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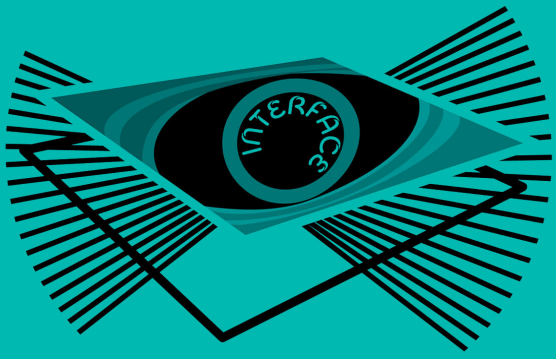
–JOURNAL OF EUROPEAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES



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EDITORIAL:

INTERFACE: A Place of Interaction

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The academic world has been habituated to an organization that emphasizes the autonomy of each discipline and the purity of its subject, while at the same time it exults in the self-evidence of the founding premises of any given discipline. In the academic domain that INTERFACE claims to belong, this habitual organization is realized as a distinct department for each European language/literature (i.e., Department of German, Department of French, Department of Spanish, Department of Classics, and so on), a fact that, when combined with the principle of autonomy mentioned above, usually leads the members of each of these separate departments to consider their work to be different, separate, and unrelated to the work of the members of the other departments of other languages.

Yet, this organizational model has always been subject to both internal and external pressures. Internally, the most prominent manifestation of challenges to the integrity of each of the disciplines (French, German, Spanish,...) is the conflict between Language Studies and Literature Studies. So, for example, while everyone agrees that knowing French is a prerequisite to reading French literature, not everyone would agree that a French Department in a university should include both teaching and researching French language and French literature; nor, should the inclusion of both is agreed, is it guaranteed that this agreement would also entail agreement regarding the relative importance and status of either of them vis-a-vis the other.

Externally, the problem of the autonomy of each of the European Languages/Literatures departments is challenged by the mutual influence exercised by one language on another and by one national

literature on another. For example, English may very well be a West Germanic language, but since the eleventh century, and as a result of heavy borrowing, its vocabulary is mainly that of a Romance language; and since it acquired the status of a *lingua franca,* it has become itself a source of borrowing to Romance languages (e.g., *le weekend, le bus, etc.*). Of course, with languages one can relatively easily find ways to accommodate the study of influences *and* maintain the autonomy of, say, English and French; however, when it comes to literature the same task becomes much more complicated. For instance, Goethe (whose work belongs to the German Department) is widely accepted as having profoundly influenced Joyce (whose work belongs to the English Department), but then a question arises: How much should one understand Goethe in order to be able to understand Joyce? The issue becomes even more complicated when one takes into account that both Joyce and Goethe have been influenced by Graeco-Roman literature (works that belong to the Classics Department). How proficient in Graeco-Roman literature should one be in order to be proficient in either Goethe or Joyce? Also, how knowledgeable in both Goethe and Graeco-Roman literature should one be in order to be able to distinguish which of the Graeco-Roman echoes in the works of Joyce come from Joyce's own direct exposure to it, and which are re-echoes of Goethe's exposure to it? Indeed, which department would be best suited to consider the study of Joyce (or of Goethe, or of ...) as part of its domain?

The questions above have been posed to indicate the *aporia* and the cul-de-sac to which the institutional organization of our academic universe has been led, and is leading us. On the one hand, it seems a remarkably good idea, in the search for the advances that specialization makes possible, to promote organizational units that foster specialization; on the other hand, this practice becomes counter-productive if it is not accompanied by the realization that specialization in a particular field is only one of the apexes of a pyramid which has as its base specializations in other more or less related fields, a pyramid that, when turned upside down, its earlier apex will become the base, and an element of the earlier base will be the new apex.

INTERFACE aims to become a stepping stone towards a more integrated approach to the study of European languages/literatures in East Asia. Our starting thesis was to reject the oppositions that traditional academia sets up (*language vs. literature*, on the one hand, and *German vs. French vs. Spanish vs. Classics vs. …*, on the other hand), and to re-conceive them as two continua where one can find stages that are completely distinct from each other, and stages where the boundaries are fuzzy and unclear. Equipped with this starting thesis, we are inviting colleagues from all over East Asia (and beyond) to take part in a dialogue that would allow all of the participants to share their experiences, explore their complementarities, and offer each other the background needed to push for higher levels of achievement.

Merriam-Webster define interface as "the place or area at which different things meet and communicate with or affect each other"; INTERFACE aspires to become this "place or area" for scholars of European Languages and Literatures.

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Language and Content Courses: A Plea for Synergy in Academic Programmes

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Abstract

Traditionally, language courses and content courses have co-existed within academic programmes without being explicitly related to each other. This compartmentalization views language teaching as "practical and technical" and content teaching as "the real intellectual challenge" (Fandrych, 2010). Nevertheless, globalisation and the importance given to the knowledge economy compel the need to reconsider the orientation of academic programmes as a whole, as well as the guiding principles of each course. This necessity also echoes the shift from a traditional knowledge oriented educational philosophy to the importance for students to acquire skills and competences. This approach raises questions in terms of the profile and orientation of academic courses dedicated to foreign language/culture studies. These issues will be illustrated here with a case study, namely a European studies undergraduate programme in Hong Kong combining two majors, social sciences and intensive language learning. This atypical combination is envisioned as a fertile fusion of academic disciplines to support students' language learning and their motivation. This pedagogical perspective is supported by the dual educational axis of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, namely the action-oriented approach and the vision of language learners as social agents as well as the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach.

Keywords: Foreign Language Teaching, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), Cognitive-Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)

Language and Content Courses: A Plea for Synergy in Academic Programmes

Higher education institutions worldwide have been facing the need to reconsider the orientation of academic programmes as a whole, as a result of the introduction of new ideas and educational principles engendered by a fast-changing environment. Globalisation, knowledge-based economy, and internationalisation, set up an international context within which integration, convergence, and participative learning are envisaged as the three key characteristics influencing teaching and learning strategies for "Knowledge Age" organizations (Coyle, Hood & Marsh, p. 2010). In the pursuit of "excellence of education", teachers are strongly encouraged to rethink their courses in the light of new educational principles and objectives. By embarking on this new academic journey, they have to try to steer the boat in the same direction, that is, all teachers responsible for courses in an academic programme must design the content and format of their courses according to the programme's overall objectives. One of the major concerns is to reposition and redefine academic programmes and courses by observing the shift from a traditional knowledge-oriented educational philosophy to one that enables students to acquire skills and competences (Cabau, 2014a). At the same time, a call for transdisciplinarity has been recurrently made at Hong Kong Baptist University in order to enhance the coherence of academic programmes (Cabau, 2013).

This article will demonstrate the application of the above-mentioned educational reorientation in a dual-focused academic programme based in Hong Kong. Its peculiarity lies in the combination of social science as the disciplinary core with intensive linguistic training in a foreign language other than English, namely German or French. One of the underpinning principles of the European Studies Programme at Hong Kong Baptist University is the adoption of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) to strengthen the coherence of this

academic programme by interrelating content and language teaching. This educational approach also aims to prepare students for their full year compulsory academic stay in the target language country during their third year of study (Cabau, 2013, 2014b). This paper will focus on the CLIL approach in the French stream of this Hong Kong academic programme.

1. Theoretical framework

The need to better coordinate the learning of language and subject matter has been expressed for several decades (e.g., Mohan, 1986), and the integration of language and content instruction has grown in importance since then, in line with the development of the communicative approach of the 1970s. These needs led to the implementation of Content Based Instruction (CBI), i.e., "an approach to language instruction that integrates the presentation of topics or tasks from subject matter classes (e.g., mathematics, social studies) within the context of teaching a second or foreign language" (Crandall & Tucker, 1990, p. 187). CBI can be content-driven, where emphasis is put on the learning of content, or language-driven, where content is the tool for language learning (Met, 2000). Met defined content in content-based programmes as representing "material that is cognitively engaging and demanding for the learner, and is material that extends beyond the grammar or culture of the target language" (1999, p. 150). CBI, bilingual education, language across the curriculum, and immersion programmes were precursor approaches to Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), a concept which emerged in the 1990s in Europe. For example, there is no entry for CLIL in the first edition of the *Routledge encyclopedia of language teaching and learning* published in 2000, while there is one for CBI (Byram, 2000). The three methodological pillars of the European Space for Higher Education are "competences as a core objectivity of university education; an action-oriented learning model, and communicative capacity as a complex combination of different types of general and linguistic knowledge and skills" (Ezeiza Ramos, 2009, p. 154).

Marsh (2002, p. 15) defined CLIL and its French acronym EMILE,

Enseignement de matières par l'intégration d'une langue étrangère, as "any dual-focused educational context in which an additional language, thus not usually the first language of the learners involved, is used as a medium in the teaching and learning of non-language content" . The European Commission's education network Eurydice (2006, p. 8) considers CLIL as "a generic term to describe all types of provision in which a second language (a foreign, regional, or minority language and/or another official state language) is used to teach certain subjects in the curriculum other than languages lessons themselves" and in which equal importance is given to the development of proficiency in both the non-language subject and the language in which this is taught. It is interesting to note that on the site of the European Commission (http://ec.europa.eu/), CLIL was previously defined as an umbrella term embracing *both* learning other content or another subject through the medium of a foreign language (FL), *and* learning a FL by studying the content-based subject. Now, it is defined as "teaching a curricular subject through the medium of a language other than that normally used. The subject can be entirely unrelated to language learning" (European Commission, 2012). It seems that the European Commission now sees CLIL as equivalent to CBI.

But even if CBI and CLIL are sometimes considered synonymous (e.g., Ruiz de Zarobe, 2008), the difference lies in the continuum and the dual importance of language and content (Coyle, 2005), (i.e., the joint role of language and content (Marsh, 2002). Coyle et al. (2010) still subscribe to the double facet of CLIL, i.e., the "additional language" in CLIL is used for the learning and teaching of both content *and* language, even if CLIL is content-driven. Because of "the joint pursuance of two sets of goals – the acquisition of knowledge and skills in a given content domain and, in parallel, the acquisition of communicative skills in an L2" (Tudor, 2008, p. 51), CLIL is different from the teaching of courses in a FL/L2. This means that most English-medium programmes in various universities throughout the world cannot be designated as being part of the CLIL strategy, since they focus on content only. Nevertheless, we may observe a recent trend towards the integration of language learning and content study in some European universities offering programmes

in a foreign language (English, German, or French) (Tudor, 2008).

One of the (many) questions arising from the definitions mentioned above is whether CLIL is applicable to both language and content classes, or only to content classes. In fact, the literature describing the experience of applying CLIL (mainly in Europe) seems to indicate that the CLIL approach is envisaged to be utilized in content classes, i.e., not by a language teacher. Nevertheless, while defining CLIL as the use of an L2 in the teaching of non-language subjects, Dalton-Puffer (2007) seems to evoke the possibility of applying a CLIL approach in the context of language classes: "undeniably, CLIL classrooms are *not typical language classrooms* in the sense that language is neither the designated subject nor the content of the interaction, but the medium through which other content is transported" (2007, p. 3, my emphasis). The fact that the CLIL approach may be adopted in very different educational contexts explains these terminological variations and the lack of a "canonical model" for CLIL instruction (Tudor, 2008). The variety of CLIL implementation is explained by several factors, among which the balance between language and content and the students' proficiency in the target language play major roles (Tudor, 2008).

A final note: the integration of language and content has been the focus at the school level for several years now, but only recently has it been discussed at university level (Rösler, 2010), despite the creation of a platform for researchers in 2008, i.e., the *International CLIL Research Journal* (http://www.icrj.eu/). Furthermore, most of the research literature about CLIL refers to the use of English as the medium of instruction. This is due to the fact that English is the medium of instruction most widely used in CLIL instruction mainly in Asia, but also in Europe. As previously mentioned, the experimental study presented here relates to the adoption of an FL other than English in CLIL instruction, more precisely French. Nevertheless, we may say that research about the CLIL approach in Asia in tertiary education with an FL other than English is scarce, even non-existent in Hong Kong, and even more so with social science as the core discipline.

2. Rationale for CLIL

CLIL programmes have been implemented for several reasons: the disappointing results observable in FL teaching (Dalton-Puffer, 2007), the realisation that additional instruction time does not automatically ensure better proficiency among students (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009), and the need for better educational outcomes in language and communication (Coyle et al., 2010). Mohan explains that university students studying abroad fail to reach their potential in academic achievement because of poor coordination between the language teaching/learning and content teaching/learning and because of students' passivity in content classrooms, traditionally characterized by a high proportion of teacher talk and limited opportunities for student response (Mohan, 1986). The implementation of CLIL programmes is seen as the best way to improve students' FL proficiency by increasing exposure to the target language without increasing the number of classes in the school curricula.

Coyle et al. (2010) see in CLIL a fusion or convergence of subject didactics together with an opportunity for students to be exposed to two complementary exercises, i.e., language acquisition (result of natural communication and usage by subconscious process) and language learning (result of direct instruction with the learner's conscious involvement). Language learning becomes hence acquisitional and intentional. In CLIL instruction, language, cognition, and culture are interrelated, and language learning is based upon four pillars: communication (language use), cognition (thinking processes), course content (knowledge), and culture (social mediation and interaction) (Coyle, 2005).

The CLIL approach sees language as a tool and not just a goal. Apart from improving language competences and oral communication skills, CLIL methodology increases opportunities for practice with and exposure to the target language/culture, as well as deeper understanding of the foreign culture of learning, academic culture, and culture of communication. It also helps to build intercultural knowledge and

understanding, develop intercultural communication skills, and provide opportunities to study content through different perspectives, while increasing learner motivation and confidence in both the language and the subject being taught (European Commission, 2012). Another outcome is preparation for internationalisation of education (Marsh, 2002), and more precisely for an academic stay abroad (Cabau, 2014b; Fandrych, 2010).

The CLIL Compendium supported by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the European Commission defined five dimensions and foci to identify the core principles of the CLIL approach (CLIL Compendium, n.d.):

1. the culture dimension (build intercultural knowledge and understanding; develop intercultural communication skills; learn about specific neighbouring countries/regions and/or minority groups; introduce the wider cultural context)

2. the environment dimension (prepare for internationalisation, specifically EU integration; acquire International Certification; enhance school profile)

3. the language dimension (improve overall target language competence; develop oral communication skills; deepen awareness of both mother tongue and target language; develop plurilingual interests and attitudes; introduce a target language)

4. the content dimension (provide opportunities to study content through different perspectives; access subject-specific target language terminology; prepare for future studies and/or working life)

5. the learning dimension (complement individual learning strategies; diversify methods and forms of classroom practice; increase learner motivation)

The curricula of content subjects are considered as providing concepts,

topics, and meaning, which enable the natural use of the target language by becoming the object of real or authentic communication (Dalton-Puffer, 2007). This greater authenticity or "naturalness" is considered as "one of the major platforms for CLIL's importance and success in relation to both language and other subject learning" (Marsh, 2000, p. 5, as cited in Coyle et al., 2010). Dalton-Puffer (2008) also highlights the fact that students feel more relaxed when using the target-language, since the stress is put on meaning and not linguistic correctness, just as it does in natural conversations outside the classroom (2008). This helps support students' language learning and their motivation by leading them "to appreciate the immediate pertinence of the effort to acquire and use a 2nd or 3rd language while studying something else" (Beardsmore, 2002, p. 26). Marsh (2005) corroborates this idea of immediate pertinence: "The mindset orientation of Generation Y (born 1982-2001) is particularly focused on immediacy as in 'learn as you use, use as you learn - not learn now, use later'. Generation C (2002-2025) will be even more influenced by early experience of integrated media, curricula and practice" (Marsh, 2005).

Based upon classroom-based evidence, Coyle (2002, 2005) identifies four building blocks or 4 Cs for effective CLIL practice: subject matter (content), the language of and for learning (communication), the thinking integral to high quality learning (cognition), and the global citizenship agenda (culture). Tudor (2008) listed the potential benefits of CLIL in higher education as follows: increased student motivation to learn the language; an authentically communicative activity; parallel development of academic/professional competences and domain-relevant communicative skills; and preparation for lifelong learning. CLIL stresses "the cognitively guiding role language plays in all mental activities, such as discourse comprehension and production, as well as when negotiating about concepts, context and meaning" (Martyniuk, 2008, p. 18). As pointed out by Mohan (1986, p. 13), "if teachers can provide more opportunities for exploratory talk and writing, students would have the chance to think through material and make it their own. Student communication about subject matter is an important way of learning because it allows for a process of reflective thinking".

Generally speaking, language learning outcomes and content outcomes are positive in CLIL education (Dalton-Puffer, 2008). According to Coyle (2005), CLIL experiences demonstrate students' increased linguistic competence and confidence; increase students' expectations, i.e., students "feel they are learning at a level that is appropriate to their age and maturity rather than at a level determined by their linguistic level"; a development of a wider range of skills, such as "problem-solving, risk-taking, confidence building, communication skills, extending vocabulary, self- expression and spontaneous talk"; and raise awareness of cultural issues and the global citizenship agenda (Coyle, 2005, pp. 6-8).

3. The European Studies Programme at Hong Kong Baptist University

In 1994, a European Studies undergraduate programme was launched at Hong Kong Baptist University, manifesting in the academic arena the traditional image of Hong Kong as the place where East meets West. The European Studies Programme (hereafter, ESProg) incorporates some original features which proved to be challenging as well as attractive in the public eye. First of all, while Hong Kong's academic institutions had traditionally had strong links with English-language countries (the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, and Canada), this programme focused on the French-speaking and German-speaking countries of Europe, with a strong emphasis on acquiring French or German. Secondly, the newly introduced programme adopted a social sciences orientation in a city known as one of the most important financial centres in South-East Asia, where people are supposedly more interested in money than in social and political issues. Thirdly, it was a four-year rather than three-year programme, with a full year spent in Europe (Cabau, 2013, 2014b). The launch of the ESProg was seen as providing added value at three different levels – political, economic, and institutional – within the Hong Kong higher education arena (Hess, 2010).

The specific features of this programme combine a systematic study

of European political, social, and economic affairs with intensive FL acquisition (French or German). The four-year programme comprises two years of full-time study in Hong Kong; a third year spent in Europe with academic study and, whenever feasible, working experience in companies or institutions; followed by a fourth year of full-time study in Hong Kong. Political science provides the disciplinary core, which is underpinned by history and contemporary area studies. The annual student intake is set at 36 students, equally distributed between the French and German streams. The Year III study component in Europe is constructed to meet individual students' interests and academic performance, predominantly within the range of social sciences and business. The ESProg maintains student exchange programmes with Higher Education institutions in Europe. As for the French stream, students can opt either for political studies at one Institute of Political Studies (*Sciences Po*) or for management/business studies at university level business schools (*Écoles Supérieures de Commerce*).

Although the ESProg is a social sciences programme, the curriculum devotes considerable time to language study (twelve hours per week during the first two years). The students undergo intensive and rigorous training in French up to certified proficiency level prescribed for full-time academic study and/or professional activities in French speaking countries (corresponding to the *Diplôme approfondi de langue française* or DALF level for French learners). All language courses use the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) laid down by the Council of Europe (2001), which provides "a useful tool to align learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities and assessment methods" (Chaudhuri, 2011). The fact that the CEFR is action-oriented entails that it is linked to the concept of task, i.e., action is justified through social practices considered as tasks, and not as academic exercises. This approach defies the stereotype of Asian/Chinese students being passive learners, since linguistic/cultural knowledge and skills are presented as tools for communication and action (Cabau, 2012). It also appears as a coherent perspective for the preparation of the year abroad and professional life in an international environment (Cabau, 2013).

The first-year language classes (absolute beginner level) focus on the context of living and studying in France. The second-year language course aims to equip the students for academic study and internships in France during Year III. The fourth-year language course focuses on academic writing in French for the dissertation they have to submit for graduation. All language courses in the new four-year course curriculum of the ESProg have been re-titled 'Language in Context' to signify that language learning is multi-purposed and context-oriented. At all levels, devices developed by the latest communication technology are used to increase the dynamic aspect of language learning in the classroom. All French language teachers are native speakers.

4. CLIL in the European Studies Programme (French stream)

Having presented the conceptual framework of the CLIL approach and its rationale as well as the profile of the ESProg, we will now turn to the implementation of the CLIL approach in the French stream of this Hong Kong based programme. If, as we have seen, CLIL is considered in Europe as a promising approach to improve language learning and subject knowledge among students, one might ponder the relevance of such an approach in Asia. The Hong Kong case illustrates the challenge posed when applying an external "model"; i.e., it stresses the importance of context and environment on the implementation of this teaching/learning approach, and the need to take into account the local, regional, national, and transnational exigencies (Cabau, 2009; Coyle et al., 2010).

The Hong Kong Government's educational language policy aims for Hong Kong students to become trilingual (Cantonese, Mandarin and English) and biliterate (Chinese and English). The CBI/CLIL approach is used in secondary schools with English as the medium of instruction, even if students' language proficiency and subject knowledge are questionable (e.g., Hoare & Kong, 2008; Marsh et al., 2000). English is also the medium of instruction at all universities, illustrating the idea of "One Country Two Systems" in the educational arena. This means that French or German are a student's fourth language after Cantonese, English, and Mandarin. The foreignness of German and French is

further reinforced by the very limited presence of these languages in Hong Kong, as generally in Asia (Cabau, 2013, 2014b). In the Hong Kong context, the CLIL approach is innovative, even more so with the use of French in content classes.

