experiences makes it improbable that MS FL teachers throughout the U.S. might envision similar instruction. That is not to say that individual teachers may not take it upon themselves to explore and adopt such a biliteracy philosophy in their own MS FL classrooms. But from this study, it would seem that such instruction would most likely be the exception rather than the rule.

As a researcher, I found my initial assumptions were confirmed during the investigation. However, as a FL teacher, I felt troubled by this finding – troubled by the thought of being rigidly attached to a curriculum; troubled by the thought that my fellow

FL colleagues felt neither encouraged nor supported in going beyond the status quo. Moreover, I felt disappointment that other FL teachers could not envision what Malloy (1998) proposed, what I felt was an applicable theory in the MS FL classroom setting. At the same time, I realized that the individualized nature of Malloy's and my beliefs and knowledge, which brought us to be of similar opinion in the practice of biliteracy instruction, were comprised of our own journeys, our own personal experiences that guided us in developing such a philosophy. It would seem too that MS FL teachers either do not have or do not feel they have the freedom to extend beyond the given curriculum. Additionally, they may not feel or actually be equipped to create a representation of biliteracy instruction outside of those required materials. As such, it is improbable that emergent biliteracy theory in the MS setting will be implemented on a wide scale because such a personalized teaching philosophy cannot be foisted upon FL educators. Such philosophies are created only after beliefs, knowledge, and practices have been reflected upon, broken down, and explored. If "teaching remains at the level of coping" (Crookes, 1997, p. 75), then there is little space in which MS FL instructors might build philosophies or go beyond the textbook as curriculum.

Pedagogical Implications

As was discussed in Chapter 4, it seems that even experienced FL teachers need some guidance in making literacy-based instruction happen in their classrooms. When Rémy, a veteran of twelve years in the MS FL classroom, shared a literacy-based activity

he would like to conduct in his French classroom (writing and performing a short play:

"I'm talking way beyond, you know the mini skits or stuff like that"), he admitted to his

lack of professional knowledge in order to make that activity a reality:

> I wouldn't begin to know what to do….I'm not sure how to build that, how to scaffold that….I think that's a big picture view, but I need the small steps, and obviously for this age level, you definitely have to break it down.

This points to a possible gap in teacher education or professional development

opportunities for experienced educators. The following suggestions are proposed for

filling that gap for the seasoned MS FL classroom teacher. While not intended to be

exhaustive, and certainly not prescriptive, these suggestions are meant to open the forum

for discussing the ways in which veteran MS FL instructors can be supported in making

literacy-base d instruction part of their practices.

First, the idea of tracking the development of pre-service or entry-year teacher

beliefs and knowledge is certainly not new (Grossman, 1990; Rankin & Becker, 2006).

Such studies provide insights to teacher educators as to how to better serve and prepare

new teachers for their new professions. But because these participants were neither new

to the profession (nor was it in the scope of this study to consider the continuing growth

of FL teachers in the MS context), there is nonetheless an implicit suggestion that it

would be informative to conduct longitudinal studies beginning with pre-service teachers,

following them through their first year of teaching and continuing at least two to four

additional years (or longer) in order to determine the ways in which and the degree to

which changes in FL literacy beliefs and knowledge take place, interact, and are transformed into literacy-based classroom practice. There is a need for longitudinal studies examining MS FL teacher beliefs, knowledge, and practices of literacy-based instruction.

Second, MS FL teachers should be invited to consult and should be actively involved in the selection of all classroom textbooks and instructional materials used. Because it is not evident how to evaluate materials, having guidelines for selecting age- and level-appropriate materials is important for FL departments, materials selection committees, and individual teachers alike. Curtain and Dahlberg (2004) note that special considerations should be made in order to meet the "distinctive characteristics and learning needs of early adolescents…in the middle school curriculum" (p. 326). Just as was the case for most of the participants in this study, Curtain and Dahlberg (2004) recognize that in most MS FL programs:

> it has been common practice to choose foreign language materials designed for high school students and "slow them down" for the middle school, often covering the materials for the first high school year over a two-year period. This practice is intended to prepare middle school students for a smooth integration into the high school sequence, but it fails to address the special needs and interests of the early adolescent at the romantic layer of educational development (pp. 326-327).