4.1 Format of the CLIL approach

In the French stream of the ESProg, the CLIL/EMILE approach was adopted in order to achieve two main objectives: to develop the linguistic proficiency of students with a general knowledge of French culture and to prepare them for a smooth adaptation to a French academic environment, so that they meet successfully the high demands of French tertiary programmes. In addition, knowledge about the target-language country is as important as linguistic proficiency, because it is crucial for ESProg students' social interaction with foreign nationals during their stay in France. The heavy teaching schedule of twelve hours per week facilitates the integration of these objectives in language classes. The social science orientation of the ESProg provides unlimited resources to contextualize CLIL classes (Dalton-Puffer, 2007). A large collection of films related to French history, society, and politics (most of them with subtitles in English) is available in the Self-Access Learning Unit of the ESProg. French culture is the core discipline of our programme, i.e., social sciences. The non-language topics/themes are not taught *in* French but *with* and *through* French (Eurydice, 2006, p. 8). This means that content courses also use at least some French in class, and some topics refer to topics taught in French in the language class, so that students benefit from their French classes to understand more in the content class. Hence, content is a full component of the language teaching curriculum.

Content and more precisely, cultural aspects are embedded in language classes from Year I on during CLIL sessions (two hours per week in the first semester). Culture is presented and studied in the perspective of self-reflection, i.e., students are expected to ponder their own social environment while examining some social issues of present-day France

(Cabau, 2013). For example, ecological and environmental issues are presented in the light of the situation observed in Hong Kong. In CLIL sessions in Year II (four to six hours per week), content, i.e., topics in French culture (e.g., the Algerian War, the May 1968 protest, the headscarf controversy) are presented in French by using lecture presentations, press articles, television programmes, and films in order to help the students acquire academic language competence (ALC), i.e., "pragmatic and conversational skills that are typical of academic environments (such as approaching and negotiating academic issues with teachers, co-operation with other students, active involvement in class discussions, etc." (Fandrych, 2010, p. 22). During lecture presentations, emphasis is not only put on listening comprehension but also on note-taking. Students are also asked to use various materials to present topics in French in order to increase their oral proficiency and presentation skills before their academic stay in France. Regular tests in French are given to students each semester. The tests include questions about present-day international events. Students may use their dictionaries during these tests to avoid any major problems of comprehension. The greater emphasis put on content in Year II is facilitated by an intensive French language programme organized at the end of Year I. In 2012, the topics presented were the Hong Kong legislative elections and the French presidential election.

The approach adopted in the French stream does not fit into any of the categories defined by the literature about CLIL. This does not come as a surprise, given the specificity of CLIL settings, such as the multiplicity of teaching/learning formats, of orientations of academic programmes, and staff and budget issues. It seems that content-driven sessions *within* a FL teaching schedule are not widely applied in the academic context. Nevertheless, the CLIL sessions of the French language classes are content-driven, since the content is taught in French; the content is primary, and language learning is secondary; the content objectives are determined by the ESProg's goals and curriculum; the teacher selects language objectives; and students are evaluated on content mastery (Met, 1999). The French language teacher does not teach a subject, but introduces themes/topics of content (here French civilization)

during language classes, which correspond with Crandall & Tucker's definition of CBI previously mentioned. The main difference with CBI, though, is that students are expected to be active learners who engage in various communicative activities orally and in writing, and by doing so "developing their potential for acquiring knowledge and skills (education) through a process of inquiry (research) and by using complex cognitive processes and means for problem solving" (Coyle et al., 2010, p. 6).

4.2 Outcomes

First of all, it is important to stress that ESProg students face the challenge of acquiring almost simultaneously two different academic cultures, the local one and that of the destination country, as well as a second academic language after English. During their French sojourn, students experience different expectations from the teachers, a different methodology, autonomy-driven learning activities, etc. Syllabi, course readers, reading assignments, and published course notes often are not available, but students are expected to select books from extensive bibliographies and to write substantial course notes. Participation in class and oral presentations are given significant weight in assessment (Cabau, 2013). This is the reason why emphasis is put in Year II on the acquisition of ALC, since it is a "crucial linguistic and intercultural survival skill for periods abroad" (Fandrych, 2010, p. 25). Without ALC (strategies in reading comprehension, in listening and viewing comprehension, in writing essays, in presentations and discussions, etc.), students are unlikely to profit fully from their study abroad period in Year III (Cabau, 2013). The fact that students spend a successful year in top ranking French higher education institutions is a strong indicator of the various competences and skills gained during CLIL sessions.

Another positive consequence has been observed, namely the continuous exchange between language and content classes through 'curricular interfaces' (Rösler, 2010). That is, the knowledge acquired during CLIL sessions in language classes re-emerges in content subjects, such as

"Contemporary European Societies: The French-Speaking Countries". For example, the headscarf controversy studied in language classes is an already known social event when they attend the seminar about French Speaking European Societies in the second semester of Year II. Moreover, the same content subject may support students' language learning: the lecturer who is a French native speaker delivers her lectures in English, but may refer to some sources in accessible French, as in the lecture dedicated to the French social model when some documents are not available in English, but written or spoken in simple French, and with the use of films/videos/television programmes with subtitles in English.

Finally, we will turn to the teachers' perspective. Although the teaching staff in most CLIL programmes are not native speakers (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009), the problem of the teachers in the target language is minimized when the CLIL approach is included in the language classes. Another advantage of integrating the CLIL approach in language classes is that coordination between language and content is facilitated, because it is performed by a single teacher. Obviously, the language teacher, if not adequately trained, has to demonstrate at least a keen interest in the content. In the present case, the French language teacher had some previous experience in teaching French culture at another university. Another advantage in our case is that language teachers do not need any specific training to teach culture (as would be the case if they had to teach mathematics in French, for example), but possess some training in pedagogy (not very usual among academics teaching content), which enables them to develop their own material (Met, 1999). In fact, our language teachers have repositioned their teaching philosophy according to the ESProg and the core discipline and have become "conductors of the orchestra within the new language learning framework" (Marsh, 2005). At the same time, teamwork with the content teacher is crucial, and preparation is more time-consuming for the language teacher who also has to collaborate with the content teacher to discuss themes and topics.

4.3 Challenges

Some of the potential drawbacks of CLIL are whether the content integration could increase differences of proficiency among students, whether students regard CLIL sessions as too demanding (Tudor, 2008) in terms of acquisition of general knowledge, and whether motivated students can communicate their interests to their peers. Additionally, although, as previously mentioned, the language learning outcomes of CLIL instruction are globally positive (as regard listening comprehension, morphology, fluency, etc.), nevertheless this is less evident in students' writing and syntax; mainly as a result of placing emphasis on oral activities (Dalton-Puffer, 2008).

In fact, experience tells us that the CLIL approach may have a negative impact on students' linguistic progress only if students do not show any sustained interest in what is going on around the world, i.e., if they lack intellectual curiosity. By contrast, CLIL may have a positive impact on students with only average proficiency in French, but a strong motivation to understand worldwide issues. Their interest motivates them to communicate, hence increasing their chances to improve their linguistic proficiency. As mentioned previously, CLIL/ESProg students feel more relaxed when using the target language, because the stress is put on meaning and not on linguistic correctness.

To incorporate content in language classes necessitated some reflection on the content and the format among teaching staff of the ESProg. In the French stream, language teachers at first considered it risky to reduce the time allocated to language training. Content is often seen as difficult because of the traditional way of teaching languages at Hong Kong secondary schools, where proficiency is generally measured "in terms of formal language learning (e.g., grammatical accuracy)" (Jackson, 2010, p. 117). For this reason, content was originally introduced in Year II, but the increased expectations of host institutions in France heavily influenced the subsequent decision to introduce CLIL sessions from Year I. Another observation led to widening the scope of the content: students needed to contextualize their knowledge of French culture in a

more global, international perspective. It appeared irrational for Hong Kong students to learn about one specific European civilization without possessing a minimal knowledge of contemporary international affairs (e.g., the 2012 U.S. presidential election, the winner of the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize, etc.). One might think that students enrolled in an academic programme follow the news regularly, but Hong Kong students and new graduates are considered "*too inward looking*, […] *know too little about the outside world (and indeed show insufficient curiosity about it) to be ready to contribute in the kind of globalising economy in which Hong Kong must find its place*" (University Grants Committee, 2010, p. 57).

The other big challenge for the faculty members of the ESProg was to develop synergy between the language and the content subject teachers. This synergy entails a de-compartmentalization between language teaching, considered as "practical and technical", and content teaching, regarded as "the real intellectual challenge" (Fandrych, 2010, p. 22). In fact, the relationship between language and content is often characterized by tension and conflict (Krueger & Ryan, 1993): one of the recurrent concerns of content teachers is that the use of an FL may reduce the breadth and depth of the student learning. Students would learn less and in a more superficial way (Dalton-Puffer, 2007). Questions are also raised about the possible loss in a lecturer's teaching abilities when teaching in an L2 and not in his/her mother tongue because of more restricted language competence (Tudor, 2008). Tudor (2008) also refers to the perceived lower status of language teaching faculty compared to mainstream lecturers. This might be due to several factors: lower academic qualifications among language teachers compared to content lecturers; the fact that language competences have been long seen as only instrumental and optional, and that higher education institutions have been long reluctant to the idea to make students acquire competences (and not only knowledge), a concept generally linked to professional and not academic qualifications (Springer, 2010). In fact, "issues of roles and status come up repeatedly and heatedly in content-based instruction" (Snow, 1998, p. 257). However, because of the format of the CLIL approach in the ESProg and the existence of a strong team spirit, such issues are non-existent.

4.4 Content and language in Year 4 seminars

The presentation of the CLIL approach in the ESProg (French stream) would not be complete without considering the importance given to content and language during the fourth and final year. French is the medium of instruction in two fourth-year seminars.

In the first seminar, "Contemporary European Societies II: *questions d'actualité"*, students are expected to recognize multidimensional factors and stakes which have affected the societies of Belgium, France, Luxembourg, and Switzerland in recent years; to define present-day issues of political and social debates in the European French-speaking countries; and to identify various challenges for these countries in the social and economic field from the perspective of the European Union's policy in the era of globalization. In terms of skills, by the end of this course, students will be able to compare the social and economic policies adopted in Belgium, France, Luxembourg, and Switzerland in response to these challenges; to explain the present-day role and position of existing political parties in the above-mentioned countries; and to present in French, orally or in writing, an organised synthesis on topics related to the evolution and present-day situation of the French-speaking societies of Europe. Hence, this seminar is clearly content-oriented, but reinforcing academic language proficiency is also an objective.

The second seminar "European Economic and Business Life: *travailler en contexte international*" is project-based. The project or scenario devised by the students sets the objective to be achieved (e.g., the opening of a French company in Hong Kong) and defines the different steps (micro-tasks) of the mission (macro-task) to be accomplished. The assessment takes place for each micro-task focused on reception, interaction, and production of written and oral communication (Cabau, 2013). This seminar mainly revolves around three principles: transferability, i.e., learning objectives should be linked to students' future professional careers; capacitation, i.e., the capacities needed to perform various tasks in a professional context; and integration, i.e., the successful combination of "conceptual, procedural and attitudinal

learning at different (cognitive, functional, social, etc.) levels" (Ezeiza Ramos, 2009, p. 154). These principles are mentioned as the three (out of nine) most important expectations among Hong Kong employers, namely analytical and problem-solving abilities, work attitude, and inter-personal skills. But according to a 2006 survey, whereas graduates obtained a satisfactory performance score for work attitude and inter-personal skills, their performance in analytical and problem-solving abilities was the second lowest (Education Bureau, 2010). From this perspective, group work, student questioning, and problem solving are considered crucial elements for interactive classrooms. The project approach adopted in the Year 4 seminar seems among the most appropriate formats to answer Hong Kong employers' expectations in terms of graduates' abilities, more particularly for inter-personal and management skills, which can be applied in a French-speaking professional environment.

5. Concluding remarks

In Europe, the development of the CLIL approach has been mainly envisaged with the impact of the internationalisation of higher education and its consequences, i.e., the growing demand of English-medium academic programmes (even if some universities include other languages, such as French and German). This paper illustrates that a content-oriented approach is also applicable in an Asian academic context with languages other than English; but it also highlights the importance of context and environment, such as the profile and structure of academic programmes, teaching and learning strategies, staff resources, and educational objectives. In fact, in Asia, as in other parts of the world, several factors may challenge the future of CLIL provision: the first one is undeniably the overwhelming status of English as international academic language, the consequence being that in Asia CLIL is virtually equivalent to English language education. Then, the problem of programme structure is apparent, namely the limited time allotted to content subjects against the time dedicated to language tuition. This issue is related to the academic profile of the programme

(business, literature, etc.) including language education.

The duality of focus on both language and content is demanding for students, who have to reconsider their foreign language learning strategies. At the same time, the integration of content in language classes increases the range of teaching/learning activities where students actively participate in the learning process. But smooth and productive integration of content will be more easily achieved at universities by being implemented at an earlier stage, i.e., at secondary schools, which may increase learners' motivation in FL education. The CLIL approach is also ambitious and challenging for all teachers, and the Hong Kong case study investigated why and how the language teacher has to go far beyond the linguistic teaching/learning activities and the presentation of cultural issues found in traditional foreign language textbooks. In the ESProg, this is a question of choice driven not only by the profile of the academic programme, but also by the support of the faculty members. Any attempt to force or induce language teachers to incorporate content (politics, economy, etc.) in their classes is likely to fail, mainly because these teachers normally lack background knowledge to teach content.

Finally, it is important to stress that if potential employers are keen to hire fresh graduates who have mastered a foreign language, they expect these candidates to possess excellent communication skills, i.e., to master the linguistic and non-linguistic tools to interact efficiently in a foreign professional environment. Communication skills are not synonymous with linguistic correctness, but they play an increasing role in the enhancement of graduates' employability. It is from this perspective that CLIL experiences in various Asian academic contexts with a language other than English should be developed.

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Learning Russian through Poetry in the Russian as a Foreign Language Classroom

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Abstract

The use of literature in foreign language teaching has been a subject of heated debate for a long time. The present paper aspires to argue that the use of literature, in particular poetry, can be used as stimulus to motivate students playing the role of the *+1* in Krashen's "input hypothesis" (1982, 1985, 1991), provided that it is appropriately integrated in the teaching along the lines proposed by Savvidou (2004); furthermore, this "integrated approach" becomes an excellent tool in enabling the teacher to familiarize students with the cultural aspect of language learning (Shchukin, 2003; Brown, 1986; Fortunatova, 2004). To achieve its purposes the present paper presents a case study of using poetry in a Russian as a Foreign Language (RFL) class in Taiwan following the principles of the "integrated approach". The case study is located in context both through a review of the role of poetry reading in foreign language and through a review of Russian teaching in Taiwan (with special attention paid to the opportunities and limitations of holding this case study in National Taiwan University). Then the paper proceeds to present the methodology used in integrating the teaching of Pushkin's poem "To Chaadaev" and Lermontov's "The Sail" in this particular RFL class, and pays special attention to a problem students faced with enunciating properly the rhythm of the poems (a problem that was not predicted by Savvidou's "integrated approach"), as well as the steps taken to solve this problem. Finally, the paper presents the evaluation of the progress made by the students and concludes by emphasizing how the "integrated approach" can enhance both the students' creativity and their ability to engage into autonomous learning.

Keywords: Literature Teaching, Russian as a Foreign Language (RFL), Poetry Reading, Integrated Approach

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Learning Russian through Poetry in the Russian as a Foreign Language Classroom

1. Role and function of poetry reading in foreign language classes

A wide spectrum of opinions is held by scholars and teachers regarding the inclusion of literature reading in language classes; nevertheless, both positive and negative opinions reflect their concerns on students' learning efficiency. Opponents suggest that literature hinders learning, and teachers who intend to familiarize learners with the target culture through classic literature end up finding that the students become overly dependent on word-for-word translations (Rosenkjar, 2007). Metaphors and ambiguities in literary texts are especially singled out for creating insurmountable difficulties for students at the basic level, with the result that they fail to develop their language skills and literary appreciation. Eventually, neither teachers nor students are satisfied with the class. Consequently, "there is often reluctance by teachers, course designers, and examiners to introduce unabridged and authentic texts" (Savvidou, 2004) to the foreign language syllabus.

In most cases, learners follow designed textbooks, usually non-literary, to acquire language knowledge and skills. However, upon achieving a certain level of language mastery, students are often reported to reach a dead end and feel bored with routine teaching methods "such as grammatical analysis, sentence structure analysis, story-telling, diary writing, translation, group activities, and role plays" (Ming-sheng Li, 1998, p. 6). At this point, literature reading could serve as a motivation to make further advances. According to Krashen's "input hypothesis" (1982, 1985, 1991), students should be provided with material "a bit beyond" their current level of competence. The language input is called *i+1*, where the *i* is the current level, and the language which learners are exposed to should be *i+1*. I propose that literature can stimulate students and be the *+1* for them, provided the texts are suitably selected. Therefore, literature is certainly suitable for students if used in proper teaching approaches so that the "reluctance" suggested by Savvidou

might not necessarily occur.

There are two reasons for adopting this opinion. Firstly, as Savvidou (2004) shows, literature "can provide a powerful pedagogic tool" that helps in improving language skills. Equally, if not more importantly, "literature can also act as a powerful change agent" (Amer, 2003, p. 63) that assists students to enhance their cultural/intercultural awareness, and therefore enables them to acquire knowledge of the target culture, which, as many studies have pointed out (Maley, Daskalovska & Dimova, Bibby & McIlroy), is necessary for acquiring language competence.

Literature is also important in the Russian as a Foreign Language (RFL) classroom. Since the 1990s, the focus of theoretical and practical methodology has turned to "human language" (человек в языке), i.e., the attention of the class being slightly drawn to cultural linguistics (лингвокультурология). As Shchukin (2003) states, "strategies of RFL teaching should be based on culture, the study of which determines learners' ability of cross-cultural communication and generates their social competence as the final result of language acquisition." This agrees with Brown's emphasis on the cultural aspect of language teaching. He argues that "second language learning is often second culture learning" (Brown, 1986, p. 33). Besides literal accuracy in communication, teachers need to help learners understand not only literal, but also implicit, culture-related meanings (Fortunatova, 2004). However, these "implicit meanings," including the nuances, creativity, and versatility in the Russian language, always cause difficulties, or even insuperable obstacles for RFL learners. Most RFL teachers use literature as a powerful tool to help students both remove such obstacles and improve their language competence. A good example of this could be the short- and long-form adjectives in Russian. RFL teachers usually explain that the long-form adjectives are preferred in today's conversational Russian, while the short-form ones are used in formal Russian. Then they typically quote Lev Tolstoi's sentence "Real wisdom is concise" (Настоящая мудрость немногословна) as an impressive example of the short-form adjective used in written Russian. To put it simply, literature can be used in the RFL classroom as a model of style and reference to grammar.

2. Role and function of poetry reading in foreign language classes

Among literary genres, poetry is most valued for its role and functions in language learning, and is often included in teaching materials. Thanks to its characteristics, such as wording, rhythm, repetition, intonation, and association, poetry appeals strongly to language learners. Indeed, poetry reading can be seen as singing, which greatly helps learners memorize vocabulary efficiently and in the long run improves their language competence. In addition to facilitating language learning, poetry has also been demonstrated to help learners develop a deeper understanding into the culture and society of the target language. A very good example is provided by *Learning English through Poems and Songs*, published by the Education Bureau in Hong Kong for senior high students in 2010. The third section, entitled "Reading and Writing Poetry," contains varied poetic forms like acrostics, shape poems, limericks, narrative poems, and ballads. It not only familiarizes learners with the structure of English poetic texts but also encourages them to compose a poem themselves, thereby promoting their active engagement with the target culture. In short, poetry reading is widely accepted among language teachers who claim poetry can succeed in arousing learning interest.

RFL teachers have paid special attention to the function of poetry in language class because the memorable rhythm of Russian helps readers command its pronunciation rules. In recent years, poetry of the Silver Age (1890-1921),[1] a creative period of Russian poetry on a par with the Golden Age (1820-1835) more than half a century earlier, has been found to be efficient in boosting learners' interest. These poems are frequently covered by language teachers, and they have been found highly suitable for advanced learners, arousing their interest. As Chelkalina (2010) points out with reference to a language class based on the reading of Silver Age poetry, analyzing and understanding the composition of

1 Divergent views are held by Russian scholars regarding the beginning and the end years of the silver age of Russian poetry. Some of them think it began in 1890; others suggest that it started in 1880. The more controversial opinion is about its end year. Some scholars think it ended in 1917, after the outbreak of the October Revolution in Russia; others think it was in 1921, after the death of A. Blok and N. Gumilyov's execution. However, some scholars believe that it ended in 1930, after the suicide of V. Mayakovsky and the growing ideological control in the Soviet Union.

Silver Age lyric poems turn out to provide stimulating challenges to both teachers and learners. This is because most poets, not limited by established convention, deliberately make their works actionless and put more stress on image description. Occasionally, some well-known poets, such as Alexander Blok (1880-1921), Marina Tsvetaeva (1892-1941), and Velimir Khlebnikov (1885-1922), even make their poems nothing but a play of acoustic instrumentation, such as assonance and alliteration. Surprisingly, these traits draw the attention of language learners.

However, given the fact that poetry of the Golden Age is more familiar among the RFL circles in Taiwan (indeed, the work of poets such as Pushkin (1799-1837) and Lermontov (1814-1841) are considered indispensable in learning Russian), I decided to introduce these poems to Taiwanese students.[2] Poetry of this period is well-known for its richness of content and action. In addition, despite the fact that the poems were composed almost two centuries ago, their cultural and social background can be comprehended by learners without much confusion. Students are consequently expected to be able to identify themselves with the poetic heroes and make poetry part of their lives.

3. Russian as a foreign language in Taiwan

The history of teaching Russian as a foreign language in Taiwan has not always been smooth or uneventful. Historical and political factors combined in such a way as to play a role that was, paradoxically, both obstructive and constructive. In 1957, the first academic institute offering Russian teaching was set up in National Chengchi University's (NCCU) Department of Oriental Languages (Russian Division), followed by Chinese Culture University (PCCU) in 1963. They had been the only two institutes teaching the Russian language until another department was founded in Tamkang University in 1993.

For geographical, historical, political, and economic reasons, English

2 The methodology and results of this approach will be discussed later.

and Japanese have been front and center in foreign language education in Taiwan, followed by European languages such as Spanish, German, and French, while the Russian language is of less importance due to generally unstable relations with the Soviet Union/Russia. By contrast, China, Japan, and Korea have been placing more emphasis on RFL not only because of geographical proximity but also because of their complicated historical, political, and economic ties. However, in comparison with other East Asian polities, such as Singapore and Hong Kong, Taiwan stands out in terms of RFL education in that it has been developing and growing for longer than half a century.

In 1949, the Nationalists retreated from mainland China to the island of Taiwan, and "Anti-Communism and Anti-Soviet Russia" became one of the basic national policies and propaganda drives of the Republic of China. The political slogan literally means opposition against Communist Russia and Communist-controlled China, and it introduced a faraway country, Russia, to the island. Since then, the Taiwanese have apparently become more knowledgeable about Russia, but this understanding has always been politically prejudiced against it. Until the 1970s Russia was considered an archenemy. In this historical context, most colleges in Taiwan were passive or uninterested in teaching Russian. However, NCCU and PCCU embraced the advice of Sun Tzu, the ancient Chinese strategist, to "know your enemy and know yourself," and pioneered Russian teaching in Taiwan. Such teaching was obviously influenced by the political guidelines of its time. Some of the first teachers of the Russian language often injected their anti-Russian attitude into teaching materials, so it was common to see in textbooks many political terms such as *Советский союз* (the Soviet Union), *коммунизм* (communism), *враг* (enemy), *демократия* (democracy), *Три народных принципа* (*Three Principles of the People*), and *создавать Республику* (found the Republic). Yet, these biased textbooks were gradually discarded as Russian-Taiwanese relations improved.

The courses provided by the three above-mentioned Russian departments were mostly grammar translation-based, some of which were Basic Russian (I & II), Advanced Russian (I & II), Practical Russian, Russian

Conversation, Stylistics, and Literature. Regarding their credit hours, language teaching was emphasized far more than literature teaching; actually, it was not until the 1990s that Russian literature courses started becoming frequently available.

In the 1990s, literature reading gained more attention as the three departments started to enroll specialized instructors (both of Russian and Taiwanese nationalities). Most of the courses addressed the nineteenth-century classics, such as Pushkin's and Lermontov's poetry, while twentieth-century literature was secondary. As for narratives, what were often included in teaching materials were Pushkin's *The Belkin's Tales* and Chekhov's early short stories.

4. Russian as a second foreign language in NTU

There is no specialized Russian program in National Taiwan University (NTU). However, Russian-related courses have been provided at NTU for at least twenty years. These courses were designed to cultivate basic language ability and literary knowledge. They can be categorized by their methodological focus: (1) grammar-based: Russian I (basic), Russian II (intermediate), and Russian III (advanced); (2) conversation-based: Russian Conversation I and II; and (3) literature-based: Selected Readings of Russian Novels, and Selected Readings of Russian Poems. These courses focus on language itself, i.e., grammar, lexis, and syntax. Despite the restricted syllabus, Russian teachers try their utmost to help students acquire communicative competence and, most importantly, the ability to understand discourse in all socio-cultural contexts.

The current paper will try to provide some illustration of these efforts by referring to the course "Selected Readings of Russian Poems," while at the same time analyzing and suggesting the benefits of poetry reading in Russian teaching. Readers should be aware, however, that this poetry reading course is a new, experimental class which has only been offered during the last few years; as a consequence, it should not come as a surprise that this course can be improved in many aspects, some of

which have already been selected for incorporation in future versions of the course.

The course "Selected Readings of Russian Poems" is designed to help intermediate and advanced students enhance their language competence through poetry. We adopted Savvidou's (2004) integrated approach, in which she offers the following six stages as a model for teaching literature. Stage 1 (Preparation and Anticipation) tries to elicit learners' real or literary experience of the main themes and context of text. In Stage 2 (Focusing), learners experience the text by listening or reading and focusing on specific content in the text. In Stage 3 (Preliminary Response), learners give their initial response to the text. In Stage 4 (Working at It – 1), the focus is on comprehending the first level of meaning through intensive reading. In Stage 5 (Working at It – 2), the focus is on analysis of the text at a deeper level, exploring how the message is conveyed through structure and special uses of language in the text. In Stage 6 (Interpretation and Personal Response), the focus is on increasing understanding, enhancing enjoyment of the text and enabling learners to come to their own personal interpretation of the text. As Khatib states, "each of these stages is conducive to the betterment of teaching literature" (2011, p. 205).

This integrated approach is in general based on Carter and Long's (1991, p. 2) three models of literature teaching: the culture model,[3] the language model,[4] and the personal growth model,[5] with the last model being the basis of Savvidou's integrated approach. In this approach the focus emphasizes the interaction of the learners with the text and their personal interpretation of it. Additionally, when implementing it in our classroom special attention was paid to the listening/reading and creativity mentioned in the approach, as it was considered to be

3 The culture model requires learners to explore and interpret the social, political, literary, and historical context of a specific text. However, such a text is often considered a cultural artifact, which makes the model largely rejected by EFL teachers (Savvidou, 2004, p. 3).

4 The language model is the most common approach to literature in the EFL classroom, but the disadvantage is that literature in this model is used only as a focus for grammatical and structural analysis (Savvidou, 2004, p. 3).

5 The personal growth model attempts to bridge the culture model and the language model. The function of this model emphasizes the interaction of the learners with the text. By using this model the text is been seen as a stimulus for personal growth activities (Savvidou, 2004, p. 3).

essential for the development of our learners' oral abilities.

5. Russian poetry reading in the RFL classroom: methodology and evaluation

Poetry reciting, a common activity in language lessons, is very useful for improving Russian learners' pronunciation and intonation. If the teacher can include such an activity in his/her teaching design, the class will certainly be more meaningful. "Through reading repeated lines in poems aloud, students can appreciate poetic rhythm, understand the characteristics of poetry, and eventually construct knowledge of the discipline" (Cheung, Wing-Tak, 2008, p. 16).

5.1 Teaching Pushkin's Poem "To Chaadaev" Using the Integrated Model

Classic poems were chosen as course materials, especially poems of Alexander Pushkin[6] and Mikhail Lermontov.[7] To abide with Krashen's *i+1* principle, the selected poems were purposefully chosen to be a bit challenging for intermediate and advanced learners.

Four of Pushkin's representative poems were included in the course: "To Chaadaev" (К Чаадаеву), "If Life Deceives You" (Если жизнь тебя обманет), "The Prophet" (Пророк), and "A Monument I've Raised Not Built with Hands" (Я памятник себе воздвиг нерукотворный). These four poems represent different periods of Pushkin's literary career, from the romantic to realistic periods.

Class procedures will be exemplified with reference to Pushkin's "To

6 Aleksander Pushkin (1799-1837), the Russian Romantic poet, novelist, and dramatist, has often been considered the founder of modern Russian literature. His works include the narrative poem *The Prisoner of the Caucasus* (1822), the novel in verse *Eugene Onegin* (1833), the tragedy *Boris Godunov* (1825), and the novel *The Captain's Daughter* (1836). His personal life was made difficult by his conflicts with the authorities who disapproved of his liberal views. He was killed in a duel.

7 Mikhail Lermontov (1814-1841), the Russian Romantic poet, novelist, and dramatist, has been considered the most important Russian poet after Alexander Pushkin's death in 1837. His works include the narrative poem *Demon* (1829—1839), the play *Masquerade* (1835), and the novel *A Hero of Our Time* (1840), which founded the tradition of the Russian psychological novel. The poet was killed in a duel.

Chaadaev."[8] The original and English versions of the poem are presented below for reference.

Пушкин А: К Чаадаеву	**A. Pushkin: To Chaadaev**
Любви, надежды, тихой славы	Of love, of hope, of quiet glory
Недолго нежил нас обман	Not long I nursed the self-deceit,
Исчезли юные забавы,	Vanished are adolescent dallies
Как сон, как утренний туман;	Like a dream, like the morning mist;
Но в нас горит еще желанье,	But still desire burns within us;
Под гнетом власти роковой	Beneath the press of fateful power
Нетерпеливою душой	With impatient soul
Отчизны внемлем призыванье.	We hark the native country's summons.
Мы ждем с томленьем упованья	We bide with yearning expectation
Минуты вольности святой,	The moment of sacred liberty,
Как ждет любовник молодой	As the young lover bides
Минуты верного свиданья.	The moment of the promised meeting
Пока свободою горим,	The while with liberty we burn,
Пока сердца для чести живы,	The while our hearts are quick for honour,
Мой друг, отчизне посвятим	My friend, to our land we dedicate
Души прекрасные порывы!	The soul's exquisite raptures!
Товарищ, верь: взойдет она,	Comrade, believe: it will arise,
Звезда пленительного счастья,	The star of captivating bliss,
Россия вспрянет ото сна,	Russia will rouse herself from sleep,
И на обломках самовластья	And on the ruins of despotism
Напишут наши имена!	Our names will be inscribed!

(Translated by Walter Arndt)

At the beginning of the class, the instructor asked the students about their understanding of the poem. They answered that the first two lines of the poem, though only eight words long, made them think for a long time. Although the learners knew that the four words of the first line are in the genitive case "любви, надежды, тихой славы" (of love, of hope, of quiet glory), it took them a long time to realize that these words should be linked with the last word of the second line, "self-deceit": "self-deceit of love, of hope, of quiet glory." This shows that the construction of

8 This poem was written in 1818, when Pushkin was nineteen years old. The poem is addressed to Peter Chaadaev (1794-1856), Russian philosopher and friend of Pushkin. This poem reveals the spirit of resistance, which made the tsarist regime fearful of him.

poetry is very different from that of prose. Concerning learners' real or literary experience in the first stage of Savvidou's model, learners know that Pushkin's "To Chaadaev" is an epistle, a literary device that is common in both Western and Chinese cultures. Taiwanese learners, unsurprisingly, associate the poem easily with some classic Chinese poems belonging to the same genre, such as Li Po's (李白) "To a Friend" (贈友人), Du Fu's (杜甫) "To Li Po" (贈李白), and Wang Wei's (王維) "Wei City Song" (渭城曲). Therefore, learners expected that the poem "To Chaadaev" is about friendship, love, and school memories, but the main theme and content of the poem are actually about revolt against the tsarist regime, which exceeded their expectations.

In the next stage (Focusing), Russian theater actor Oleg Dal's recitation of the poems was played in class, and the students listened very intently. "That's the right way to recite Russian poems!" one of the students commented after listening. While it has been recognized that reading aloud is a useful way to memorize vocabulary, listening to poetry read aloud also helps students recite words, especially when the poem is performed by a well-trained actor/actress, his/her voice, tempo, and even pauses make every single word of the poem extraordinarily moving.

After the first listening, the students listened to the poem recitation again. This time, they paid attention to the tone and word stress. As mentioned in the previous section, the word stress is usually a tough problem for Russian learners because it is usually unfixed in Russian. Stress change is found in Russian nouns, adjectives, and verbs, and any wrong stress might change the meaning and cause miscommunication or even misunderstanding. That is why Russian learners and native speakers often cannot understand each other.

Concerning the Preliminary Response (Stage 3), student Wu thought it was weird that the sentimental feeling of ephemeral youth was connected with the theme of opposing the tsarist regime; another student, Weng, said that this kind of connection was not weird, but just the same as Lin Juemin's epistle "Farewell Letter to My Wife,"[9] which is full of

9 Lin Juemin (1887-1911) was an early Qing dynasty revolutionary, who died in the Guangzhou Uprising in 1911, at the age of 24. The epistle "Farewell Letter to My Wife" was written three days before he joined, and was arrested in, the Guangzhou Uprising. In the letter he expressed his personal feelings

sentimental power. In short, the theme and content of the poem "To Chaadaev" are more complex, which is not so often seen in classical Chinese poetry.

The next step is Intensive Reading (Stage 4). Some key words and techniques were pointed out for students for further analysis. The instructor guided students to find out the contrasting vocabulary of the poem, such as *любовь* (love) compared with *обман* (deceit), which Pushkin used to make the conflict in meaning. Students could then quickly point out by themselves the comparison between *юные забавы* (adolescent dallies) and *утренний туман* (morning mist), which refers to ephemeral youth. The most abstract contrast in the poem is the comparison between *отчизна* (motherland) and *самовластье* (despotism), the former referring to "Mother Russia," that is the object to which the poet and his compatriots wanted to dedicate their loyalty, and the latter referring to the tsarist regime, the object they were trying to overthrow.

The poetry of Pushkin is well known for its "clarity and simplicity" but still has no lack of difficult vocabulary and comparison, both full of cultural meaning. Through this stage of Intensive Reading, RFL students can accurately grasp the first level of significance of the text, then go further to the next step.

In Stage 5 we continued intensive reading, but our focus was on the analysis of the structure and special uses of language in the text. In Pushkin's "To Chaadaev" the first part describes the cruel reality and the gloominess of a young man, while in the second part the narrator is passionate and sincere in calling for friendship. The last part then ends with zealous and optimistic expectations, which is immensely encouraging for readers. What is most noteworthy in "To Chaadaev" is its shift from personal concerns to civil responsibilities, making the poetic work more memorable and profound in meaning. This unique analogy is shown in the eleventh and twelfth lines, in which Pushkin

towards his wife and country in a romantic tone. Now the letter "Farewell Letter to My Wife" has become the most famous love letter in the modern Chinese-speaking world.

compared the mood of a lover who is waiting for "a promised meeting" with the devotion of a young man to his motherland. Student Kao considered, "a promised meeting" purified revolutionary action, which is a typical approach of a romantic poet.

The instructor here could point out that the characteristics of Russian romanticism are full of the spirit and passion of revolution and revolt. Romantic poets of that era often regarded the autocratic Tsarist regime as the source of their discontent. Just as in "To Chaadaev," the most striking characteristics are its civil concerns rather than personal sorrow over his ephemeral youth. Although it was composed 170 years ago in tsarist Russia, the civil concerns described in the poem still resonate in the twentieth-first century, and that is why it is very well-received by most RFL learners.

As for Stage 6, we will discuss it later in the last section "Creativity and Inspiration".

5.2 Teaching Lermontov's "The Sail" Using the Integrated Model

Besides "To Chaadaev," this course used the integrated model in teaching another poem by M. Lermontov (1814-1841), "The Sail" (Парус). Lermontov's poems present a difference from Pushkin's poetic "clarity, simplicity, succinctness," as they tend to be ambiguous and symbolic, displaying his conflicted and uncompromising character. Despite these differences, their poems basically reflect the same cultural consciousness and social issues which form the nucleus of contemporary Russian values. Therefore, by appreciating their poems, students can understand important aspects of the social and spiritual aspects of Russian speech. The original and English translation of the poem "The Sail" are presented below.[10]

10 This poem was written in 1832, when Lermontov was eighteen years old. The poem reflects a depressed mood of the Russian aristocracy-intellectuals after the failed uprising of Decembrists and the oppressive rule of Tsar Nicholas I.

Лермонтов М: Парус	**M. Lermontov: The Sail**
Беле́ет па́рус одино́кой	A sail is gliding in the torrent,
В тума́/не мо́/ря го/лубо́м. —	Enveloped in a bluish haze.
Что и́/щет он/ в стране́/ дале́кой?	What does it seek 'mid breakers foreign?
Что́ ки́/нул он/ в краю́/ родно́м?	What did it leave in native bays?
Игра́ют во́лны, ве́тер сви́щет,	The tempest roars, the sea is riven,
И ма́чта гне́тся и скрыпи́т;	The mast gives in: it bends and creaks
Увы́! — он сча́стия не и́щет	No, not by joy this sail is driven,
И не от счастия бежи́т! —	And 'tis not joy it vainly seeks!
Под ним струя светлей лазури,	Beneath, the stream is deep and quiet;
Над ним луч солнца золотой: —	Above, the clouds are soft as fleece…
А он, мятежный, просит бури,	Alas! It longs for storms and riot,
Как будто в бурях есть покой!	As if a storm could bring it peace.

(Translated by Anatoly Liberman)

Lermontov's "The Sail" is widely admired because of its representation of the unique solitude and rebellion of puberty. For Taiwanese learners who live on an island, the imagery of sea, sailing, and waves never presents difficulties but is easy to understand: a white sail in the sea alludes to youth loneliness and rebellion; the waves imply tough reality. These implicit meanings are not difficult to understand, especially when listening to professional reciting: the rhythm, imagery, and word choice are smoothly integrated with the meaning. It shows that the success of Stages 4 and 5 depended greatly upon the learning efficiency of Stages 2 and 3.

The last two sentences of the poem are most obscure: "*Alas! It longs for storms and riot, As if a storm could bring it peace.*" The emotions in these two sentences are full of contradictions and complexity, but they are not just talking about one's own destiny. The word "storm" here is a metaphor, not only referring to challenges and difficulties in one's fate but also alluding to the rebellion against the authoritarian

tsarist regime. However, our poem's hero says that he will not escape but bravely confront the challenges and difficulties.

The two poems, "The Sail" and "To Chaadaev," were written in 19th-century tsarist Russia, but their humanist themes still succeed in connecting students with their personal experience in the RFL classroom.

5.3 A parallel issue: poetry reciting in language teaching

Stress and rhyme help create a rhythm during recitation, but in actual practice learners consistently have trouble from the very first line. This is an unexpected task which is not mentioned in Savvidou's approach, and extra practice was necessary to get this crucial part right. The mistakes observed when the students of the course recited poetry (caused by the declension and stress change of Russian nouns) will be illustrated by reference to the poem "To Chaadaev". "To Chaadaev" is in iambic tetrameter of two-syllable feet with the stress on the second syllable: ⏑ — | ⏑ —| ⏑ — | ⏑ — ⏑.[11] For example, the first line "*Лю**бви**,| на**деж**|ды, **ти**|хой **сла**вы*" (*Of love, of hope, of quiet glory*)[12] is fully communicated in iambic tetrameter. However, it is found that most of the students read with incorrect stress: "*Лю**бо**ви,| на**деж**ды,| **ти**хой **сла**|вы*," making it sound like an amphibrach: ⏑ — ⏑ | ⏑ — ⏑ | — ⏑ — | ⏑. The word ***любо́вь*** (love) in its genitive case (of love) should drop the vowel -o-, and the stress will move to the final syllable: ***любо́вь → любви́***. In fact, the word after the declension remains in two syllables as it is in the nominative case, but most of the students incorrectly read ***любови*** without dropping the vowel -o-. The reason lies in the declension-driven stress change in the word ***любо́вь***, which is fairly common in Russian nouns. In fact, the flexibility and beauty of the rhythm and rhymes in Russian poetry are to a great degree affected by declension and stress change. As a result, a correct recitation of the poem suggests a desirable command of the declension and stress change

11 ⏑ = unstressed syllable; — = stressed syllable.

12 Stressed syllables are in bold.

of Russian nouns.[13] Table 1 summarizes the errors made by the students when they first read out the word "*любви́*" in the first line of the poem.

Declension **Stress**	**Nominative** любо́вь	**Genitive** любви́	**Error**
Fang	✓	×	любо́ви
Kao	✓	×	любо́ви
Chang 1	✓	×	любо́ви
Yang	✓	✓	
Wu	✓	×	любови́
Chang 2	✓	×	любо́ви
Wang	✓	✓	
Weng	✓	×	любо́ви

Table 1

Only two out of the eight students correctly pronounced the genitive case of the word. In fact, the word *любо́вь* was not alien to students who knew its declension very well. However, they tended to retain and stress the vowel -o- when reading its genitive case, resulting in a redundant syllable in the first line. To address this issue, the instructor explained the meter, rhythm, and foot of Russian poetry so that students were aware of the fact that only *любви́* is allowed in this iambic line. It was observed, after the explanation, that most of the students corrected their pronunciation, but it was formally evaluated again on the midterm examination.