When selecting a text series, it is important to ensure that the Level One materials also meet the needs of the 11-14 year olds who may also be using it. "Teachers need to know how to analyze, adapt and supplement the one [textbook] they are using," (Castronovo,

1990, p. 248), yet even veteran teachers may have little to no experience in doing this kind of work. The criteria Curtain and Dahlberg (2004) provide take the format of a series of yes-no questions (pp. 327-329) in various areas (e.g., goals, communication, culture), and are intended to guide teachers and supervisors in making choices that fit the goals and philosophy of the local program. These questions are a good starting point for screening texts and materials, but they could also be supplemented by those guidelines offered by Swaffar (1991) and Aski (2003) (both used in this study), because their frameworks can guide teachers in their understanding of how the kinds of textbook activities do or do not align with program goals (e.g., habit learning versus communicative), and even with their own personal and professional beliefs and knowledge of literacy-based instruction in the MS FL classroom.

Johnson and Markham (1989) stated: "Unfortunately, there often is a discrepancy between the intended goals of the author and the distinct reality of the text material" (p. 44). Based on the classroom observations from this study, a discrepancy (match-mismatch) can also exist between a teacher's beliefs and knowledge and the textbook itself. Being in tune with one's instructional beliefs and philosophies regarding literacy-based learning in addition to understanding those of the text and materials prescribed for the classroom will make it easier for teachers to adjust their literacy instruction as necessary in the classroom.

Third, selecting reading materials from beyond the textbook and its ancillaries seems to be another area where guidance is needed, even for the seasoned educator.

Swaffar (1985) discussed using authentic texts in the beginning level FL classroom and presented possible sources for such materials. She states selections should be made "based on the principles that the most comprehensible texts are those which deal with familiar, concrete subject matter presented in a straightforward logic pattern" (p. 29). She explains that this is because "words and structures are retained at a far higher rate when reader exposure is to a familiar, personally interesting topic, than when reading is conducted mechanically, for assignment purposes only" (p. 29). Here, Swaffar suggested using directions, advertisements, topical opinions or interviews, government pamphlets, and travel brochures as potential reading materials. But she outlined no specific guidelines by which one could evaluate such texts aside from the consideration of making selections grounded in the theories of cognitive processing and discourse competency:

> If readings are selected for and have instructional confirmation that the student grasps the global factors of environment and intent and has a valid prediction about the pattern of textual information, the experience will provide comprehensible input which can be assessed by the teacher with relative ease either orally or in writing (p. 29).

She does note that instructors "who are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with communicative techniques and testing will probably find authentic materials frustrating or 'beyond their students'," (p. 30) which seems to have been the outlook of two participants in this study (Rémy and Thomas). Through an unfamiliarity or lack of knowledge of instructing with authentic texts, such as children's books, teachers could take the position that such materials might be well beyond the MS FL learners' abilities. But, Swaffar (1985) and

Maxim (2006) would disagree with such a perspective, as would this researcher. Such texts are well within the realm of possible materials for use with beginning level language students; it is in the articulated preparation of guided lessons that these texts are made relevant and valuable for teacher and student alike.

Focusing specifically on selecting children's books in her dissertation, Malloy (1998) presented a list of four basic criteria she uses for choosing German picture books to use with her MS students. These are: (1) "The author, the language, and the publishing company should be German;" (2) "The language of the text should be contemporary and succinct – as nearly as possible it should describe or pertain to what is going on in the accompanying pictures;" (3) "The pictures themselves should be high quality artwork that reveal much about the cultural differences between Northern Europeans and US-Americans;" and (4) "Young people, especially in cohorts of different individuals going about more typically European activities, should be the characters in the stories" (pp. 125-129). Considering that Malloy had the luxury and freedom to create her own curriculum and that she often purchased her children's books while traveling in Germany, these guidelines are helpful. However, they are perhaps somewhat elusive for those teachers unable to travel frequently to a target language country, or who have limited access to bookstores that carry a wide selection of FL children's books. Nonetheless, given the paucity of guidelines available, Malloy's (1998) seems to be the best the field has yet to offer.

The corollary then is that MS teachers must become involved in voicing their opinions on those FL materials options that align with personal and district goals for students. It is not enough to know how to go about selecting appropriate textbooks and materials; MS FL teachers need to take action as well. According to Bandura (2006), the four core properties of human agency are intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness, which function in individual, proxy, and collective modes. Because "human functioning is socially situated" (p. 165), MS FL teachers need to proactively approach circumstances in instructional settings and assert their self-influence within the social interplay. "Given that individuals are producers as well as products of their life circumstances, they are partial authors of the past conditions that developed them, as well as the future courses their lives take" (p. 165). MS FL teachers need to realize that they should not abandon their agentic selves in the school setting by foregoing opportunities to have a direct say in the way they will be asked to teach and the materials they are asked to use. Instead they need to realize that they "can effect change in themselves and their situations through their own efforts" (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175).