Another common error occurs in the word *се́рдце* (heart) in line fourteen "*Пока́/ сердца́/ для че́/сти жи́вы*" (*The while our hearts are quick for honour*). The ending vowel changes into a stressed *-а* (се́рдце → сердца́) to indicate the plural form of the word, which Pushkin uses to preserve the iambic rhythm for the poem: ⏑ — | ⏑ — | ⏑ — | ⏑ — ⏑. Thanks to the reading of the first thirteen lines, students were more familiar with the iambic form and fewer made mistakes this time

13 In Russian, both declension (relevant for nouns, adjectives, and pronouns) and conjugation (relevant for verbs) usually cause stress change.

(see Table 2).

Declension Stress	Nominative Singular	Nominative Plural	Error
	сéрдце	сердцá	
Fang	✓	✓	
Kao	✓	×	сéрдца
Chang 1	✓	×	сéрдца
Yang	✓	✓	
Wu	✓	✓	
Chang 2	✓	×	сéрдца
Wang	✓	✓	
Weng	✓	×	сéрдца

Table 2

Most students do not feel confident with the stress change when forming the plural form of neutral nouns. As can be seen in Table 2, students tended to leave the stress in its original syllables when pronouncing the word *сердцá*. On the other hand, the instructor observed that some of the students, though unsure of the pronunciation of the plural form, made a good guess based on the iambic rhythm of the poem. This observation suggests that poetry reading might have a positive effect on Russian lexical and phonetic learning.

5.4 Evaluation

For the students' midterm evaluation, the instructor required them to recite the poems on stage. Over half of them thought it was very challenging but felt excited about this evaluation. The results of the midterm evaluation are presented in Table 3. The evaluation was based on four primary criteria: stress, pronunciation, fluency, and emotion. Stress and pronunciation should not entail more than three errors. As for fluency, the whole poem for recitation should not last more than three minutes. Emotion, which is more difficult to assess, was mainly based

on volume and emotional expression. When students met the above criteria, they reached the expected level (✓); on the contrary, those who failed to reach the expected level got the mark (–).

To Chaadaev	Stress	Pronunciation	Fluency	Emotion
Fang	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kao	✓	✓	–	✓
Chang 1	✓	–	–	✓
Yang	✓	✓	✓	–
Wu	✓	–	–	–
Chang 2	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wang	✓	✓	✓	–
Weng	✓	✓	–	–

Table 3

The first criterion is closely associated with the training we had in class, and most of the students achieved the expected level. Two students couldn't get the "✓" in the second criterion "pronunciation." This is because they could not clearly and correctly articulate certain words, such as *нетерпеливой* (with impatience), *призыванье* (summons), *томленьем* (with yearning), *пленительного* (captivating) and *воспрянет* (rouse). All these words are multisyllabic; they need further practice. Half of the students couldn't reach the expected level in the third criterion "fluency." Some of them made too long a pause when reciting the poem and repeated words two or three times, which affected their fluency.

The last criterion "emotion" is the most critical, and at the same time the most difficult for students, especially as it depends on the fulfillment of the first three criteria. Half of the students achieved the expected level because of expressing emotion through their voice. On the contrary, students who didn't reach the expected level appeared too rigid and cautious in their voice.

5.5 Creativity and Inspiration

One of the most amazing aspects of the mid-term evaluation was the students' creativity. For example, student Fang played *Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 16* by the Norwegian composer and pianist Grieg as background music when she was reciting the poem "To Chaadaev." She explained that the concerto just flashed into her mind when she practiced reciting the poem. This musical piece is low and soft at the beginning, perfectly matching the first part of the poem, while it becomes louder and has a faster beat in the second part matching the increased emotional intensity of the second half of the poem. The music then ends with the student's perfect interpretation of the lines *"Russia will rouse herself from sleep*, / *And on the ruins of despotism* / *Our names will be inscribed!*" Fang's performance was immediately greeted with deafening applause. When it comes to how background music and poem recitation work together, most students commented that the music contributed to and even enriched the reciter's emotional expression. In fact, additional practice is required in order to make background music work with poem recitation, and Fang's performance and other students' comments again prove that fluency and emotion of poem recitation are generally based on learners' practice.

Another student Chang 1 chose to recite "The Sail." As she started to recite the poem, she played a short video clip where she was practicing volleyball alone on campus. The student read "*A sail is gliding in the torrent, / Enveloped in a bluish haze. / What does it seek 'mid breakers foreign? / What did it leave in native bays?*" At this time, the background sound turned monotonous with the volleyball hitting the wall and the ground. Then the student continued, "*The tempest roars, the sea is riven, / The mast gives in: it bends and creaks. / No, not by joy this sail is driven, / And 'tis not joy it vainly seeks!*" While the student read these lines, the girl in the clip was sweating heavily and out of breath. "*Beneath, the stream is deep and quiet; / Above, the clouds are soft as fleece…/ Alas! It longs for storms and riot, / As if a storm could bring it peace.* " At the end of the recitation, the girl in the video was worn out and lying on the ground, with the volleyball rolling and finally coming to

a stop. The lonely sail contrasted with the girl playing volleyball alone. The reciting student conveyed the subtle feelings in Lermontov's poem by associating her personal experience with the sail fighting with the waves. The rebellion and pursuits of puberty were best interpreted with the volleyball in the video clip. All the students were greatly touched by her poetic interpretation of the visual image. Chang's creativity and emotion showed her deep understanding of the mental aspect of Russian poetry.

The case of the second student indicates that autonomous learning can be boosted by means of the proper teaching approach and materials. Further, their strong willingness to learn and courage to speak are essential for mastering various Russian discourses, especially socio-cultural ones. In short, pursuit of creativity in poem recitation not only encourages the learner but also inspires the audience to have a more active attitude in language learning.

6. Conclusion

Poem listening and reciting are two sides of the same coin. The musical feature of Russian poems is highlighted by the human voice. Once students can appreciate the emotion in poems, they can easily overcome their timidity and enjoy Russian poetry.

Poetry learning is effective in helping students master various Russian discourses, especially socio-cultural aspects. "Poetry reading helps foreign language learners identify with the foreign countries. With multimedia materials, students could quickly and effectively adopt the material and apply what they have learned in creative ways" (Tsai, Ling-Wan, 2011, p. 61).

In general, poetry teaching has a positive effect on students' language competence. With a well-selected teaching approach and literary texts, students can quickly and efficiently understand deeper meanings of every language discourse. For intermediate and advanced learners, literary texts can indeed further raise their autonomous learning.

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Considering a first deconstructionist approach to teaching German Literature in Taiwan

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Abstract

German literature teaching has traditionally worked with a method that is based on hermeneutics as a theory of comprehensive understanding and practice of interpretation. Although the hermeneutic methods of Germanic studies developed into critical didactics after the historical hiatus by the National Socialism, and then has been critically evaluated by theorists such as Habermas, traditional hermeneutics still stands against the backdrop of many parts of Germanic studies in research as well as in teaching. However, language is a communication system that is never quite unequivocal in its linguistic terms. This was already pre-thought by Nietzsche, and since the 1970s, it was emphasized in the thoughts of French philosophy, particularly the thoughts of deconstruction by Derrida. The difficult theoretical and ethical implications of deconstruction require a demanding reading of Derrida's writings: this would overwhelm learners of foreign European languages. Therefore, my considerations focus on the question of whether and how far the thinking of deconstruction can be made fertile as a particular literary theory approach in Taiwan. What could a potential approach of literary didactics that is influenced by the thinking of deconstruction look like? What kind of advantages and problems are evoked? Based on an analysis and criticism of a literature teaching approach for German native speakers, I will consider a first deconstructivistic approach to literature teaching in the field of teaching German as a foreign language in Taiwan.

Keywords: Teaching Foreign Language and Literature in Taiwan, Deconstructionist Thinking, Hermeneutical Thinking, German Didactics

Considering a first deconstructionist approach to teaching German literature in Taiwan

German literature teaching has traditionally utilized a method that is historically based on hermeneutics as a theory of comprehensive understanding and practice of interpretation. Since the 19th century, the method of hermeneutics used in German studies has been influenced considerably by the methodology of Wilhelm Dilthey (Bogdahl, 2003, p. 34). For an interpretation, this approach also requires, among other things, comprehension of the author's biographical situation. Even though, after the historical hiatus due to National Socialism, hermeneutic methods of German studies have developed into critical didactics and have been then critically evaluated by theorists such as Jürgen Habermas (Habermas, 1996, p. 28), traditional hermeneutics still stands as the backdrop of many fields of German studies both in research and in teaching, including teaching foreign language literature classes in Taiwan.

However, language is a communication system that is never quite unequivocal in its linguistic terms. This was already previously discussed by Friedrich Nietzsche, to whom words have been always metaphorical (Nietzsche, 1988, p. 880). This perspective has been enhanced by French philosophical thinking (Simons, 2009, p. 60) since the 1970s. In particular, the open thinking of deconstruction can be traced back to the philosopher Jacques Derrida (Derrida, 1996, p. 301). His postmodern philosophy of deconstruction as a strategy aims at a critique of metaphysics with supposedly fixed terms in language, binary oppositions, and their implicit hierarchies. Therefore, in the center of my considerations is the question of whether and to what extent deconstructivist thinking can be made fertile in the field as a pedagogical approach for teachers and learners of German as a foreign language ("DaF") in Taiwan. Equally important seems the question what complications may lay behind some of the teaching difficulties

for Western Teachers in an East Asian surrounding like the one on Taiwan. Is it possible to find a suitable approach to teaching literature to students in Taiwan that is based on the philosophy of deconstruction? What could it look like? What kind of advantages and difficulties for learners and teachers would be involved? I will attempt to consider a first deconstructionist approach to literature teaching in the field of DaF in Taiwan while making a comparison between hermeneutical and deconstructivist thinking from the perspective of a place of in-between. However, I warn that those who expect to find a simple solution to this problem might be disappointed.

1. Complexity. The local context

A few decades ago, a language that is spoken mainly on the other side of the globe seemed just too far away to be of interest to young people. In current times, the Internet certainly has helped students of European languages, literatures and cultures in East Asia to get closer to these foreign languages. However, the didactics and educational practice for foreign European language teaching in East Asian contexts seem to have been unable to fully address the particular needs of the students in East Asian countries including Taiwan. That is why there is a need to look for another kind of approach to teaching foreign European languages, literatures and cultures in Taiwan. As literature is generally a part of culture, teaching literature may be included into a program of teaching German language and culture in any East Asian country. However, there are some issues associated with it, including time constraints, the ever present requirement to test and evaluate the students, the large size of classes, the general complexity of a foreign literature, and the alleged property of the history of literature to be boring to students – all of these often do not contribute or promote teaching both language and literature at the same time. Some teachers consider them as a burden and dismiss literary texts as unsuitable or inappropriate for teaching German language. What complications may be behind these teaching difficulties? In his article about the failure of communicative language teaching in Taiwan Nigel Daley (2009) demonstrated the significance of the complexity of the local context for teaching. In his paper, various

key issues are displayed which have a great impact on learning and teaching, e.g. the influence of the Chinese imperial examination history on the psycho-cultural construct of people in Taiwan, traditional cultural norms of education in and outside the educational system, the socio-political framework, and the teacher-student roles (Daley, 2009, p. 13). Following Deleuze/Guattari, Daley (2009, p. 18) described this as a nested teaching complex, "an assemblage of two systems". The education in Taiwan seems to show a co-adapting of teaching and curricula, educational policies, and cultural dynamics which are intertwined with each other, and with other levels like the individual students, globally propagated theories, local beliefs, and cultural formations as well.

It is important to mention the complexity of the local context and the interdependence in this nested teaching complex because it gives an insight into the differences of starting points and motivation. So, for example, in Germany the aim of education traditionally would be described with the German word 'Bildung', a metaphorical term that originated from botanical language and was formed by German philosopher, Prussian minister of education and founder of the Berlin University Wilhelm von Humboldt; it describes a form of personal maturity and humanity, self-determination, the ability to participate in discussion, to have a personal opinion and unfold individuality through education. Although the Confucian ideal of education shares with Humboldt the aim of improving human beings, yet not with the intention of producing enlightened citizens. Unlike Humboldt's idea, the collectivist tradition of China rather intends to bring harmony to the community.

In an East Asian culture like Taiwan with its Chinese heritage the practice of teaching could rather be described as capitalizing the upbringing, filial piety, and education that traditionally produces a stronger focus on knowledge-centered examinations less than process-centered examinations on the part of the institutions, teachers, and parents alike. This means that the feared and celebrated examinations play a far greater role in the society of Taiwan because they generate order, and a traditional German teaching approach has difficulties meeting

the expectations toward teaching in Taiwan. From the perspective of the latter, any communication with the teacher seems unnecessary to reach the target of writing a successful exam. As a result, teachers in Taiwan experience students who fail to attend a 3-hour-lecture, and afterwards expect the teacher to give them access to the entire content of the lecture via Internet. These students are accustomed to a practice that does not differentiate between interacting in a classroom and reading alone at home. In a product-focused structure, interaction is not necessary, and these practices make sense to students when they are in a traditionally Chinese cultural heritage society because its emphasis is on reproducing the exact same form, which does not require much thinking and reflection. Learning appears to these students to be an individual and competitive experience, which requires of them only to study hard for the exam, but not to engage in interactive communication or in processual thinking and creativity. However, this way of thinking misses the point when the lecture is process-focused. A process-activating input and training in thought call for something different that needs interaction and communication, which cannot be provided via reading some keywords that students just memorize. From the view of traditional German didactics, rote learning is not the goal for any studying. A classical-humanistic trained German teacher probably may consider this kind of learning futile. As a result, the old goal of teaching might have to be partially replaced in favor of enhancing the students' skills to read texts, and try to prepare them for a contact with the unknown (e.g., a cultural exchange abroad that will change their construction of identity, and give them a broader horizon[1]).

2. Questioning teachers?

When looking at the structures in education, it can be noticed that the structures in Taiwan do not encourage questioning. In Germany it is widely accepted that one should give the young generation a chance to learn anything by ways of questioning their surroundings.

1 Elsewhere (Leipelt-Tsai, 2012, p. 239) I have suggested that identity construction undergoes a shift after exposure to the "foreign".

Characteristic of this idea was the introduction of the German version of the old children's TV series "Sesame street". In the entrance song, the children always sang "Who? How? What? Why? Whoever does not ask remains stupid!" (in German it has an easy-going alliteration: "Wer? Wie? Was? (…) Wieso? Weshalb? Warum? Wer nicht fragt, bleibt dumm!". In this way, in Germany questioning as such was promoted among young children as an indispensable quality of their mental make-up, and this way of thinking has already become part of the German people's collective memory. This encouragement to question almost everything already at a young age demonstrates one impact of education in Germany. As a result its practices produce a more open atmosphere in regard to questioning in general. Moreover, German teachers praise their students not only for intelligent answers, but also for intelligent questions. Unlike in East Asian countries like Taiwan or Japan, in Germany information flows more openly, and even the Master craftsmen are willing to share responsibility for the learning of their apprentices, and most of them usually try to explain everything to them. So it seems that Germans generally are used to a different practice in education compared to people in East Asian countries.

In East Asian cultures it can be noticed that the position of the teacher often corresponds partially to hierarchical structures found in the former historical mandarinate. That may be a reason why in this kind of societies people seem less inclined to question their surroundings openly. One important example is visible by anyone who watches one of the many traditional Kung Fu movies from Hong Kong: their narrative refers explicitly to the very high position of teachers in traditional East Asian cultures.[2] Confucius, as a prototypical teacher, is regarded as moral authority and a role model for harmonious dealings with other people. His teaching and influence preserves the teacher's high social position. Still, the Chinese educational system is probably more influenced by the traditional elitist system of official examinations, and Confucius himself should not be considered to be the sole agent for the creation of this ideology of education.[3] To obtain harmony, it

2 The genealogy of teaching can also be observed in a more sophisticated form in modern movies, for example in Chen Kaige's (陳凱歌) film "Sacrifice" (2010, 趙氏孤兒).

3 In an email to the author Dr. Cay Friemuth (13 Oct. 2012) emphasizes that when claiming Confucius

seems particularly important to avoid conflicts and contradictions in this type of society. Disobedience and opposition to elders, teachers, and parents are considered impolite or audacious. Traditionally the position of teachers would come very close indeed to that of a parent. For pupils and students, copying and reproducing variations was seen as a practice of humbleness and reverence. Most of the time, the pupils in these societies still may not get much opportunities to learn how to ask questions since they usually only have to memorize instead of communicating dialogically, and they may not get enough space to gain educational experience with others to acquire a method of how to deal with processual knowledge. However, to quote Gordon Wells, "We need to see teaching, (…) not as the transmission of pre-existing knowledge to passive recipients, but rather as the provision of opportunities for children to continue to exercise their in-build drive actively to make sense of their experience" (Wells, 1986, p. 29).

In a society where teachers traditionally demand respect, loyalty, and absolute obedience from their students, questioning by their students seems almost impossible. This means the socio-cultural background and the function of teachers is different than in a Western society that is influenced by the Platonic principle of dialogue considering the position of teachers. Although there are differences between the position of a teacher at a school and a professor at a university, as well as between every singular school and every singular teacher, in what follows I will try to compare the general position of teachers in the two cultures. In Taiwan, teachers are held responsible for the learning performance of students, and they, as an instrument of mediation, are expected to provide all the knowledge that is needed. Teachers in Taiwan occupy a position in which they are able to control the progress of learning;

universally as only influence for East Asian cultures, this would correspond to a claim that European culture could be traced back to a general "Christian culture", or a "Platonic culture". Actually allegedly Confucian or sanctioned by Confucius texts existed mainly in memorization –sacred texts, whose claim to validity is the European equivalent of the Bible. The claim to power of the elites in Asia was based –as in clerical Europe– on the fact that the texts needed correct interpretation by the elite's own monopoly to interpretation. In this respect things in Europe and China were not that different –except that back then in Europe the Enlightenment led to a rediscovery of the ancient authors and their free thinking, a reappraisal of the individual as a rational subject who thinks for itself instead of memorizing. Now, this enlightenment separates Europe from the Islamic world as well as the East Asian cultures –even though some scholars believe to find the first model for the Enlightenment in China (Friemuth, 2012, p. 10).

what a teacher says should always be right and is not questionable. They symbolize the authority of knowledge, so to teach seems not just an occupation, but rather a kind of ethic-/moral work. According to Cheng (2011, p. 180), former president of National Chengchi University (政治大學, NCCU), a teacher in Taiwan should not be the only person who holds power over knowledge. He points out that in former times, teachers refused to be taught or challenged, and they did not have interactions with their students. They insisted on teaching knowledge instead of teaching students how to think (Cheng, 2011, p. 181). So it seems that such hierarchically mediated knowledge leads to fixed structures of knowledge that in modern times turn out to be rather resistant to variegation and processes of knowledge.

On the other hand, in Germany, unlike in Taiwan, a teacher is a respected but ordinary person in everyday life. German teachers generally are only showing the way how to learn and develop oneself, and they are not assumed to be the only resource one can learn from. So German students are expected to learn from many other resources by themselves. In Germany, the students' learning achievements are considered only from an individual condition and situation. In order to learn and figure out different issues, a German student may sometimes try to question the professional opinion of a teacher in an open discussion.[4] Also, it seems that in a traditional East Asian culture that is influenced by the old system of official examinations much more is expected of a teacher than in Western cultures: a teacher has not only to be good at what he does but has to lead a somehow 'morally impeccable' way of life which seems even more important than his/her ability to teach. In addition, when being an advisor (導師) in a culture like Taiwan, much more is expected of him/her than in Germany; this task includes being able to respond and to responsibly provide counsel regarding almost every aspect of a student's life, even when they are already grown up (Advisor guide, 2012, pp. 3-5).

4 It might be little-known but seems a very characteristic example that in Germany often the mandatory two advising university professors of doctoral students, both in technical sciences and in humanities privately recommend in their advisory discussion-hour to their doctoral students two contrary or mutually exclusive suggestions about the approach to be taken. In this way, the doctoral students are forced to decide for themselves which background and way of thinking will influence their doctoral thesis.

In addition, the interconnected communication structure and the social behavior seem more complex than in European countries. For example, the valuation of losing face is somewhat different in Europe than in Asian countries.[5] Whereas in Taiwan a loss of face should always be avoided, in Germany the concept of losing face in public is also known; however, in connection with the acceptance of criticism it is usually weighted differently (Leipelt-Tsai, 2009, p. 92), especially when the result is an important learning experience. Though in other social units (such as in manufacturing, or in the military) a more steep social hierarchy increases the speed of response or output and is therefore desirable, a steepened social hierarchy at schools and universities does not help to create the perfect learning environment for students. For example, due to their fear of losing face, they may sometimes not be willing to speak in a foreign language, and remain silent with the result that a very small number of students dominate classroom proceedings. For students who want to learn a foreign language, a different atmosphere with a less steep hierarchy that possibly achieves a verbal culture of debate is more desirable. However, to touch the question of education means to question one of the basic outlines of a culture that is influenced by its traditional system of official examinations.