Fourth, this segues into another suggestion that recalls the FL reading and writing workshop that Benjamin attended. A literacy-based training opportunity that explicitly ties theory to practice is important for every MS FL teacher's professional development experience because the instruction of reading and writing is part of the beginning level language learning experience. Given that most teachers come out of their training programs with limited expertise or experience in instructing reading and writing skills

development in the FL (Bernhardt, 1991; Gascoigne, 2002), and remembering that it is difficult for teachers to teach something they do not know (Shulman, 1986), it seems wise to include such continuing teacher education for experienced MS FL teachers on FL literacy instruction, be it through course work or workshops. In other words, a theoretically based, practitioner-oriented workshop (or graduate level course) on literacy-based instruction should be a fundamental part of each "teacher's career ladder" (Crookes, 1997, p. 70) and could be the catalyst for empowering and engaging their agentic selves.

Finally, the low percentage of participation in professional organizations, as seen in Allen's (2002) study as well as this one, is regrettable and should be an area of great concern for the FL profession on national and local fronts. Comments from participants indicate that cost and perceived value are at the heart of membership decisions. In order for teachers to see value in becoming members of any association, they must first see the relevance to their teaching situations. For example, prospective members might ask such questions as: How does membership assist me in the classroom? What kinds of resources and benefits are available to this organization's members? Yet the onus should not fall solely on the shoulders of the professional associations. Current members need to become agents of change and encourage colleagues to become active in these organizations through various means of contribution. For example, collaborative work and action research project presentations at annual conferences could serve as the entrée to active membership. Collaboration can be professionally fulfilling, while also easing the time

commitment to such work. As such, several aspects of the FL teacher's professional development could be united.

This investigation found that variations in personal and professional knowledge, which ground teacher philosophies of literacy-based instruction, most likely preclude the broad application of the theory of emergent biliteracy in middle school foreign language classrooms as it is currently proposed. What would it take for the profession to implement the theory of emergent biliteracy as proposed by Malloy (1998)? It would appear that Cochran-Lytle and Smith's (1999), Pajares's (1992), and Nespor's (1987) discussions of beliefs and knowledge and how they influence teacher practices and behaviors are salient to the conceptualization and the realization of the influences that teacher philosophies and theories have on literacy-based instruction. If we consider the model used in this study (beliefs, knowledge, and practice), teachers would begin with self-examination and reflection. Both new and seasoned FL teachers might ask themselves on a regular basis: What do I believe about literacy-based instruction? By first stating one's beliefs, any teacher is then in a position to determine if, how, what, and why new knowledge does (or does not) align with her/his personal beliefs on literacy-based FL instruction. Articulating these beliefs is a necessary first step. Next, a stronger professional and theoretical knowledge base in the instruction of FL reading and writing needs to be part of all FL teacher preparation and continuing education programs. It is difficult for teachers to teach what they don't know, and FL literacy skills development deserves more than a cursory presentation at the MS level. Lastly, research-grounded

practices will promote the consistent self-(re)examination of beliefs, an act that is essential to continued professional growth and to the adoption of an emergent biliteracy philosophy: "Knowledge about teaching and the classroom becomes instantiated only after it has been integrated into the teacher's personal framework – contextualized, as it were, into a matrix of classroom experience and other sources of pedagogical input" (Rankin & Becker, 2006, p. 366).

It is also possible that the emergent biliteracy theory merits revising. A reworking might include readjusting its intended audience to the elementary level wherein many of its original principles are grounded, and it might find a greater audience. Or it might include a reworking of its current framing so that other MS FL teachers might feel, see, and connect with the possibilities that Malloy and this researcher believe exist for such instruction in this particular FL setting. In this way, MS FL teachers would be encouraged to reconceptualize biliteracy instruction for their students leading to an understanding that this theory could be applied as a complementary approach to their current instruction, as opposed to the sole approach used in their classrooms. Given that this theory has not been taken up in over one decade, it seems evident that additional inquiry would be necessary in order to improve its applicability in the MS context.