2.1 Interlinking

In Leipelt-Tsai (2009, p. 86) discussing appropriate teaching targets for German speaking instruction of literature in Taiwan, I have already pointed out, following Walter Benjamin's thesis about the amplification of a new form of perception and reception in modern times (Benjamin, 1977, p. 165), that the modern technology changes the sensory perception of humans. Social stress and intensive pressure are changing the human receptivity with a tendency to be less filled with rapt attention but more unsettled and fractured (Leipelt-Tsai, 2009, p. 87). I have linked this with the reading process of modern society, especially that of contemporary youth in Taiwan, and interpreted this as an adaptation to the changing perception that consequently looks for another gratification. Looking

5 For remarks about the concept of face in Western culture, e.g. the Swiss and the American, see Locher, M. A. (2010).

from the viewpoint of the young adolescent students in Taiwan in times of the new media, the complication to read many difficult literary texts in a foreign language without a first translation seems far too difficult. Their leisure practice seems to have changed, and the trends of the reading culture has changed. Applying Benjamin (1977), one may say that the modern perception tends to a kind of reading process that searches for shock effects. The need for ongoing attracting irritations and provocations increases more and more. This lack of contemplation complicates the reading for students, making the reading process with its generation of meaningful sense more difficult. The practice of reading tends to be now more dispersal rather than contemplation and consideration. Unlike someone who centers oneself and concentrates on the text while reading, now, instead of becoming engrossed in the text, the modern human engrosses the text in oneself. Simultaneous multiple stresses and exposures to new information technologies can slow the mental processing down, that is why one might sometimes have to consider a reduced intensity of the reading process. Of course, this differs individually from student to student. Still, it is especially evident in a society like Taiwan which is strongly influenced by new media.

I would suggest that Western teachers should try to develop a hybrid approach. Teachers of DaF in Taiwan could consider another didactic option to apply a relatively new way of thinking and to combine an awareness of temporary knowledge with processual thinking and creativity, thus, a didactic approach that follows the philosophy of deconstruction. However, if teachers of DaF in Taiwan try to integrate the postmodern ideas into their classes, a new teaching challenge may occur, because a corresponding form of deconstructivist didactics seems very difficult to find. To define deconstruction would mean to rely on an ontological procedure that would ascribe it a deliminating identity. As Wolfreys/Robbins/Womack quoted Derrida's words, "deconstruction, if it is anything, is an economic concept designating the production of differing/deferring" (Wolfreys/Robbins/Womack, 2006, p. 30). To unlock the difficult theoretical and ethical implications of deconstruction requires a lengthy and concentrated reading of Derrida's writings, so this could overwhelm any learner not yet

acquainted with deconstruction in his/her mother tongue. I argue that with deconstructivist thinking, a thinker – this includes any teacher as didactician – has to consider that the human mind is limited and not capable of cognition; therefore, (s)he is not at all able to say what (s)he knows. This means one cannot produce knowledge; one is only able to say what one does not know or has to remain silent. So, if a didactician tries to produce positivist unrestricted knowledge with the thinking of deconstruction, his/her didactics have already failed because, by defining targets and fixed notions, (s)he exerts ideological power, which stands against deconstructivist thinking. Deconstructivist thinking doubts and questions this kind of establishing (positivist) knowledge since it is an imposition of power and hierarchies.

In order to teach that humans are not able to know any supposed truth, using questions and negations could be one possible way of teaching deconstructivist thinking. In doing so, the teacher will only say what it is not and cannot say what it is, because the limited capability of human cognition makes it impossible to produce this kind of positive knowledge. This corresponds to the fact that, according to Culler (1999, p. 27), Derrida follows with the utmost austerity the structuralist principle that there are only differences in the linguistic system, and no positive terms. Another way to teach deconstructivist thinking could be by means of showing how it works in practice and aiming for a more process-focused, instead of product-focused teaching. So, when trying to use a teaching approach that corresponds to the Derridean thoughts of deconstruction as a strategy aimed at a metaphysical critique of supposedly fixed terms in language and their implicit hierarchies, instead of verbally stating alleged truths that produce an ideology, a teacher may use a strategy of performance (i.e., by deconstructing a notion, and showing narratively what is not definable in order to expose to sight the indeterminate). I suggest that this didactician will tend to use negations in many situations, e.g., even when a student is asking about his/her written paper, the didactician would ask questions or talk about what (s)he has not written and not about what (s)he has written. From the students' perspective, especially students with Western cultural backgrounds who are used to simple logocentrical thinking, they may get frustrated when listening to negations and questions and

may long for a more simplistic way of thinking. Some students need more time to recognize that the negativity of didactics is not due to a teacher's personality, but due to deconstructivist thinking. The question remains open if it is possible to teach deconstruction in a didactically more appealing way without acting against its principles.

The access to deconstruction may need more time than just stating something in a one-sided simplistic logic. Although grasping the theoretical and ethical implications of deconstruction requires more time, this kind of non-ideological didactic would give students of German studies the opportunity to familiarize themselves with different ways of thinking – something students in other fields already have done (e.g., in English and French departments in Taiwan). Thus, an introduction to deconstruction might encourage students to follow the traces of meaning, to think creatively, to acquire new ways of thinking, and moreover, to question their surroundings independently. Derridean deconstruction is not only a postmodern theoretical approach that can be used for the teaching of literary works. Deconstructivist thinking works against hierarchies, such as those in language, and has a great 'potential to unsettle' (Flüh, 2012) as Peter Engelmann formulated it. In Germany the absorption of the French poststructuralistic theories were much delayed, and their application is still less common than in France, England, and the US. This applies to a great extent to German studies, and in consequence to didactics for German literature. Both of these fields often concentrate on utilizing the critical theory of the Frankfurt School (influenced by Adorno and Horkheimer) or the sociological Systems Theory developed by Niklas Luhmann. Paraphrasing Richard E. Nisbett's proposition that East Asian cultures are more relation-centered and might more often prefer to use a thinking in relationships (i.e. concentrated on the relationships of notions) and less a thinking in objects (i.e. concentrated on the singularity of objects; Leipelt-Tsai, 2009, pp. 82-86), deconstructivist and other poststructuralist thinking seem specifically suitable to the predominant thinking style in East Asian cultures. This is especially so since poststructuralistic[6] semiotic

6 I would like to draw the reader's attention to the fact that here, and throughout this paper, I use the ending '-istic' with the meaning 'in the way of...', so 'poststructuralistic', for example, means 'in the way of a poststucturalist'.

theories follow traces of meaning in language as difference (as with Jacques Derrida), and respective structuralistic semiotic theories see language as a chain of signifiers (as with Jacques Lacan), both of which would fit well with a more relation-centered thinking. In this way, the socio-geographic location may enable teachers to employ a deconstructivist teaching approach.

3. Impossibility

A book that tries to demonstrate a potential approach to German literary didactics influenced by deconstruction is Nicole König's *Dekonstruktive Hermeneutik moderner Prosa* (2003) with a theoretical outline and exemplary readings for German schools.[7] König applies her didactical approach only to the genre of prose texts. Looking at the title of her book, a newly coined term strikes the eye: the so-called 'deconstructivist hermeneutics'. At first glance, it seems to lead to a 'mission impossible' by combining hermeneutics with deconstruction. Some may ask: why does the term *Dekonstruktive Hermeneutik* sound impossible? In order to approximate the thinking of deconstruction and the thinking of hermeneutics for those who are not familiar with it, I will try to oversimplify the differences between these directions of thinking in a short overview.

Many have already heard of hermeneutics as a method of interpretation of texts and of Biblical texts that was already used in medieval times. More broadly, it can be described as a theory on the interpretation of texts and understanding. The hermeneutic circle describes the impossibility of knowing anything except through what is already known (Wolfreys, Robbins, & Womack, 2006, p. 50). The hermeneutic circle implies that singular parts of a text are only understood after reading and understanding the whole of a text, and at the same time, the entire text can be understood only through the comprehension of parts of the text. Over times, this paradoxical theory was supplemented and modified, but there was always the claim to an understanding behind

7 For a historical outline of didactics in Germany, see König, pp. 134 et seq.

it. While the traditional German approach (e.g., by Wilhelm Dilthey) was to try recovering an 'original' intention of the author of a text,[8] in the 20th century, the most influential representative of philosophical hermeneutics, Hans-Georg Gadamer, assumed language as a medium in which understanding can be accomplished (Gadamer, 1996, p. 29) by means of exploiting a supposed 'true' meaning of a text through asking questions in a dialogical conversation that in principle is not possible to terminate (*Der ununterbrochene Dialog*, Gadamer & Derrida, 2004). However, this positivistic concept of understanding was questioned when Derrida demonstrated that Gadamer's precondition of understanding – a willingness to understand – was, and still is, questionable (Gadamer, 1996, p. 104). Therefore, understanding – if it exists – has always a relational character.

With the open thinking of the differance (with an 'a'), and of the trace, the unity of philosophy is broken, and the other –which had been excluded– becomes an input to philosophical thinking.[9] Deconstructivist thinking cannot be thought of as a form of hermeneutics because this movement of thinking goes in another direction. To put it in a simplistic way, in hermeneutics, the interpretation of a text would analyze a plurality (for example a novel) in order to simplify, reduce and summarize it. Accordingly, hermeneutical thinking would extract only a supposed essence out of it. This reduction and simplification of meaning produces a final conclusion that brings the movement to an end. Hermeneutical thinking believes in a fixation of established knowledge and requires the reduction by means of definition. It needs narrowed notions, and it needs to build up dichotomies and hierarchies of these notions. A critique of hermeneutical thinking might be that it may oversimplify (which means, for example, that the distinctiveness and specifics of the form and content of a text may get lost).

Deconstructivist thinking, however, would move in the other direction of thinking. It is concerned about the different, the small and excluded,

8 The starting point of hermeneutical reading is to ask about the intention of the author "*Was meinen Sie, was möchte der Autor damit ausdrücken?*", cf. Ehlers, Swantje (1992).

9 In the suppression, and combating of the proliferation of deconstruction in German speaking countries, the influence of philosopher Jürgen Habermas also had its share.

the other. Deconstructivist thinking –if it has a start– would start from one concentrated point, for example a word, and try to unfold the many meanings of this word. This could be done by analyzing the context or by going back to historical meanings that are still connected to the word. For example, when reading the old German proverb *Lesen bildet* some might say it means 'reading forms'. With deconstructivist thinking one would try to unfold this, e.g., by looking into an etymological dictionary, where one would find the entry

> "bilden Vb. 'formen, gestalten, hervorbringen, darstellen, sein', übertragen 'die geistigen Anlagen entwickeln'." (Etymologisches Wörterbuch. A-L, 1993, p. 137)

So the verb *bilden* can be unfolded into different meanings like 'to form, to make up, to shape, to produce, to represent, to be', and in a figurative sense 'to educate, and to develop the mental abilities'. One can go even further and connect this word with the Middle High German word *bilden*, which means 'to decorate with pictures, to shape, to reproduce, to imagine' (*Etymologisches Wörterbuch. A-L*, 1993, pp. 137f.). In this way, deconstructivist thinking as a process gives different perspectives onto one term, paradoxically all at the same time. It shows many readings and different possibilities of meaning. Deconstructivist thinking is not able to produce a conclusion; instead, in its dissemination it produces temporary answers and an openness for the other (e.g., the openness of a new question). It follows traces, differentiates very carefully, is interminable and indeterminable. Deconstructivist thinking does not believe in a fixation of knowledge (such as a prescriptive constraining definition) since change always produces new knowledge, and old knowledge is not recognized anymore. It would not state that something 'is'; rather, it would describe something by saying what it is not. It breaks open dichotomies and hierarchies of notions, and tries to dismantle them, even the notion of being a deconstructivist.[10] A critique of deconstructivist thinking might be that one may say it creates meaning, maybe even meaning that another reader is not able to read.

10 That is why someone who says (s)he is a deconstructivist is not really a deconstructivist: deconstructivists would never fix this notion by saying that. Hence, they should be nowhere to be found.

As a result, hermeneutical thinking as a method will produce oneness, while deconstructivist thinking as a strategy will produce a plurality. For example, the notion of a human being in terms of hermeneutical thinking would be an undivided individual, while deconstructivist thinking would consider it as a subject, subjected to forces inside and outside of its mind.

Only from the perspective of a one-sided simplistic logic the allegation against deconstructivist thinking as being not (one-sided) logic (in German: *nicht ein-fach*) seems admissable because it is not unilateral, and it may be characterized as a pluralistic logic that is impossible to grasp by simple logocentrical thinking. The accusation of a possible random arbitrariness by hermeneuticists shows they have not grasped deconstructivist thinking because deconstruction deals foremost with accuracy. For example, while reading one has to pay attention to every point, dash, and blank space. Undecidability is just a first step that will give way to a precise reading through an exact analysis of the context(s), so arbitrariness is not at all given; when a text is read in this way (e.g., with the method of close reading) any difference becomes important to the reading. Therefore, deconstructivist thinking seems more difficult and time-consuming than hermeneutical thinking because it has to consider every small detail in a text, and, unlike hermeneuticists**,** even has to consider what is not in the text. Instead of isolating and concentrating on only one way of thinking deconstructivist thinking has to consider many possible ways. It seems difficult to capture that the concepts that are used by simple logic are not suitable for deconstructivist thinking. If someone who is used to hermeneutical thinking expects a full examination of the entire works of a writer, (s)he will be disappointed because there is no longer a belief in unity and therefore no concept of works in the sense of a totality. As the text is only a supposed unity, so are the collected works of a writer. Hermeneuticists and those who look for simple positivistic knowledge in a deconstructivist reading or deconstructivist lecture will be disappointed, and they might feel confused and discontented because they cannot follow and cannot take unrestricted knowledge home in the way they are accustomed to do.

4. Alternating movements of thinking

In light of this simplified background, it seems impossible to adapt deconstructivist thinking to hermeneutics as proposed by König (2003). However, as I have already suggested elsewhere (Leipelt-Tsai, 2008, p. 73) in discussing the aesthetics of reader reception , when reading a text the human mind uses most of its time engaging in both ways of thinking. Readers have to proceed on the necessary assumption that they can find a meaning in a text, otherwise most of them would not start reading. Therefore, in spite of the text's indetermination, they would usually not stop reading until they found a kind of meaning because they are driven by their desire for meaning (even if as a result they find the meaning that the text has none, for example, in advertising). The readers' preliminary draft of meaning in the reading process is constantly changing by means of adaption of the text that was just read to new meaning, and the readers will time and again try to discover a consistency in the signifiers and falsely assume of the differance (with an 'a') that it would be a constitutive relation. Despite the play of differences in a text, any reader tries to find a singular meaning for at least a short amount of time. In a possible second reading (for example, of the same reader when young and when old), the meaning may have changed. Nevertheless, at the same time, the reading process as a movement of fluctuation works again and again against a closed structure of meaning.

Though the two movements of thinking exclude each other, I argue that this exclusiveness does not mean that they cannot be thought of sequentially in an ever-alternating succession. I would suggest that they are followed by the readers in an exchange of views in an open process of reading. It is not possible to adapt deconstructivist thinking to hermeneutical thinking. However, in order to combine both ways of thinking, from this new perspective of reception theory there is one way that could describe the reading process that consists of a double-structured follow-up of reciprocating movements of an 'either – or'; it is a thinking that commutes and never meets. I suggest that a reading process is not one-sided but divided. It could be read as a position of thinking with multiple tracks, i.e., a way of thinking that occupies two

places at once and is constantly moving, similar to the doubling of the central instance of the psychoanalytic concept of a fetish we can find in Derridean thinking[11] and with reference to other deconstructivist concepts that are thought of as moving.[12] According to Derrida, a fetish incorporates and combines self and other, and (s)he unites this ambivalence in her/himself. As an excluded other it interrupts any binary system and determines the heterogeneous association in a place of in-between. Its typical structure connects the contrary, preserves and simultaneously conveys the conflict between the position of having and lack (Leipelt-Tsai, 2008, p. 330).

Inspired by König's book title, I propose a transferring of the Derridean doubling of the central instance to the process of reading. I suggest calling this kind of thinking – one that involves thinking in double-structured reciprocating movements that shows an alternating movement of thinking of opening and closing in the reading process – a 'stereoscopic thinking'. In the process of reading, the concluded meaning moves back and forth, from a reducing and enclosing kind of thinking to a opening and multiplying kind of thinking, and vice versa. Denial of difference as well as recognition of difference can be found in the reading process. An effect can be unfolded which tries to mediate power over the meaning of the text. Through reduction and restriction of meaning the readers try to enable an approximation to temporarily stabilize the outcome of the reading and give meaning a phantasmatic unity, and the frightening lack of coherence is denied. Still, this movement never rests because in the reading process no final connection between both directions of thinking – hermeneutical and deconstructivist – is possible.

However, this proposed moving 'non-position' of reading cannot be called 'deconstructivist hermeneutics' because the movements of thinking are

11 Such as in his concept of a writing mode called "hymen's graphic" as well as the concept of the "pharmakon", poisonous and healing (Derrida, 1979, p. 99).

12 There are other concepts based on deconstructionist thinking that are thought of as moving, e.g., the "double vision" of migrants in the postcolonial theory by Homi K. Bhabha (1994, p. 8), or the pendulum-position of the "diabolic gender" Sarah Kofman describes (2000, p. 151). Kofman called the ever-moving *ecriture* with double-columns a "diabolical gender" that breaks all oppositions and hierarchies.

in the opposite direction. Hermeneutics loses its identity and its name when trying to change into deconstructivist thinking. When trying to use both ways alternately, I suggest naming it a 'deconstructionist approach' for teaching literature. König (2003, p. 23) suggests an approach that is based on Hans Robert Jauß's reception theory and dominated by the concept of dialogical 'understanding' of a text that at the same time is always a 'non-understanding'.[13] This cannot be called deconstruction. The question of the otherness of understanding (Jauß, 1994, p. 11) and the understanding of otherness remains extremely problematic. This is particularly the case since Derrida, who cannot underline the possibility of understanding, persists in saying that there is no given homogeneous space of communication (Derrida, 1988, p. 293) and indirectly asks to be read in a certain way.[14]

5. Didactics of the indeterminate?

According to König, modern prose texts demonstrate a devaluation of the story, the narrator's uncertainty, gaps, alienation, and a repeal of causality, e.g., breaking up the linearity of narration, discontinuity, and instability (König, 2003, p. 1).[15] König's term *Dekonstruktive Hermeneutik* does not fit her writings because she does not use the kind of open thinking that would show a deconstructivist reading process, and her approach emphasizes understanding as appropriation of the foreign (König, 2003, p. 23), which a deconstructivist thinking could not follow since deconstruction works against any appropriation. König does not deconstruct prose texts in exemplary readings but uses postmodern terminology with hermeneutics for her didactical goal of teaching

13 König writes: "alles Verstehen ist zugleich immer ein Nicht-Verstehen" (König, 2003, p. 23).

14 Due to limited space and time, the difficult problem of understanding cannot be analyzed further and has to be discussed elsewhere. The hermeneuticists Bogdahl/Korte admit that the term 'understanding' is problematical (p. 111 et seq.).

15 König chose German prose texts that are said to belong to modernist times and before. This is seemingly the reason why she uses the notion of 'modernity' not in terms of a historical but as a phenomenological concept. Consequently, her concept of modernity can be used to question the naming of postmodernism as something that comes after modernity. When one reads 'modernity' literally, the naming of the concept 'postmodernism' should be impossible because there cannot be anything more modern than modernity. Of course, some may say the name 'postmodernism' follows the playfulness of its content and seems to be a witty pun.

literary texts[16] without reflecting the implications of deconstruction in her practice[17] that, at its best, could lead to a performative reading. From the view of deconstructivist thinking, a reading should not just state that a subject is deconstructed but should ask questions, e.g., how and in which ways the subject is described in the text. Instead of showing in practice how deconstruction works, König fixes and limits her view in a hermeneutical manner.

However, of great didactical interest is König's recognition that the goal of reading should be less to capture a unifying meaning and more to question how metaphysical contradictions contribute to prose texts and how protagonists and their relations lead to an aporetic logic. According to König (2003, p. 18), this causes a change in perspective; meaning is therefore no longer thought of as the origin of language but as the product of language. König's 'didactics of the indeterminate' (2003, p. 132) recognize that modern prose texts neither follow traditional models of writing nor do they follow the expectations of 'one' (supposed) reader who is used to a kind of fiction that can be easily processed. She states: 'the more versatility replaces linearity and causality, the more the reader and thus the didacticist has to part of his logo-centric interpretation' (König, 2003, p. 132). In this way, her didactics of the indeterminate become the central parameter of teaching literature. Based on a dynamic understanding of texts, König's goal is not only to break open the (supposed) cohesion of the prose text and its inherent hierarchies. To her, this also changes the 'comprehension' of the process of cognition and understanding. This questioning of any conceptualization leads to a focus on aspects of ambiguity, transgression of boundaries, and shifting of meaning. The claim to understand becomes brittle, and as a consequence, when cognition is thought in its particularity as well as in its plurality, it loses its claim to universality. Subsequently, according to König (2003, p. 132), the insight into the existence of indeterminacy,

16 König's rhetoric is a mixture of different theoretical backgrounds that seem incompatible with each other (p. 117, 132). Missing an overview of the differences in various postmodern theories, she claims that Derrida would be like Lacan, with both committed to structuralism (ibid., p. 103, 117). Lacan may be described as structuralist, but Derrida goes a step further and uses other concepts like dissemination to describe a kind of dispersion of meaning instead of a chain of signifiers.