Limitations Revisited

Subjectivity is a part of qualitative research. Being aware and reflecting upon the ways a researcher may unwittingly influence the data collection process is important to

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such inquiry. Even though participants were not asked to alter their classroom instruction in any way during the course of the study, it was clear that at least two participants (Benjamin and Rémy) were making decisions to include (and possibly exclude) particular activities due to the researcher's presence:

> It's kind of strange having you in the class, 'cause like for me…well, I'm subconsciously, you know, I think, "Well, she's studying reading and writing, so, she'll be here Friday; what can we do that's reading or writing on Friday?" (Benjamin)

> I mean clearly with your presence…I've focused more on how I'm integrating writing and reading into what I already do. So I think there's an awareness there that's a little bit greater. And, that did in part motivate me to do *Pauvre Anne*…to do the novel study. (Rémy)

Such comments are cause for pondering the validity of the data being collected. Were these participants merely saying and demonstrating what they thought the researcher wanted to hear and see? Had this study lasted only a couple of months perhaps this would have been the case. However, as each participant was involved in this study for at least five months, it was the "internal consistency over a period of time" (Seidman, 2006, p. 25) that leads to trust in the data. Nonetheless, the potential influence of researchers on the data is a very real possibility and should be taken into account whenever a qualitative study is being designed.

Perhaps one of the greatest limitations to this study was the assumption of the universal understanding of the term "children's literature." That is, based on the researcher's personal and professional knowledge, questions were crafted regarding the

use of children's literature (authentic texts with a targeted K-5 audience) in the MS FL classroom with certain ideas in mind – using children's books and stories to supplement the curriculum and enrich the FL learning experience through linguistic and cultural models as transmitted through the written word. The researcher's background and familiarity with particular resources and authors in English and French were specifically not shared beforehand with participants. Through the course of this study, the naïveté of the assumption of how other FL teachers conceptualize the use of literature was borne out. Discovering other professionals' knowledge and interpretation of the term "literature" and how it matched or did not match their conceptualization of MS FL literacy-based instruction was informative. From this, FLED might engage in the valuable endeavor of a more open discussion of the interpretation of the term "literature" within our field. How do FL teachers understand this term based on their own experiences as a FL learner? Moreover, how might that interpretation be adjusted to include the teaching context in which these teachers find themselves, namely the MS FL classroom full of 11-14 year olds?

In Shook's (1997) discussion of overcoming the possible mismatches in the beginning reader-literary text interaction, he notes that "what is unique about literature is *how it is valued or judged by its readers*" (Shook, 1997, p. 235, original italics). Shook (1997) then states his own definition that "literature is unique because *readers* set it apart as written input that is *compelling* to them" (p. 235, original italics). In part, the reason that several participants (and Thomas) only considered children's literature as viable

instructional tools in more advanced classes, or that they could not reconcile their personal experiences with FL literature, is this notion of value and judgment associated with the term "literature." In actuality, some better terms to have used here, and which the profession might consider using in lieu of the term "literature" in order to avoid the same kind of miscommunication are: children's stories, children's books, or even children's texts. As such, the notion of the text being valued or judged or even compelling from an academic, philosophically analytical perspective is extracted, and the written text as linguistic and cultural input is foregrounded. Despite the fact that all of the participants thought it was a good idea to use children's literature (texts) and poetry with the MS level students, the conceptual mismatch as blended with time constraints and a required curricular and academic model made it extremely difficult for them to envision literacy-based instruction incorporating written texts outside of the textbook and its ancillaries.

It is quite possible that the gender of these participants and their parent status may have also played a role in the apparent disconnect with children's literature. Of the four, Rémy was the sole participant who was not yet a parent. Victor and Thomas were both parents of grown children, while Benjamin was the parent of a toddler. In this way, their interest in using children's literature and their personal connection (or lack thereof) to story time readings may have influenced their receptiveness to using such approaches in the classroom. Future studies might also explore the gender and parenting connection of

teacher beliefs, knowledge, and practices of literacy-based instruction in the MS FL classroom.

While the small sample size of this study certainly precludes any generalizations being made about this topic in this context, its findings serve as a basis for additional research. This study examined only one facet of MS FL instruction (literacy-based) and the ways in which teacher beliefs and knowledge influenced their practices in the MS classroom. Indeed, many other areas could be examined in the MS setting using the same theoretically research-grounded frameworks used here, including grammar instruction or affective filters. Additional queries would serve to expand the literature in FLED of the MS context.