17 In order to fit into the outline of this book this article also cannot actively practice deconstruction (as in its earlier version), and stays rather historically narrativistic.

fragmentation, metafiction, and discontinuity causes a confrontation with non-comprehension. Therefore, one has to emanate from a basic configuration of unreadability of literary texts. In other words, a unifying reading is not possible. The aim is therefore to disclose the modes of operation of the text and to address the difficulties which pose obstacles to a comprehension of the literature. Hence, the readers' attention will shift from the question of meaning to the question of constructedness of the text. I argue that the outline of this didactical approach (König, p. 132-150) can actually be called a deconstructionistic approach and seems applicable to teaching literature in the field of DaF. Following the 'Didactics of the indeterminate', it becomes important for readers to focus on peripheral elements, fractures, and discontinuities in the texts. Particularly the unspoken, the omitted, and the repressed will be of interest. In the following, the questions of how and why these elements of the texts are repressed by the dominant systems become an issue, as well as how they operate. This can be accomplished through an approximation by multiple readings, which neither resolve contradictions nor adapt any plurality of meaning to a unity. Without any preliminary understanding that guides the reading, it is not aimed at a consensus on a single meaning of the text. Differently to a hermeneutical approach that starts with several readings from the indeterminate to the determinate, in a deconstructivist approach one reads from the determinate to the indeterminate.[18] Instead of only asking about the production of meaning, now the question of how meaning is prevented comes to the fore.

6. Intertwined in texts: Teaching literature and language

When considering the nexus between teaching foreign literature and teaching a foreign language one may ask: what is the difference between both teaching forms? Teaching a foreign language needs a form of text –usually a written text from everyday life– that has to be

18 König's insistence on a hermeneutical interpretation could be transferred as a very first step in the process of reading since a 'deconstruction' can only be started if anything was constructed beforehand. In addition, König combines to her method of reading a didactics that derived from a German reception theory orientation towards dealing productively with texts. Understanding is therefore regarded as a form of co-producing (König, 2003, p. 136) and includes a subjective share.

read and analyzed in class. Similarly, teaching foreign literature needs a form of text – usually a text from a known or famous author– that has to be read and analyzed in class. There is no language teaching without text, and there is no literature teaching without text. What is the difference between a literary text and a non-literary text? The words that are used in contemporary texts of everyday life are often the same that are written in a literary text, depending on the language. For example, when one looks closer at the lyrics of modern pop music, which belongs to the genre of literary texts, one finds that the usage of language in a literary text is as (supposedly) 'authentic' as in any every day usage of language. Not limited to words in literary texts, any word was and still is metaphorical, and its semantics is constantly shifting (Leipelt-Tsai, 2008, p. 33). Thus, the only difference would be that a literary text does not pretend to describe a reality that the human mind actually cannot perceive. In consequence, it is not really possible to exactly differentiate between language teaching and literature teaching because they are intertwined.

How can a deconstructionist approach be used in class to teach reading of German literary texts in Taiwan? The first step could be simply to read the text aloud, which involves the whole body, in order to literally make a learning experience. Then, an opening up of a text by guiding key questions (and by more questions developed by the students) can produce a close reading that is followed by a textual analysis. It is expected that these readings provide many questions that should be followed by a plurality, i.e., more than one possible answer. If the students respond with only one answer, the teacher can try to unfold a second or third answer, and finally, instead of a closed end to the reading, they will find not one conclusion but an opening of more questions.

Without following the traces of words, it is not possible to analyze any text. So to unfold different possible meanings of words in foreign literary texts, students need to work with a dictionary. Instead of trying to define or narrow down any definition, the many meanings of a word will be unfolded. Still, after trying to disseminate the meaning of a word the students will be confronted with its context and learn how the meaning

of a word can be restricted by this context. This part of analysis consists of working with the vocabulary of the foreign language, resulting in students asking more and more questions about the text, and trying to analyze the relation between the text and the context(s), its inherent hierarchical structures, many different discourses going in reverse directions, intertextuality, and so forth. In this way, teaching literature through analysis of written texts is actually a form of language teaching. Lexical variants are applicable not only when learning vocabulary, but in the practice of reading as well.

7. 'Preschool of deconstruction'

This paper started out as an attempt to find a teaching approach for German literary studies in Taiwan that is rooted in deconstruction and would be applicable in the classroom. It is apparent that it is impossible to mix both ways of thinking (and reading) together at the same time, deconstruction and hermeneutics. Every text is heterogeneous and should be read and addressed singularly. For any reading with a deconstructionist approach, there cannot be one precise instruction for teachers and students which they simply have to follow. Still, the inspirational German professor Kaspar H. Spinner (1995) proposed operational procedures as a 'preschool of deconstruction' in his paper about 'Poststructuralistic reading in class – based on the example of Grimm's fairy tales.'[19] According to him, the statements of a text can create tensions with other possible, but unrealized, expressions in the text. In this way, the students obtain a more dynamic perspective, which would approximate a poststructuralist's perspective. One of Spinner's examples is the fairy tale of Snow White. Its first sentence starts with "Once upon a time in the middle of winter, there was …" (Spinner, 1995, p. 14). Tentatively, this sentence can be reformulated as a leave-out try: "Once in the middle of winter, there was…", a leave-out and rearrange try: "In the middle of winter, there was once…", or a replacement try: "Once in the middle of winter 1805, there was…". This demonstrates

19 Spinner recommends operational procedures by which individual formulations or terms can be tentatively changed in a text (Spinner, 1995, p. 14).

that the words "upon a time", which had been replaced or omitted in the reformulation, try to produce a distancing from reality. A fairytale beginning seems to speak the opposite of what it says in its literal sense. What should have happened here once apparently never happened at all. It is stated as something, but by the expression "upon a time" (in German: *Es war einmal*), this statement also revokes its validity at the same time.

Besides these kinds of reformulations for dynamization, Spinner also suggests in his 'preschool of deconstruction' outlining inconsistent motives, e.g., in Grimm's fairy tale motives of pureness and the cannibalistic motive of eating lung and liver. From a structuralistic point of view this could be seen as two worlds standing in opposition to each other; from a poststructuralistic point of view, this could be seen as two conflicting tendencies, and it points out that the scary, demonic and archaic, as well as a transfigured picture of former times, seems typical of Romanticism. For teaching in a preschool of deconstruction, these two conflicting tendencies should not be closed in a harmonizing interpretation. Rather, the contradictory elements should be emphasized. Another suggestion offered by Spinner is using variations of narrations to emphasize different aspects of a text. This gives students a perspective on the heterogeneity of texts.[20] The contradiction lies in the texts of the fairy tales themselves. With *Little Red Riding Hood* (Spinner, 1995, p. 13), a teacher could emphasize moralizing, norm critical, and psychological readings by giving the text to the students without the ending in order that they can write their own endings. In applying Spinner's suggestion in East Asia, students in Taiwan could also write an opinion about the story from the view of a famous protagonist, such as Hua Mulan (花木蘭), cartoon characters like Nobita (大雄 / 野比大雄), or other known children's book characters (like the Swedish writer Astrid Lindgren's character Pippi Longstocking). Still, it seems important to mention that the goal of teaching should not be to summarize the content or arrange

20 For example, when reading a fairy tale aloud, the teacher or the students could use either an amusing or a mythical romantic tone when performing, or (s)he could change the tenses used to those of modern colloquial language instead of the archaizing formulation of the brothers Grimm, etc. Spinner proposes comparing the fairy tales to one another or to previous versions in order to lead the students to discover the writing style of the brothers Grimm.

the ambiguity of the text in a hierarchy of significance. Instead, it is can be seen as a process, and the polysemy can be seen as a dynamic collision of different discourses.

One could also refer to the technical method of cyclic reading, based on Roland Barthes's notion of study, in Kremer & Wegmann (1995). Kremer & Wegmann (1995, p. 58) propose reading and re-reading a text in order to explore its structure. As a result, certain constructions will be found as effects of writing and reading modes. For example, after re-reading the novel Effi Briest, students will study discourses that are typically classified as belonging to the epoch of German Realism (Kremer & Wegmann, 1995, p. 75). This indicates that the re-reading of texts in class generates and unfolds deviations and differences of readings in a momentum that produces a not entirely predictable outcome. According to Kremer & Wegmann (1995), understanding becomes pluralized and is also turned reflexively into a topic of reflection for the students.

In other words, in a 'preschool of deconstruction', the path becomes the goal. Being without any firm ending or closure, this kind of didactics can also be considered a deconstructionist approach. Besides the never-ending oscillating between the multiple readings, the most important goal of this approach is to improve not only the students' ability to read in class, but also their overall deployable literacy[21] in any situation, even without a teacher. The opening of meaning by means of questioning the text destroys the idea of a positive knowledge of literature separated from a single specific text. Seemingly, with a deconstructionist teaching approach, any desire for practical suggestions as an application of abstract models into teaching practice cannot be met. Because there is no cognition to be found in the plurality of readings, the hope for any unrestricted positivist knowledge by demonstrating specific concrete instructions cannot be satisfied. However, it should not be forgotten when teaching German studies that playfulness is an important characteristic of postmodern theory.[22]

21 Concerned with writing instead of reading, Kaluza (2009, p. 38) differentiates between literacy that is implicit and general (for text patterns) and literacy that is an explicit text competency and is processually acquired.

22 This playfulness that is already used in didactics by some teachers of German in Taiwan, such as

8. (Dis)advantage

The search for a new approach aiming to modernize the traditional didactics of teaching literature in the field of German as a Foreign Language in East Asia has just begun. Considering the issue that the students in Taiwan belong to a group whose thinking seems to be able to more readily detect structures in relations than individual concepts, the thinking of deconstruction comes to mind. A methodology that tries to follow the thinking of deconstruction would address particularly the thinking style of these students. Students in Taiwan live in a steeper hierarchical society than, for example, German students, which may lead to more difficulties when questioning their surroundings. Therefore, they may especially profit from these didactics. Since the rapid changes in culture and its interpretation are especially apparent in East Asian countries with relatively fast social changes, the aim of studying foreign literary texts would be rather to precisely analyze the form of language, and to be able to differentiate between the two directions of movements of thinking: to narrow or to scatter. However, the examination formats would have to be matched to this more student-centered and process-based didactical approach. The disadvantage, if it is one, may be that this kind of reading cannot be tested quickly (as in a multiple-choice examination), which stands against traditional teaching approaches. Still, teachers in East Asia could be interested in a didactical approach that emphasizes deconstructivist thinking when looking for another didactic possibility to apply old and new methods and to combine temporary positive knowledge with processual thinking, and creativity. Their focus might have to shift away from examinations as the aim of studying foreign literary texts and away from memorizing ever-changing knowledge to a processual thinking and a less product-focused knowledge that questions structures and interacts with a plurality of texts.

Based on an analysis and criticism of a theoretical literature teaching approach by König, I have considered a first didactical approach to

Mei-Chi Lin (林美琪, 2009), could be integrated into the class by playing with words and meaning while following the interconnected traces of the linguistic signifiers, e.g., the task to draw a rebus for the title of a lyrical text (see examples in Leipelt-Tsai, 2008, p. 374).

literature teaching in the field of DaF in Taiwan based on deconstructivist thinking. The theoretical background of deconstruction stands against didactics as a form of implementing ideology. In consequence, when teaching foreign literary texts, the aim of study should not be an integration and fusion of different approaches to texts, as König endorses it. Instead of trying to mix hermeneutical and deconstructivist thinking into one, as she implies, for less advanced students, I would advocate an approach that follows Spinner. In addition, students could first be taught an awareness that they can use two movements of thinking. In place of a hermeneutical reading and 'understanding' with pre-prepared working results that have to be met, foremost an individual, differentiating working on texts would be the new aim of teaching German literary texts, especially since the type of preliminary positive knowledge can be found in any reference book in the Internet, which limits the usefulness of memorizing this knowledge. To stay competitive, teaching and learning is not only about stockpiling positive knowledge anymore. So I suggest readings with a deconstructionist approach that leave sufficient room for students' individual questioning of the text. For advanced students, I would recommend an approach of 'either – or', i.e., a hybrid approach to reading literary texts in two steps for one text with two different results. The first step would be an approach coming from a hermeneutical tradition that seeks to reduce the texts to a closed unity and a oneness in meaning; the second step would be the 'daring' approach descending from postmodern theories (for example, from the views of deconstruction, intertextuality, discourse analysis, etc.) to unfold an interesting plurality of interpretations using intertextual linkages as well as opposing discourses that leave more questions than answers. Since this does not yet deconstruct notions, I call this didactics 'deconstructionistic' since it already includes deconstructivist thinking and can rotate with hermeneutical thinking. (This can be backed by my theorem of thinking movements in the reading process, emanating from Derrida's thinking of the two columns with stereoscopic view, see above.)

Searching for a 'truth' the students may discover that science and knowledge do not exist as fixed unities, but, the nature of science and

knowledge is something in transition that always changes its location. After any discovery there will be a new finding, and the already learned knowledge will be outdated and become obsolete. That is one of the reasons why it would be an advantage for students in Taiwan to learn about deconstruction. In the changing environment of a modern information society, a processual reading of literary texts is required. This produces not only reproduction but searches for instabilities, creativity, progress, and a new kind of narrative technique. Following Jean-François Lyotard (1999, p. 47), legitimation of education as a transmission of knowledge is accomplished by giving priority to performativity. Science remains a heterogeneous open process, and knowledge, unstable as always, will be replaced again and again by new knowledge.

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Silence and Silencing in the Classroom of Portuguese as a Foreign Language in Macau: Identity and Interculturality

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Abstract

The paper focuses on an intriguing element that most Western teachers face in language classrooms in China: the called "Silence of the East". Here I shall share some scenes from Portuguese as a foreign language (PFL) classes in Macau, China. Based on this, I discuss issues such as intercultural interaction and construction of identities: two aspects that have direct implications for the process of construction of knowledge. Specifically, I focus on (i) the silencing process that takes place at the primary context between a Chinese teacher and Chinese students, and on (ii) silence that appears in the tertiary classroom and provokes a conflict between a Western teacher and Chinese students. I assume both aspects as constructed interactionally by the discursive performances of teachers and students and argue that they are culturally and also locally built on a process of negotiation. Therefore this study refuses the essentialist perspectives that characterize and imprison the Chinese student as silent. In an opposite direction, I stress that the world is in movement and the interactions are the site for "focusing on" these ongoing discursive processes that (re)build paradigms, beliefs, identities and allow us to overcome conflicts and achieve successful intercultural interactions. In order to analyze these scenes, I work from the perspective of Interactional Sociolinguistics, an interdisciplinary field that uses discourse analysis to inter-relate discourse, culture and society.

Keywords: Portuguese as Foreign Language, Macau, Silencing, Intercultural Interaction, Identity

Silence and Silencing in the Classroom of Portuguese as a Foreign Language in Macau: Identity and Interculturality[1]

This study is primarily a teacher's speech in dialogue with other educators, sharing the path we have been pursuing in Macau: the adventure of living in a different socio-cultural environment, which is a rich context for learning, teaching, and researching the Portuguese language.

Despite having taught Portuguese as a foreign language for over ten years in Brazil before coming to Asia, my interaction with students from an apparently distant culture was extremely different and even bewildering at times. This culture clash and difference led me not only to stay in Asia but also to choose Macau to live in and carry out my research over the past eight years.

From this experience this article was produced. The paper focuses on an intriguing element that, at least initially, most Western teachers face in China in language classrooms: the so called "Silence of the East"[2].

This silence in Chinese classrooms is usually understood from the socio-cultural point of view of the teachers and normally from essentialist perspectives on society, culture, and language. These perspectives normally create a restricted and stereotypical identity of Chinese students as silent and hence passive.

1 A Portuguese version of this paper is to appear in Teixeira E Silva, Roberval (ed.). (in press) *Contextos de formação de novas gerações de falantes de português no mundo*: *perspectivas em política, história, língua e literatura*. Coleção Encontros da Língua Portuguesa. Escola Superior de Educação de Santarém e Universidade de Macau.

2 It is a commonly held belief, especially among teachers from west countries, that Asian students are passive. The silence is one of the main traits used to construct such image. Therefore, there is this generalized stereotype that students from Asia are silent.

However, instead of merely associating this silence with an oriental passiveness, we would like to discuss silence as a process that occurs in specific interactions and thus can only be analyzed after considering the context in which it was created.

Therefore, I will argue that silence i) is a co-construction between interactants; ii) is the result of a cultural and also a local construction that happens inside the interactions; iii) has different meanings in the East and West, meanings that can produce conflicts in intercultural interactions between Western and Chinese teachers/students.

In order to undertake our investigation, we adopt the perspective of Interactional Sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1982a, 1982b; Ribeiro e Garcez, 2002; Schiffrin, 1996; Goffman, 1959, 1967, 1974) – an interdisciplinary field that inter-relates discourse, culture, and society in a discourse analysis framework. This approach provides a powerful theoretical instrument that can give us new perspectives both for planning and analyzing interactions inside the classroom (Teixeira e Silva, 2010).

We will analyze two excerpts from primary and tertiary classroom contexts. The scenes under focus will supply us a range of resources in order to discuss issues such as intercultural interaction (Teixeira e Silva & Martins, 2011; Scollon & Scollon, 2001) and construction of identities (Gumperz, 1982b; Moita Lopes, 2006 [1998]), two aspects that have direct effects for the process of knowledge construction.

But first, we will give some brief historical information about Macau and describe the current situation of the Portuguese language in this region.

1. The Portuguese language in Macau

In 1557, Portugal established the first European settlement in Macau. Since then, the presence of the Portuguese language and culture and the cross-cultural contact with the Chinese community created an

idiosyncratic environment.

Technically, Macau was not a colony, but a place administered by Portugal with the consent of the Chinese government. In practice, however, the relations among the local and the European people were as colonial as in any other Portuguese colony, but with differences and interests related to the Asian context.

Historically, the organization of power was oriented by three principal groups: the Chinese, the Portuguese, and the Macanese (roughly speaking: children of the miscegenation between Portuguese and Asian people). However, from a cultural and social point of view, nowadays many other ethnic-linguistic groups (such as those from the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, Australia and from other Portuguese-speaking countries) collaborate to create this multicultural environment (Bodomo & Teixeira e Silva, 2012).

In spite of the long Portuguese presence in Macau, the teaching and imparting of the Portuguese language has only recently become a central concern. As Teixeira e Silva & Martins (2011, p. 233) state:

> Language policies for Macau had been nonexistent until the 80s, the period when Portugal and China signed the Handover Joint Declaration. With very little tradition for teaching Portuguese as a Foreign Language, or even as a Second Language, Portugal launched a campaign of teaching Portuguese in primary and secondary schools in the territory, especially in Luso-Chinese schools3. The lack of expertise in the field of SLA led to a rather deficient start of the language teaching programme in Macau.

Partly because of (but certainly not limited to) this, the Portuguese language could never be a widely used language in Macau. It was always employed in very specific contexts. In 1999, the People's Republic of China took over the administration of the territory, which

3 Luso-Chinese schools were created by the Macau Government in order to enable children of families with low income to study for free. The original ambition of these schools was to provide students with a semi- bilingual environment.

now is called Special Administrative Region of Macau. During the process of the Handover, the presence of the Portuguese language in the territory seemed to be in jeopardy. However, in today's post-colonial period, Portuguese is increasing in daily use, has been enriched with new characteristics, and is gaining more political acceptance.

The latest wave of research on and about the Portuguese language, developed especially in the area of language studies in Macau[4], has shown these new characteristics, revealing the Portuguese as a transnational language (Teixeira e Silva, 2013, forthcoming). A transnational language is one spoken by individuals with unpredictable linguistic and cultural heritages, a typical feature of superdiverse contexts (Vertovec, 2007), like that of Macau.

Therefore, the status of the Portuguese language has changed in the past decade. Now more and more people, especially from Mainland China, are interested in learning it. The major reason behind this change is the economic development and visibility of some Portuguese-speaking countries, especially Brazil and Angola, and the importance of China's trade with them.

Our study takes place within this context.

2. Silence, silencing and production of identities

In the process of socialization, we are exposed to a series of socio-cultural references that instruct us what to be and how to act. In general, these references appear as social, cultural and linguistic stereotypes; for example, well-defined and fixed concepts of "Brazilian society", "Chinese culture", and "Portuguese language". These concepts elaborated as fixed entities go against a basic principle: the world is always in movement (Bauman, 2001; Hall, 2006; Moita Lopes, 2013; Fabrício, 2013). The world and everything that constitutes it are

4 Teixeira e Silva, 2012, forthcoming; Bodomo e Teixeira e Silva, 2012; Teixeira e Silva e Lima-Hernandes, 2010.

processes continually in flux. Even so, in this globalized, post-colonial, post-structural period, we deal with contradictory concepts that Bauman (2000) "metaphorizes" as liquid and solid: on one hand, we face a world in movement and on the other hand we try to freeze that same world. The underlying assumption of our analytical approach is that there are no fixed identities[5] for anybody or any group. Hence it is inappropriate to "imprison" Chinese students to a unique and specific identity. Teachers should see the world as a process. From this perspective students are not predictable, so teachers should not stereotype them.