Implications for Research

Middle school FL practitioners might reflect on the following quote by Harste and Burke (1980), for it is applicable to the field of FLED:

> It's not that assumptions are bad. It is in fact our professional right and responsibility to make and have them. But it's also our professional responsibility to self-examine them. It is only in knowing ourselves and what assumptions we hold that we can begin to challenge them and grow. What is true for the language learner is true for the language teacher. (p. 177)

It will be through long term and continuous reflection of beliefs, knowledge, and practices that FLED professionals will be able to support their students' FL literacy development. Envisioning MS FL learners as emerging biliterates requires "a

philosophical base that evolves slowly, personally, and with the help of other learners" (Watson, 1994, p. 606). Here, "other learners" includes other teachers.

It seems that FLED will benefit by helping teachers explore their beliefs and knowledge of FL literacy instruction, thereby opening a space in which to see the possibilities that can take them and their students down a path of enriched learning through FL literacy-based experiences. Offering literacy-based instructional courses and workshops is one way of expanding the knowledge base of prospective and current FL educators by making apparent the theoretical groundings of such instruction. Encouraging, supporting, and maintaining active membership in professional organizations, both locally and nationally, can assist MS FL teachers in exploring the range of possibilities, in keeping them connected with others of like mind, and in helping them find and select appropriate resources for a literacy-based instructional approach in their classrooms. But instructional and organizational support stems from research.

"Instructional practice and cognition are mutually informing" (Borg, 2003, p. 83). While this is a generally accepted premise, it then proves problematic to untangle the "closely related notions such as belief and knowledge" (p. 86). Quite simply, this is because "in the mind of the teacher, components of knowledge, beliefs, conceptions, and intuitions are inextricably intertwined" (Verloop, Van Driel & Meijer, 2001, p. 446), and detangling them is difficult work involving focused examination. Language teacher beliefs, knowledge, and practices have been examined in a number of educational contexts (e.g., K-12, post-secondary, ELA, ESL, EFL) over the past few decades (Breen

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at al., 2001; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Crookes, 1997; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Harste & Burke, 1980; Johnson, 1992; Lam, 2000; Lamme & Ross, 1981; Lampert, 1985; Lawrenz & Cohen, 1985; Linek et al., 2006; McCaleb, 1979; Wilson, Shulman & Richert, 1987). However, few examples of such an examination of FL teachers exist (Bell, 2005; Graden, 1996; Rankin & Becker, 2006). As a researcher, the thin literature in the FL context is simultaneously distressing and appealing. The findings here then contribute to FLED by drawing attention to an underrepresented instructional context that holds an important place in the profession's vision of articulated K-12 foreign language studies.

In addition to the dearth of research studies in the FL context, it is also rare that teachers themselves speak on their literacy-based instruction. Borg's (2003) literature review of sixty-four studies on teacher cognition – "what teachers know, believe, and think" (p. 81) – in various ESL/EFL/FL contexts reveals how uncommon it is to hear directly from the teachers themselves. This straightforward observation makes the findings of this research project important: "Teachers' voices are somewhat lacking in the studies of reading discussed here…and this is clearly an issue future studies of reading might address" (p. 104). The lack of the teachers' presence, as stated in their own words, in any study examining teachers' personal beliefs and knowledge denies a true understanding of the contextual particulars that can lead to additional knowledge for the field. Therefore, further research of the relationship of teacher cognition and practices should be conducted such that the voices of FL teachers are foregrounded.

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If FLED wishes to see a progression of instruction as connected to research and theory, then it must encourage the conducting of more research that includes the practitioner's voice, especially in those contexts that are poorly represented (e.g., MS FL classrooms). It behooves the profession to create collaborative teacher-researcher environments so that the aura of research is demystified. In this way, such work will lead to additional investigation and to the construction of a specifically MS FL knowledge base. Two of the four participants in this study (Benjamin and Victor) were admittedly caught up in the mystery that the term "research" casts. Benjamin asked if deception was actually a part of the study, and Victor constantly worried about confidentiality and anonymity. Being unfamiliar with research protocol made them feel uneasy at times. If more professional development opportunities through collaborative research projects were created and promoted for MS FL teachers, then practitioners would have the chance to work through and create a better understanding of the process as well as the professional benefits of conducting research. Moreover, perhaps then more MS teachers and administrators might be willing to participate or even conduct studies in their own classrooms and schools. In itself, this kind of research-oriented environment would thereby create a space for classroom teachers to move along the "teacher career ladder" (Crookes, 1997, p. 70), and to become more deeply connected to research and theory in conjunction with practice. As such, the progression of research modifications should include action research projects as well as teacher-researcher partnerships as a means for

enriching individuals' reflective instructional practices while also expanding the MS FLED knowledge base.

By creating deeper connections between teachers and researchers, and even supporting action research projects, the profession will assist MS FL teachers in sharing their experiences, their voices, their challenges, and their perspectives on FL literacy-based instruction, thereby providing more evidence in support of an emergent biliteracy theory – or the reworking thereof. Such work fosters an expanded knowledge base, helps to frame curriculum guidelines, and provides documentation supporting the benefits of FL literacy-based studies at the MS level.

Researcher Reflections

This chapter revisited the literature and data from this study in order to discuss the teacher beliefs, knowledge, and practices on literacy-based instruction of its participants. The beliefs, knowledge, and practices of any MS FL teacher are intertwined. As stated by the participants themselves, there are additional influences, which lead to practices that may or may not align with teacher beliefs and knowledge of literacy-based instruction. Such tensions can stem from class schedules, academic calendars, required testing, and classroom textbooks and materials. This study found that a lack of knowledge in how to create appropriate representations of biliteracy instruction for MS FL students along with curricular requirements were the guiding influences in the ways these MS FL teachers practiced biliteracy instruction.

Pedagogical implications include (a) a perceived gap in teacher education or professional development opportunities for experienced educators regarding literacy-based instruction; (b) a lack of teacher involvement in selecting classroom materials; (c) a need to support all teachers in pursuing literacy-based training; and (d) a need to encourage membership in professional FLED organizations.

Additional research is needed in the MS context, on the topic of literacy-based instruction where teachers' voices are foregrounded for these areas are underrepresented in the current FLED literature. Action research should be encouraged as should teacher-researcher collaboration projects, especially for the veteran teacher, as this assists in the revaluing of work that each does and of their collective contributions to the field of FLED.

Malloy's (1998) understanding of MS FL students as emergent biliterates was a major motivation for this study as the researcher espoused its principles and wondered if other MS FL teachers would be able to envision such instruction. But the highly individualized nature of Malloy's professional journey toward a philosophy of emergent biliteracy appears to be so contextualized that it seems unlikely to be applied in other MS FL settings. It may therefore be necessary to revise her work in order for it to gain wider acceptance and to be implemented in the MS FL classroom. This would require additional investigation of its principles, methods, and applications.

Despite the findings here, the researcher still feels that once adopted, such a teaching and learning philosophy offers great opportunities for both teacher and student

to work with and within the foreign language. Yet, she also recognizes that theory without practice (and vice-versa) is an incomplete vision of instruction. Therefore, continued investigation of the conceptualization of emergent biliteracy as a teaching philosophy that is undergirded by FL acquisition theories is necessary by both researchers and teachers in FLED.

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APPENDIX A

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Teacher Questionnaire

Please provide responses to the following questions and return upon completion. You may respond in full or partial sentences, or even by listing items. You will have an opportunity to expand on any initial thoughts during our follow-up interview. Thank you.

1. Tell me about your middle school foreign language program. How do students select your course, or how students are selected to take the course? What are the curricular requirements for studying a foreign language? How does the middle school program connect to the high school program? Provide any other details you wish.

2. Tell me how you would describe foreign language literacy. How might students experience foreign language literacy in the beginning level classroom?

3. Tell me how you would describe foreign language reading and writing. How might students experience foreign language reading and writing in the middle school classroom?

4. Describe how you learned to read and write in the foreign language you teach. Include experiences both in and out of the classroom.

5. On what experiences and knowledge do you base your current classroom reading and writing instruction?

6. How would you conceptualize emergent reading and writing in a foreign language and why?

7. Tell me about those instructional practices you believe support reading and writing development in the foreign language classroom and why?

8. Share any specific examples of reading and writing practices that you have used in your classroom and which you believe have significantly improved the vocabulary, grammatical and syntactic command of your students' learning, and tell me how and why you believe so.

9. In your view, what are the indicators of students having successfully developed their reading and writing in the foreign language? Why?