The process of "learning how to be/how to perform appropriately" in a society has the context and the otherness as references (Moita Lopes, 2006 [1998]). We learn how we should act, according to the frames constructed by different contexts. That is why we elaborate different identities in order to perform different roles/positions such as students, sons, friends, boy/girlfriends and so on. In the same process, our identities are co-built in each interaction, taking into consideration the other: our interactants. The otherness gives us the cues that guide us to position ourselves. All these movements are reasoned by discourses, especially by discourses of authority. These discourses produce identities, they teach us how to perform[6] in particular settings. Therefore, in the school context, students, teachers, principals, parents, and staff are constructed by these discourses of power that, in general, are disciplinarian (Foucault, 1972), ensure homogeneity and control, and take on the voice of the subjects.

In a classroom, silence – the focus of our discussion – is constructed by different discourses and has different meanings in different frames (Goffman, 1974). Silence in a classroom can signalize resistance, boredom, respect, discouragement, disinterest, thoughtfulness, or such interactional strategies as denial, agreement, request, warning, command, threat, confirmation (Saville-Troike, 1985). Therefore, one of the best ways to understand the meanings of silence is to analyze interactions as they occur.

5 Bauman (2001) states that we should not use the concept of identity, but of identification.

6 This process has fixed references about different roles in society such as student/teacher, man/woman, etc.

Silence has been studied from different approaches. A concise overview of studies of silence, as a material/acoustic resource of the language, is the one offered by Ephratt (2008, p. 1910). He refers to two paths:

> One was the chronometrical analysis of speech, where quantitative chronometrical data on speech rates were collected to show the ratios of speech to non-speech, etc., in isolation or in relation to personality variables (as early as Chapple, 1939; Goldman-Ersler, 1958; Hawkings, 1971; Crown and Feldstein, 1985; Adell et al., 2007). (…) The second path, which began to be trodden about the same time, was discourse analysis (then a new branch in linguistic pragmatics). Sacks et al.'s (1974) paper, ''The simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation'', perceived silence as the interactive locus of turn-taking (…). Throughout linguistics literature (speech-rate and turn-taking) silence and pause are used interchangeably (sometimes within the same sentence: e.g., Goffman, 1981, p. 25, fn. 17; Crown and Feldstein, 1985, p. 33; but see section 1.1).

We will tread the second path. As Laplane (2000) and Morato (2001) affirm, silence is a component of interaction and acquires different meanings which are highly dependent on context:

> Entendendo o silêncio como um tipo particular de interação e como veiculador de sentidos, uma das tarefas a que Laplane (2000) se lança em sua reflexão é precisamente extrair do termo sua polissemia e sua discursividade inarredáveis: silêncio, silenciamento, implícito, subentendido, exclusão, resistência, opressão (Morato, 2001, p. 201).[7]

Some studies analyze both positive and negative aspects of silence. Tannen (1985, p. 94) explains that the perception of the negativity or positivity of silence is explicitly different when confronting individuals from different cultures, and she stresses its ambiguity.

7 Understanding silence as a particular type of interaction and a disseminator of meanings, one of the tasks that Laplane includes in her reflection is to extract from the term its polysemy and its irremovable discursivity: silence, silencing, implicit, implied, exclusion, resistance, oppression (Morato, 2001: 201).

> The positive and negative valuation of silence is a facet of the inherent ambiguity of silence as a symbol (…). The ambiguous value of silence can be seen to arise either from what is assumed to be evidenced or from what is assumed to be omitted.

Silence is understood as a contextualization cue (Gumperz, 1982a) and therefore it functions as a discursive element in the construction of identities. Some studies consider silence as full of meaning and productive for language (Orlandi, 1995, p. 70):

> o silêncio é a condição da produção de sentido. Assim, ele aparece como o espaço 'diferencial' da significação: lugar que permite à linguagem significar.[8]

In the construction of identities, both silence and voice are significant traits, and since this process is relational and takes place in relations of power, "Os que ocupam posições de maior poder nas relações assimétricas são, consequentemente, mais aptos a serem os produtores de outros seres (Moita Lopes, 2006 [1998], p. 308)"[9]. In the classroom interaction, the institutional discourse – usually the discourse of authority – appears in different ways such as the speech of the teacher and the students[10], the didactic resources and so on. This discourse is one of the discourses responsible for the production of identities (Gumperz, 1982b) in a pedagogical context.

In language classrooms and especially in situations in which Western teachers are engaged with Eastern students, silence can acquire connotations of a cultural barrier. As King (2012, p. 2) comments, there is a stereotype, from an essentialist and manichean vision, that contrasts "the silent East versus the talkative West".

The process of silencing has also received academic treatment from a

8 Silence is the condition for the production of sense. In so being, silence appears as a "differential" space for signification: a locus that allows linguistic meaning to occur (Orlandi, 1995: 70).

9 Those who occupy positions of higher level of power in asymmetrical relationships are therefore more able to be producers of other beings (Moita Lopes, 2006 [1998]: 308).

10 For example, students can usurp the discourse of authority in order to show commitment and agreement with the educational system to which they belong (Moutinho, 2012).

range of scholars (Leander, 2002; Orlandi, 1995). It involves the use of a discourse of authority not only to stop or prevent someone from speaking, but also to oblige someone to talk. Therefore we are talking about a question of choices, a question of freedom. As Hymes (1996, as cited in Juffermans & Aa, 2011, p. 2) comments, the voice is freedom:

> freedom from denial of opportunity due to something linguistic; and freedom for satisfaction in the use of language. In other words: freedom to have one's voice heard, and freedom to develop a voice worth hearing.

Voice and silence can be understood as a choice of being in the world in different ways.

In a classroom, the discourse of the school normally creates an organization of power in which students are requested to behave in a patterned way to keep order. Thus this discourse produces a process of silencing.

In this study, we will observe the process of silencing in a primary education context where a Chinese teacher is in interaction with Asian students, and in a tertiary education context where a Western teacher interacts with Chinese students.

Based on these two classroom scenes, we examine how the process of silencing in elementary schools contributes culturally to the onset of silence in the university. On the other hand, we will emphasize that silence in the tertiary context is not only culturally motivated, but also a consequence of the local organization of the interaction.

3. Methodological aspects

Our data come from a one year ethnographic study[11] (Erickson, 1996)

11 Project "Interações em sala de aula de português como língua estrangeira e a construção da competência textual: o contexto de Macau", sponsored by the University of Macau and coordenated by us.

that took place in an official school and a university, both in Macau. The interactions between teacher and students and between students and students are our object of study. Therefore we will analyze two contexts of teaching-learning Portuguese as a Foreign Language (PFL)[12].

3.1. Primary school context

PARTICIPANTS:

Students (First year):

- 22 Chinese students, about six years old, native speakers of different Chinese languages/dialects, such as Cantonese or Mandarin; one Filipino student, about six years old, native speaker of Tagalog.

Teacher of Portuguese (Roberta):

- A Chinese teacher, native speaker of Cantonese, 25 years old, with about five year of teaching experience and advanced proficiency in oral Portuguese

The researcher (Rui):

- A Brazilian teacher, native speaker of Portuguese, 41 years-old, with about 10 year of teaching experience in foreign language classes.

LOCATION:

One of the official Luso-Chinese schools in Macau.

DATA:

Transcription of the video recording (fifth class of the school year).

12 The theoretical problem of concepts such as foreign language, second language, heritage language or native speaker that are rather complex if we put them under the perspective of super-diversity and post-multiculturalism will not be discussed here (Vertovec, 2007, 2010).

PEDAGOGICAL RESOURCES:

- Pictures/Images;
- A puppet (a piggy);
- Audio-Cassette.

3.2. Tertiary school context

PARTICIPANTS:

Students (Third year of BA in Portuguese):

- 18 Chinese students, about twenty years old, fluent speakers of Mandarin, native speakers of different Chinese languages/dialects, such as Cantonese and Mandarin.

Teacher of Portuguese and researcher (Rui).

- A Brazilian teacher, native speaker of Portuguese, 41 years old, about ten years of teaching experience in foreign language classes.

LOCATION:

A university in Macau.

DATA:

Video-recording classroom.

3.3. Transcription

In our data, when the teacher and students are speaking in Portuguese we have a regular transcription. When the teacher or students speak in

Cantonese, the transcription (which is a translation from Cantonese) is made in ***bold italic font***.

Transcription conventions:

Word	text in standard format	Speech in Portuguese
Word	bold italic font	Speech in Cantonese (translated)
/	slash	fragmentation of intonational unit before completion of intonational contour designed; mark of abrupt cut
- - - - -	hyphenation	syllabication
°word°	signals of degrees	speech in low voice
[]	brackets	simultaneous or overlapping speech
(3)	numbers in brackets	silence (in seconds and tenths of seconds)
( )	empty parentheses	speech segment that cannot be transcribed
(word)	speech segment in parentheses	transcription doubtful
((looking at the students))	double parentheses	description and comments about non-verbal activities

*Adapted from Teixeira e Silva (2007), Teixeira e Silva (2008-2012), and Garcez (2006).

4. Scenes from classrooms of Portuguese as a foreign language: constructing meanings for silence

The scenes that we have analysed will help us to discuss how classroom discourse promotes the construction of different meanings for silence.

4.1. Socio-discursive construction of silence in a primary classroom of PFL: taking the voice of students

This section analyzes, how institutional discourse constructs a process of silencing in a primary school classroom.

The first example comes from the beginning of a class. The teacher and the students were organizing themselves in the classroom.

Example 1:

1		((Ruído dos estudantes))
2		((Roberta está a arranjar os lugares dos meninos))
3	Roberta	***Ora, agora ponham /***
4		***Ponham os livros debaixo primeiro.*** ((debaixo da mesa))
5		( )
6		Sim, todos põem o livro lá/ ((indica embaixo da mesa)) debaixo
7		Guardem o livro, agora não é preciso o livro, guardem, sim!
8		Põe debaixo, põe debaixo, põe debaixo.
9		Põe debaixo
10		( )
11	Aluno	***Professora, quero fazer xixi. ( )***
12	Roberta	***Não faz mal, só sentamos aqui, não escrevemos.***
13		***Ah, Wang, está bem, senta-te.***
14		Tá bom, eu vou ver quem é falador?
15		((a professor põe o dedo nos lábios em sinal de silêncio))
16		"Falador" ***significa as pessoas que gostam muito falar.***

1		((Students Noise))
2		((Roberta is arranging the boys' seats))
3	Roberta	***But now put /***
4		***Put the books under first.*** ((under the table))
5		( )
6		Yes, everyone put the book there / ((indicates under the table)) under
7		Put the book away, now you don't need the book, put it away, yes!
8		Put it under, put it under, put it under.
9		Put it under
10		( )
11	Student	***Professor, I want to pee. ( )***
12	Roberta	***Never mind, just sit here, we are not writing.***
13		***Ah, Wang, okay, sit down.***
14		Okay, I'll see who is talkative?
15		((the teacher puts her finger in her lips as a sign of silence))
16		"Talkative" ***means people who like to talk a lot.***

Within the asymmetrical classroom relations, the teacher normally assumes the institutional discourse, the discourse of authority, as well as the full range of her didactic resources. What is conveyed through this discourse is generally taken as "the Truth", the ultimate authority in the classroom.

At the beginning of class, the teacher starts to create interactive behavior patterns, such as "what the students can or cannot do in class". She says in lines 14 and 15, "Okay, I'll see who is talkative? ((the teacher puts her finger in her lips as a sign of silence))". As we can see in the example, the teacher asserts that people who are talkative are "people who like to talk a lot" (line 16). Therefore, the students are expected to learn that people who "talk a lot" (line 16) in the classroom are not welcome.

Presented at the beginning of the school year and at the beginning of the class, this teacher's statement strongly connotes her standard for the interactional environment of this classroom. She is stressing an

important rule for the class: to be silent. Her performance by giving contextualization cues for the students to build meanings related to silence starts a process of silencing.

We can take this as a metaphor that will be present throughout the entire class and that will be one of the bases for the construction of these students' identities (Moita Lopes, 2006 [1998]). In the process of training, students are led to understand that (in this context) in order to be a good student (Teixeira e Silva & Moutinho, 2009), it is necessary not to be talkative, to "dislike talking", in classroom situations.

This example illustrates social practices in classrooms that promote the students' passiveness not only in this Chinese context but throughout the world. This passiveness, however, is not intrinsic to the students, but a cultural demand. In fact when the Chinese students keep silent in a classroom, they are not being passive, but rather acting according to cultural indoctrination.

Therefore, this institutional discursive practice relationally builds the identities of these students not as active subjects, but as passive individuals, through direct and explicit propositions. However most of the propositions are not explicit. The majority come from more subtle discursive strategies that we will present in the next examples.

During the lesson, the teacher presents the poster below with the expression that she wants to teach.

(Good afternoon)

It is important to note that these students have almost no literacy in Portuguese. Since they cannot read the expression "Boa tarde" on the card, the only cues that they have come from the picture. Let us read.

Example 2:

77	Roberta	***O que significa esta expressão?***
78	Roberta	***Já aprendemos.***
79	Roberta	( )
80	Alunos	Professora
81	Roberta	[Professora?]
82	Alunos	[Boa tarde.]
83	Roberta	Boa tarde.
84	Roberta	Boa tarde?
85	Roberta	Vamos ouvir!
86	Aluno A	Bo-a [tar-de]
87	Roberta	[***Vamos ouvir] se está certo.***
88	Aluno A	Boa tar°de
89	Cassete	Dois. ((o número do exercício))
90	Cassete	Boa tarde.
91	Roberta	[Bo-a tar-de!]
92	Alunos	[Yeah! Yeah!] ((Os alunos ficam animados porque alguns deram a resposta certa.))

77	Roberta	***What does this expression mean?***
78	Roberta	***We have already learned.***
79	Roberta	( )
80	Students	Teacher
81	Roberta	[Teacher?]
82	Students	[Good afternoon.]
83	Roberta	Good afternoon.
84	Roberta	Good afternoon?
85	Roberta	Let's hear it!
86	Student A	Good [after – noon]
87	Roberta	***[Let us hear] if it is right.***

88	Student A	Good after°noon
89	Cassette	Two. ((the number of the exercise))
90	Cassette	Good afternoon.
91	Roberta	[Good - after - noon!]
92	Students	[Yeah! Yeah!] ((The students get excited because some gave the right answer.))

After the teacher asks the meaning of the expression in the poster, the first answer that is provided by the students is "teacher" (line 80). Then the teacher creates doubt regarding the students' answer by saying "Teacher?" (line 81). Then, another answer is attempted by the students: "Good afternoon (line 82)". This was the right answer. The teacher, however, does not confirm the response of the students. Thus, she does not authorize their answer as an appropriate contribution. By saying "Let's hear it!" (85), she indicates that the voice of authority for providing the correct answer cannot come from the students; it has to come from an institutional discourse, expressed in her own voice and in her pedagogical tools.

A student raises a voice of resistance (Foucault, 1972), and tries to have his answer heard: "Good [after – noon]" (line 86). The teacher interrupts his speech in order to reaffirm, in Cantonese now, that the one who has the voice of authority is the recording voice on the cassette, not the students: "***[Let us hear] if it is right.***" (line 87). Nevertheless, also in an attitude of resistance, a student attempts to speak again, but he gives up and slows down his voice: "Good after°noon", (line 88).

86.	Student A	Good [after – noon]
87.	Roberta	***[Let us hear] if it is right.***
88.	Student A	Good after°noon

Then the voice of authority - now the teaching material, the tape - gives the answer: "Cassette: Good afternoon." (line 90). After the cassette, the teacher herself – another voice of authority in the classroom – speaks very slowly: "[Good - after - noon!" (line 91).

89.	Cassette	Two. ((the number of the exercice))
90.	Cassette	Good afternoon.
91.	Roberta	[Good - after - noon!]

In line 93, the teacher uses translation in the classroom to make sure that the students understand the content. It is a strategy that points out how the teacher understands what language is, what teaching a language means. We can see that she adopts the traditional concept of teaching, stressing the role of grammar, vocabulary, and translation.

Throughout the sequence, the cycle is repeated.

Example 3:[13]

93.	Roberta	***O que é significa*** "Boa tarde"?
94.	Aluno	***Almoço!***
95.	Roberta	***[Almoço?]***
96.	Aluno	***[Boa tarde!]***
97.	Roberta	Boa tarde! ***Vamos ver:*** Boa/
98.	Alunos	***Boa tarde!***
99.	Roberta	***Vamos ouvir se está certo?***
100.	Alunos	***Boa tarde!***
101.	Roberta	***O nosso porquinho, ora o nosso porquinho.***
102.	Cassete	***Boa tarde!***

93	Roberta	***What does*** "Good afternoon" ***mean?***
94	Student C	***Lunch!***
95	Roberta	***[Lunch?]***
96	Student D	***[Good afternoon!]***
97	Roberta	Good afternoon! ***Let's check it:*** Good /
98	Students	***Good afternoon!***
99	Roberta	***Let us hear if it is right.***
100	Alunos	***Good afternoon!***

13 In Line 101 the teacher (Roberta) refers to a pig puppet that she occasionally uses to interact with her students.

101	Roberta	***Our little piggy, now our little piggy.***
102	Cassette	***Good afternoon!***

When the teacher, in line 93, asks in Cantonese: "***What does*** "Good afternoon" ***mean***?", the students cannot get the meaning of the expression written in Portuguese. They answer "Lunch" (line 94). The teacher, then, repeats their answer in question form: "Lunch?" (line 95). One student attempts another answer, which is correct: "Good afternoon" (line 96). Once more, the teacher does not give authority to the student's response/voice. Again, she gives authority to a pedagogical resource, the cassette: "***Let us hear if it is right.***" (line 99). Then, in the line 102, the cassette states "***Good afternoon!***" as the right answer.

Through these discursive performances of the teacher, the students are slowly realizing that their voices are not significant, that their voices have no weight in classroom interaction. In this classroom interaction, the students are not recognized as producers of meaning. They just have to repeat, i.e. to speak the voice of others and not to speak with their own voices.

As Juffermans & Aa (2011, p. 2) state, "In plain words, voice is about who says what in which way to whom". In the next example, we can see how students learn exactly who has the right to speak and who has to listen in the classroom.

Roberta is teaching another expression.

(Can I leave?)

Example 4:

339	Roberta	Yung Ho San, tu sabes? ***Como se diz "Posso sair?"***
340	Yung Ho San	Er....
341	Roberta	***Tu não sabes.***
342	Roberta	***Ora!*** Kung Meng.
343	Kung Meng	Posso sair?
344	Roberta	Posso sair? Posso sair?
345	Roberta	***Vocês concordam?***
346	Alunos	***Não***
347	Roberta	***Não? Vamos ouvir. Está bem?***
348	Alunos	***Está bem.***
349	Roberta	***Vamos ouvir como se diz "posso sair?".***
350	Roberta	***Ouçam, vamos ouvir.***
351	Cassete	8. Posso sair?
352	Roberta	***Está certo?***
353	Alunos	***Sim!***
354	Roberta	***Ora! Vamos elogiá-lo*** ((elogiar o aluno Kung Meng))

339	Roberta	Yung Ho San, you know? ***How do you say "Can I leave?"***
340	Yung Ho San	Er ....
341	Roberta	***You don't know.***
342	Roberta	***Well!*** Kung Meng.
343	Kung Meng	Can I leave?
344	Roberta	Can I leave? Can I leave?
345	Roberta	***Do you agree?***
346	Students	***No.***
347	Roberta	***No? Let's hear it. Okay?***
348	Alunos	***Okay.***
349	Roberta	***Let's hear how to say "Can I leave?".***
350	Roberta	***Listen, let's hear it.***
351	Cassete	***8.*** Can I leave?
352	Roberta	***Is that right?***
353	Students	***Yes!***
354	Roberta	***Now! Let us praise him*** ((praise the student Kung Meng))

As we can see, the teacher asks a question, in Cantonese, to a specific student: "Yung Ho San, you know? ***How do you say "Can I leave?"*** (line 339). The student hesitates (line 340). The teacher states: "***You don't know.***" She decides to ask another student, who gives the right answer: "Can I leave?". The teacher repeats the answer twice in question form ([Can I leave? Can I leave? – line 344) and asks the class if they agree (line 345). The students say: "No" (line 346).

It is possible that the students do not know the "right" answer; therefore, they would not know if the classmate was right or not. However what attracts our attention here is the fact that all the students denied the possibility that a colleague could be right. All of them said "no", which means that they also felt that their classmate's answer had no authority.

343	Kung Meng	Can I leave?
344	Roberta	Can I leave? Can I leave?
345	Roberta	***Do you agree?***
346	Students	***No.***
347	Roberta	***No? Let's hear it. Okay?***

Foucault draws our attention to the fact that "the way in which the disciplinary power has been installed in institutions (schools, for example)"[14] is so strong that it leads to "the point that individuals in these discursive practices are constructed to exercise power over themselves (Foucault, 1977)" [15] (Moita Lopes, 2006[1998]: 308).