10. Please provide the following information about yourself:

Number of years teaching _____ Number of years in this school district _____

Number of years teaching middle school foreign language _____

List the languages and levels of language instruction that you have taught:

_____

_____

Number of years teaching other subject areas (please list the subject taught as well):

_____

_____

Please provide the area of your teacher's license, any endorsements you might have, and when you received them:

_____

_____

Please list any undergraduate and graduate studies you have completed in relation to reading and writing in either English or the foreign language you teach:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Tell me about any initial training, ongoing education, or professional development opportunities relating to reading and writing in either English or the foreign language you teach and why you participated:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Tell me about any reading or writing practices you maintain in your classroom on a regular basis and why:

_____

_____

_____

_____

How often do you read materials outside of the classroom in the foreign language you teach?

_____ Frequently   _____ Rarely

_____ Once in a while / on occasion   _____ Never

Provide up to three examples of what you read: _____

_____

_____

How often do you write outside of the classroom in the foreign language you teach?

_____ Frequently   _____ Rarely

_____ Once in a while / on occasion   _____ Never

Provide up to three examples of what you write: _____

_____

_____

Is there anything else you would like for me to know about your professional self?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX B

GUIDELINES FOR THE FIRST FORMAL SEMISTRUCTURED
TEACHER INTERVIEW

Guidelines for the First Formal Semistructured Teacher Interview

1. Tell me about your school's foreign language program.

2. Tell me how you conceptualize literacy in general.

3. Tell me how you conceptualize emergent reading and writing in the foreign language classroom.

4. Tell me what you think a foreign language teacher needs to know in order to teach reading and writing in the second language.

5. What kind of experiences does a foreign language teacher need to have in order to teach students to read and write in another language?

6. How do the National Foreign Language Standards influence your classroom practices relating to reading and writing?

7. How does your past training (e.g., course work, professional development) influence your classroom practices relating to reading and writing?

8. How does your personal experience in learning to read and write in another language influence your classroom practices relating to reading and writing?

9. What are some of your favorite reading practices you do with students? Why? [explore for pedagogical knowledge, beliefs, and practices]

10. What are some of your favorite writing practices you do with students? Why? [explore for pedagogical knowledge, beliefs, and practices]

11. What do you think about using children's and young adult literature in your class? [explore for professional, subject area and experiential knowledge]

12. What do you think about using personal and creative writing projects in your class? [explore for (past) experiential knowledge]

13. What do you think about using phonics instruction in your class? [explore for subject area knowledge]

14. What do you think about using poetry in your class? [explore for subject area knowledge]

15. What do you think supports reading and writing development in the foreign language classroom with middle school students? [explore for personal and professional beliefs]

APPENDIX C

GUIDELINES FOR INTERIM SEMISTRUCTURED FORMAL INTERVIEWS

Guidelines for Interim Semistructured Formal Interviews

1. Tell me about any reading or writing event in your classroom from this past month that was particularly motivating for the students. What made it special? [explore for connections between beliefs and practices; refer to teacher log]

2. Tell me about any reading or writing in your classroom event from this past month that did not seem to have the impact you had hoped it would and why you believe so.

3. Have you modified anything in the way you taught writing or reading in the past month as compared to last year, or even the year prior? Why or why not? [explore for ways teacher knowledge has expanded over time and its influences on beliefs and practices]

4. What is your greatest challenge with regard to teaching reading in French/Spanish and why?

5. What is your greatest challenge with regard to teaching writing in French/Spanish and why?

6. Is there anything else you would like to share on the development of reading and writing in French/Spanish?

APPENDIX D

GUIDELINES FOR EXIT SEMISTRUCTURED FORMAL INTERVIEWS

Guidelines for Exit Semistructured Formal Interviews

1. Tell me how you think your students' foreign language reading and writing development is going so far this year. What things are you pleased with? What would you like to see change? Why?

2. Do you think that learning to read and write in French/Spanish are important skills for your students to learn? Why or why not? [explore for personal and professional knowledge, beliefs in bigger/immediate picture]

3. Tell me how you understand middle school foreign language studies to fit into the district's curriculum expectations for middle school students. How does foreign language study at the middle school level tie into curricular goals at the high school level?

4. Describe how you would ideally like to see students grow in their foreign language reading and writing development. What steps do you feel are necessary at the next step in their language studies? [explore for connections in teacher knowledge and beliefs]

5. Describe any particular reading and writing activities that you wish you could conduct in the foreign language classroom and why. What resources would be needed to make this happen in your classroom?

6. Is there any area of foreign language reading and writing that you wish to personally explore more deeply and why? If not, why not? [explore for mismatches in teacher knowledge, beliefs, and practices]

APPENDIX E

TEACHER LOG OF CLASSROOM READING AND WRITING EVENTS

Dear Teacher Participant,

You are asked to select one week during each month of the study to document the reading and writing activities in the foreign language (FL) that you conduct with your students, to explain why you chose those activities, and to give any anecdotal comments. Please select a week where you will conduct reading and writing activities (as opposed to listening and speaking activities), but the entire week need not be dedicated to reading and writing in the FL. If you do not conduct any kind of reading or writing in the FL on a particular day that week, please note this as well in the log. To help you in completing this log, I have provided some guidelines here:

Reading / Writing Event – An activity that focuses on reading, writing, or a combination of the two in the FL. This could include activities such as, read alouds (by students or teacher), journal writing, or textbook exercises, or any activity where students are engaged in reading and writing in the FL. This does not include any listening or speaking focused activities.

Purpose – Briefly state why you chose the particular writing or reading activity (i.e., what are students gaining?).

Comments – Provide any anecdotal comments you wish, such as, "went well" or "ran out of time" or "students had difficulty."

You may use bullets and incomplete sentences to complete the pages of the log. Please indicate page and activity numbers, handouts, or the name of specific texts used as the information from this log may be referenced in our interim formal interviews.

Please note that one log has been provided for each month (October – March) for you to complete. I ask that you also write in the dates of the week you chose to document either next to or below the name of the day.

To help you stay organized, keep these logs in the provided folder, which you may keep upon completion of the study. I shall collect the each month's log during one of my bi-weekly visits, once you have finished filling it out.

Let me know if you have any questions. Again, thank you for your time and your cooperation.

Amye Sukapdjo
sukapdjo.1@osu.edu

OCT. 2007		READING/WRITING EVENT	PURPOSE	COMMENTS
TEACHER LOG of Foreign language Reading & Writing Events	Mon.			
	Tues.			
	Wed.			
	Thurs.			
	Fri.			

NOV. 2007		READING/WRITING EVENT	PURPOSE	COMMENTS
TEACHER LOG of Foreign language Reading & Writing Events	Mon.			
	Tues.			
	Wed.			
	Thurs.			
	Fri.			

DEC.. 2007		READING/WRITING EVENT	PURPOSE	COMMENTS
TEACHER LOG of Foreign language Reading & Writing Events	Mon.			
	Tues.			
	Wed.			
	Thurs.			
	Fri.			

JAN. 2008		READING/WRITING EVENT	PURPOSE	COMMENTS
TEACHER LOG of Foreign language Reading & Writing Events	Mon.			
	Tues.			
	Wed.			
	Thurs.			
	Fri.			

FEB. 2008		READING/WRITING EVENT	PURPOSE	COMMENTS
	Mon.			
	Tues.			
	Wed.			
	Thurs.			
	Fri.			

TEACHER LOG
of Foreign language Reading & Writing Events

MAR. 2008		READING/WRITING EVENT	PURPOSE	COMMENTS
TEACHER LOG of Foreign language Reading & Writing Events	Mon.			
	Tues.			
	Wed.			
	Thurs.			
	Fri.			

APPENDIX F

RESEARCHER'S OBSERVATION LOG

Date of Observation: _____   Site: _____   Teacher: _____

Post-observation Teacher comments	R/W	Activities	Materials used	Researcher comments

APPENDIX G

DATA COLLECTION TIMELINE

Dates of Study	October 2007			November 2007			December 2007			January 2008					February 2008				March 2008			
	15-19	22-23	29-Nov. 2	5-9	12-16	26-30	3-7	10-14	School Break	2-4	7-11	14-18	21-25	Jan.28-Feb.1	4-8	11-15	18-22	Feb.25-29	3-7	10-14	17-21	24-28
Teacher Questionnaire		V		R B			T															
Initial Interview		V			R B			T														
Exit Interview																						A
Informal Interviews	*	*	A	S		N	E	E	D	E	D	*	*									
Observations		V	V	R B	R B	R B T	T	A	--			A			V B T	A		V R B	T			
Materials Review			✓			✓			✓				✓				✓				✓	

B=Benjamin; R=Rémy; T=Thomas; V=Victor; A=All Participants

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