This is what we see in this extract: students assume and accept the fact that they have no voice. They are showing that they are learning how to become competent members of this social group, in which being talkative is forbidden. Therefore, they become silent.

In consequence of this interaction, it is possible to notice how

14 Original in Portuguese : "o modo como o poder disciplinar tem se instalado nas instituições (em escolas, por exemplo)".

15 Original in Portuguese : "a ponto de que os indivíduos nestas práticas discursivas são construídos para exercer poder sobre si próprios (Foucault, 1977)".

obligations, responsibilities, and rights of students and teachers are strictly designated in this classroom, i.e., the identities of students and teachers are rigidly fixed. This seems to be the Chinese cultural view of the classroom (Teixeira e Silva & Moutinho, 2009).

Finally, within the context analyzed, the process of silencing is motivated by a concept of education that places the teacher – and all discourses of authority – as the center of the teaching-learning process. The procedures correspond to what Freire (2000) calls "banking education" in which the teacher, the only one who has the knowledge, deposits this knowledge "into" the students and will later audit it through assessments. This procedure matches a pedagogical choice that deprives the interactions of the necessary space for the joint construction of the desired knowledge. The underlying concept here is that language is the form/structure (and not the use) and that the unit of work in the language teaching-learning process is the word or the sentence (and not the text or the discourse).

4.2. Socio-discursive construction of silence in a tertiary classroom of PFL: the ambiguity of silence

It is important to stress one point: these six year-old children show remarkable enthusiasm in the classroom. The many times that they say a happy "Yeah" during class is just one indication that they are participative and collaborative in classroom interaction. But this "Yeah" disappears as their school years pass.

The consequence of this silencing process is that the institutional discourse will eliminate the students' own voices from their classroom identities. This devoicing process eventually produces the materialization of silence in classroom: the absence of sound.

Let us make a comparison with one scene[16] from a tertiary classroom. In this classroom, unlike the previous examples, a Western teacher and Chinese students interact. The students are at the beginning of their

16 This scene was analyzed with another approach in Teixeira e Silva & Martins (2011).

third year in the Portuguese Studies B.A. Program. They have, in general, an intermediate to high-intermediate level in Portuguese, so they can interact comfortably listening and talking in Portuguese. This excerpt comes from the second month of classes: the students and the teacher already have achieved a good level of classroom contact.

Example 5:[17]

1	Professor:	Bom, senhores, (10 segundos) ((ele está organizando os papéis para começar a aula))
2		Vocês**::::**
3		Bom, alguns/ alguns mostraram uma certa preocupação
4		que parece ser a preocupação de todos
5		relativamente às nossas apresentações
6		Bom, a princípio nós combinamos que…
7		eh… vocês iam pensar e hoje a gente escolheria **ou** faria sorteio. Sortear é escolher.
8		eh… os dias de apresentação.
9		Cada um tem mais ou menos 7 minutos para falar, não é isso?
10		Sobre um assunto específico e assim por diante.
11	Professor:	Bom, então**:::** o que vocês têm a dizer sobre isto?
12		(04 segundos) ((os alunos não se mexem nas cadeiras))
13	Professor:	Nada?
14		(02 segundos)
15	Professor:	Então, a gente faz tudo como ficou combinado?
16		(12 segundos)
17		((um aluno fala em chinês com outro no fundo da sala e o professor reage:))
18	Professor:	Português!
19		((Vários os alunos riem e todos sorriem))
20		(03 segundos)
21	Aluno 01:	O que é que quer ouvir?

17 In Portuguese, the use of the word "senhores" (Line 1) referring to all students is a joke: a strategy of involvement. Since we will not take this aspect into consideration, we decided to translate "senhores" into English as "everybody".

1	Teacher:	Well, everybody, (10 seconds) ((he is organizing the papers to start the class))
2		You::::
3		Well, some / some of you showed a kind of worry
4		that seems to be the worry of everyone
5		about our presentations
6		Well, at first we agreed that ...
7		eh ... you would think and today we would choose or draw lots. Draw lots means to choose
8		eh ... the days of presentation.
9		Each one has more or less 7 minutes to talk, right?
10		about a particular subject and so on.
11	Teacher:	Well, then::: what would you like to say about this?
12		**(04 seconds)** ((the students do not move on their chairs))
13	Teacher	Nothing?
14		**(02 seconds)**
15	Teacher:	So we do everything as it was agreed?
16		**(12 seconds)**
17		((a student speaks in Chinese to another at the back of the room and the teacher reacts:))
18	Teacher:	Portuguese!
19		((Several students laugh and all smile))
20		**(03 seconds)**
21	Student 01:	What do you want to hear?

Compared to the primary school students, these college students apparently do not show the same engagement when the teacher talks to them. The silence that arises provokes a conflict between the Western teacher and the Chinese students: it seems that the teacher is speaking alone since nobody says anything.

This silence, constructed by both teacher and students, can be understood in at least three ways:

As cultural production: The student's statement "What do you want to hear?" (line 21) can be the result of the process of silencing that we saw in the primary context. It seems that the students do not know how to respond to the teachers' requests. Many statements by Chinese students (Teixeira e Silva & Martins, 2011) show that, in the process of schooling, they learn that they should keep quiet in classroom. Possibly the students' school experience showed them that they do not have the right to speak in the classroom. Therefore silence can be motivated by cultural factors.

As local production: The discursive choices of the teacher do not help the students to interact. The features of the teacher's discourse are different from what students are used to dealing with in a classroom. For example, they are not used to answering open questions in a classroom, their previous experience with questions is to be clearly addressed by the teacher. Here the silence is constructed locally by the discursive choices of the teacher. The manner of asking questions makes it easy or difficult to engage students in successful classroom interaction. Therefore silence is not cultural here but rather is produced by this specific manner of interaction.

As result of the distant cultural backgrounds of the interactants: The conflict of this interaction can also be viewed as the result of different perceptions of silence. As mentioned before, people from distant cultural backgrounds can evaluate silence in different ways. In this context, the Brazilian teacher does not accept silence and keeps requesting the students' collaboration. Silence, in Brazilian classrooms, among other possibilities, is usually perceived as a lack of interest.

All the elements pointed out above have to be considered. However, what we wish to emphasize here is what we quoted in section 2 referring to King's paper; but here we will rewrite his words. In example 5, we are not facing "the silent East versus the talkative West" (King, 2012, p. 2) but actually facing "the silent tertiary classroom versus the talkative primary context". It is not necessarily a question of Western and Eastern contexts.

The statement of a Chinese undergraduate student may help us understand this silence that regularly appears in tertiary language classes. We asked another class of third-year students in Portuguese Studies to give their impression about what was going on in example 5. They watched the video, read the transcription and wrote their comments. Here is one very revealing statement.

Statement 1:

> A crucial element in Chinese culture that arouses both fear and curiosity of Westerners is silence. However, the same concept is called "peace" by the Chinese themselves, even if more often than not it is only an artificial peace. It is a little awkward to say this, but as a product and an observer of twelve years of Chinese education, I would say that we have been abused since the beginning. Imagine that the first grade boys and girls in primary school are required to behave in a particular way: to sit with their arms crossed behind their back (so they cannot mess around with things on the table), neither to talk in class nor to chat with anyone. "Talk to me after class!" This is the way that the teachers use to command or threaten us. (...) The best strategy that we have found is that silence saves us time, energy and many problems of communication. But this is only one reason for this mysterious phenomenon.
>
> (Ana - 21 years-old)

As we can see, a tertiary Chinese student believes that silence has many meanings: it is defense, resistance, contempt, disengagement, concealment, avoidance of problems, and a survival strategy.

The silence that we can see in this tertiary context has many socio-cultural and local interactional-discursive roots. The final point is: silence cannot be used as a reason to label Chinese students as culturally silent and passive.

5. Questions as Final Comments

As the materiality of the discourse makes apparent, the interactions analyzed above deal with silence and with the process of silencing. We would like to pose some questions here to encourage all of us teachers, to (re)think our interaction with students:

1. Has the motivation that feeds this silencing discourse its roots in macro socio-cultural aspects, in the local organization of the interaction, or in micro didactic-pedagogical concepts?

2. How do these aspects and concepts influence each other?

3. Are teachers aware of the power of their discourses?

4. Are they aware of the silencing processes imposed upon both the students and themselves?

5. Where can we localize Western and Eastern interaction in order to avoid the stereotypes that populate the educational imaginary of relations between subjects from different cultures?

6. How enlightened are teachers about these issues?

7. Which educational projects are being undertaken in the society where these analyzed interactions take place?

> One way to think of the society in which one would like to live is to think of the kinds of voices it would have!
>
> (Hymes, 1996, as cited in Juffermans & Aa, 2011, p. 2)

In order to make possible a society in which everybody has the right to speak or to remain silent, we believe that it is necessary to question fixed patterns of behaviour and to embrace as a principle the diversity of our world.

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Promoting Student Engagement through Skill-Heterogeneous Peer Tutoring

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Abstract

This article is concerned with the effects of a specialized setup for student group work in L3 teaching. It promotes grouping students according to their skills in various subjects into heterogeneous groups as a way for inducing peer tutoring and raising student's self-esteem. The motivation for this study sprang from an extra-curricular study project for subtitling German short films intended as a remedy for the widely observable study fatigue in Taiwanese German as a Foreign Language (GFL) majors. It turned out that combining students into workgroups couldn't just rely on personal preferences, because the work required skillsets from three distinct areas: Project Management, Language, and Technology. As a solution to this kind of settings, this article proposes the instructor-organized creation of skill-heterogeneous workgroups. As theoretical background, it relies on findings from the fields of cooperative group work (e.g. Slavin, 2014; Cohen & Lotan, 2014, et al.), ability grouping and skill grouping (e.g. Missett, Brunner, Callahan, Moon, & Azano, 2014; Kulik & Kulik, 1992, et al.) in combination with motivational theories (e.g. Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Dörnyei, 2008; Reeve, 2009, et al.). The results of this project seem to indicate that the best way of grouping students was to assign each group an expert from one of the three main fields involved in subtitling. This way, every group member has authority in one field and can accept tutoring in the two remaining fields without losing face. The participating students enjoyed highly efficient group work that produced lasting synergetic effects in all areas involved.

Keywords: Group Work, Peer Tutoring, Student Engagement, Cooperative Learning, Placement

Promoting Student Engagement through Skill-Heterogeneous Peer Tutoring

It is a commonplace observation in scholarly literature that Taiwanese students majoring in GFL often lack enthusiasm for their studies (cf. Lohmann, 1996, pp. 88–97; Plank, 1992; Chen, 2005, p. 29; Merkelbach, 2011, p. 130). This situation is linked to the fact that a substantial number of Taiwanese students choose their major not out of interest but because of their results in the centralized university entrance exam. Once enrolled though, students are initially willing to participate in classroom activities, often motivated by the impression that mastering a reputedly difficult language will improve their career options. Typically after three or four semesters, when they find that progress is slow and careers are not built on language skills alone, motivation drops. Students who lack motivation often simultaneously experience a lack of self-esteem with regard to their skills in German. This lack of self-esteem hinders their ability to establish meaningful social contact with their peers, which in turn leads to bad study habits and thus completes a vicious cycle.

While the main pedagogical objective of the project underlying this study was to raise study motivation,[1] this article focuses on the design of group work and its effects on student engagement. The project consisted of subtitling German short films and employing peer tutoring in small, skill-heterogeneous study groups. Its design combined current pedagogical psychology, such as internalization of motivation and Flow theory, with established group work techniques. Voluntary participants were 23 students majoring in German as a Foreign Language from a national Taiwanese university. Their mother tongue was Mandarin Chinese, with some using exclusively Taiwanese dialect at home; their English as well as their German proficiency level varied between

1 The issue of raising study motivation is being dealt with in full detail in „CLIL-Projekt zur chinesischen Untertitelung deutscher Kurzfilme als Mittel zur Motivationsförderung“ (Odendahl, 2015).

beginner and intermediate. Teacher-Student classroom interactions were mostly in German, in-group interactions in Chinese. These Students were placed in skill-heterogeneous[2] groups and directed to perform autonomous small-group peer tutoring, the results of which were presented during regular classroom sessions. The project succeeded in fulfilling the commission of subtitling 14 German short films and organizing a public viewing. Participating students learned the basics of every skill involved in the process of subtitling, including (but not limited to) the importance of translation adequacy[3]. By utilizing group work concepts such as differentiation of tasks, co-constructive learning, and cognitive elaboration, the project achieved a significant rise in self-esteem and in the engagement of participating students.

The official goals set for the group work in the subtitling project were not directly related to formal German language learning but originated in a commission from Berlin short-film festival organizer interfilm GmbH. They consisted in completing Chinese subtitles for 14 German short films, booking a venue, and creating enough media attention to draw an audience to the event. Work groups were designed to include at least one member proficient in one of three skills necessary to complete the assignment, namely German-Chinese translation, video file manipulation, and event management. The educational goals of this project included developing and then passing on these skills but also aimed at increasing study motivation by providing students with the hands-on experience of applying their special knowledge to a marketable product. The project setting discussed in this article combines an inherently attractive and clearly defined high–stakes task with a skill-heterogeneous group design (cf. Wunsch, 2009, pp. 41–47) to cultivate several peer tutoring effects.

This paper consists of two parts, the first of which presents the conceptual framework and reviews the principles of motivational pedagogy underlying the project. Based on this theoretical framework,

2 The term is central to my thesis and will be discussed in detail throughout the later paragraphs. In short, it denotes a technique for composing members into small work groups, which is based on acquired skills rather than other criteria.

3 This fundamental translation principle formally introduced by K. Reiß and H.J. Vermeer can be summarized by "translating the meaning, not the words". A more in-depth discussion of the principle follows in a later section.

the second part discusses the practical application of these theories in the setup of the subtitling project.

1. **Grouping Students for Cooperative Group Work**

1.1 Group–worthy Tasks

The simple definition of the term motivation, as used in this paper, follows Reeve (2009), who describes motivation as the sum of all processes that lend energy and direction to behavior. The term skill is used in opposition to the term ability, skill being something that can be acquired through training, whereas ability is seen as static, either in the physical sense of being –for example– able to pronounce an s, or in reference to a point in time, e.g. being able to converse fluently in a foreign language (cf. Fleishman, 1964).

Cooperation has been proven to have positive effects on higher–level skills such as problem–solving and brainstorming, simply by increasing the number and quality of ideas produced (Slavin, 1980, p. 335). Lower–level skills requiring a certain amount of rote repetition, such as phonetic drills, are not likely to profit from group interaction. Successful group interaction depends on choosing complex tasks that require multiple skills to complete (Webb, 2008, p. 209). In order to get students to engage in high–quality talk, Cohen & Lotan (2014, pos. 330) stress the importance of the task's inherent features: "the task needs to pose complex problems or dilemmas, have different potential solutions, and rely on students' creativity and insights." As a result, a well–designed task that requires several students to contribute to its solution enables their peers and teachers—but most importantly themselves—to recognize each group member as intellectually competent (Lotan, 2003, p. 73).

The key features of this particular group work design include interaction of group members in planning and performing tasks and stimulating interdependence with each other's skill sets in heterogeneous groups.

Short film subtitling provided an ideal setting for this project, since the medium is not only an important part of many students' recreational activities but is also an area of work with a certain glamorous distinction from other jobs normally envisioned by graduates in the field of foreign languages (Odendahl, 2015, p. 138). The task of subtitling computerized movies meets the requirements of a complex task for a group of language students perfectly in that it consists in the combination of language–related content with strong technical elements. The language requirements for the technical parts are comparatively low, while adequately translating spoken German into Chinese subtitles requires a high degree of language competence (in both German and Chinese), register sensibility, and translation skills. In order to produce meaningful and adequate subtitles, translators not only have to thoroughly understand a given message and its intention in the established context but also think of an equivalent in their own language – especially since subtitles need to deliver the original message inside the confines of one line of text at a time. The translation task's complexity makes the complete decoding of the source text and subsequent re–coding of the message in the target language an ideal environment for cooperative group work in the sense that cooperation will almost certainly yield better results than any individual effort (Slavin, 1980, p. 335). Although regarded in its entirety formidably complex, the task still remains achievable even for intermediate students, who may have to bolster their listening comprehension by playing a passage multiple times and factoring in any visual clues. Students can pause or manipulate the speed of a passage at any time until they can extrapolate every facet of every word uttered therein. Therefore the language skill requirements are high enough to make the task attractive, but not so high as to make it daunting (cf. Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 49), for students can confidently commit time to the solution of problematic passages in the certainty that these problems will be solved.

1.2 Benefits of Cooperative Group Work

The terms cooperative and collaborative are often used interchangeably

for the same kind of group work; however, the definition of the term collaborative learning is very vague and may refer to "any pedagogical theory or method that advocates or involves using groups" (Smit, 1994, p. 69). This article uses the term cooperative as opposed to competitive and individualistic to refer to work that requires distinct efforts (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, p. 1). This usage is partly informed by the theories of the Russian psychologist Vygotskiĭ (1896-1934), which entered the American academic scene in the 1970s. Vygotskiĭ's position that the benefits of cooperation occur when a more expert person helps a less expert person became mainstream consensus. Although Vygotskiĭan approaches to instruction usually concentrate on the transmission of skills from adult to child, as is the case in traditional classrooms, the process of negotiation and transformation is not necessarily limited to teacher-student interaction. The general principle of getting help from more competent persons includes the concepts of guided participation or scaffolding. Scaffolding enables any less competent person to carry out a task that s/he could not perform without assistance (Vygotskiĭ, 1978). For scaffolding to be effective, several conditions must be fulfilled. The help provided must be relevant to the student's need; it must be correct, comprehensible, provided at the right time, and at the needed level. A certain learner autonomy is helpful, because according to the modern Vygotskiĭan school, learning is more than simply the transfer of knowledge from expert to novice; positive learning outcomes are more likely to occur if students use the help they receive to solve problems on their own without further assistance. This concept of learner autonomy after initial expert guidance was directly incorporated into designing the group work for this project. Scaffolding played an important role, too, but the concept had to be modified to fit the idea of peer tutoring with frequent tutor/tutee role switching, as discussed in the next paragraph.

The Vygotskiĭan conception is often contrasted to the Piagetian one, which centers on the child's acquisition of knowledge rather than its unidirectional transfer from more competent members of society to less competent ones. For Piaget and his followers the notion of cognitive conflict (Piaget, 1923) occupies a central position. Cognitive conflict arises when learners perceive a contradiction between their existing

understanding and what they hear or see in the course of interacting with others. Learning then occurs by reexamining their own ideas and by seeking additional information in order to reconcile the conflicting viewpoints. According to Piaget's findings, children are more likely to exchange ideas with their peers than with adults, because peers speak at a level the others can understand and peers have no inhibitions of challenging each other.

In trying to marry the Vygotskiĭan concept of passing knowledge from a more competent person to another with the Piagetian insight of peers being more likely to understand and therefore influence each other, Hatano (1993, p. 155) developed the idea of co-construction of knowledge (cf. Webb, 2008, p. 204). Co-construction of knowledge postulates that knowledge is acquired as a construction process that occurs between learners. Hatano observes that one student can pick up useful information from other students who are not generally more capable. He also notes that some members involved in horizontal interaction can be more capable than others at a certain moment in time (Hatano, 1993, p. 157). This leads to the notion that the tutor/tutee roles can switch frequently—a notion that served as the foundation in designing the in-group interactions for the subtitling project.

Also crucial to the design of this peer tutoring setup was the concept of cognitive elaboration. It was employed by asking students to keep the small-group peer tutoring sessions short and to the point – the reasoning being that having a tight time frame leads to much more focused preparation work. Students would be limited to mere minutes for presenting their findings to their peers, who would then comment on the presentation and ask questions (see detailed description in the peer–tutoring section below). According to the theory, the very action of explaining something to others promotes learning, which essentially is the definition of cognitive elaboration. It should be noted that promoting cognitive elaboration by means of time pressure is not to be seen as separate from the Vygotskiĭan and Piagetian perspectives or the co–construction of knowledge, but as an integral part of them (Webb, 2008, p. 205). In order to make themselves understood, tutors need to rehearse

their information and reorganize or clarify their presentation. Moreover, while formulating an explanation and thinking about the underlying problem, the dual process of generating inferences and repairing mental models is triggered.

1.3 Raising Enthusiasm through Cooperative Group Work

The main pedagogical mission of the subtitling project was to raise students' enthusiasm for their GFL studies.[4] This section will give a brief summary of the motivational strategies fundamental to the project as a whole–including the choice of task, the grouping of students, peer tutoring, and the mix of autonomous work in small groups with classroom sessions.

The processes that give behavior its energy and its direction (and thereby define motivation) include the effects of increased self–esteem and positive interdependence, which are two major benefits of cooperative group work. The popular dualistic notion of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation does not fully do justice to the situation of Taiwanese GFL students, who generally have no interest in German language or culture before they enter university, but want to master the language once they begin their studies (Odendahl, 2015, pp. 117–118). So, instead of trying to raise levels of intrinsic motivation, a more fitting term for what this project tried to achieve would be the internalization of an initially extrinsic motivation. This concept has come to the attention of educational psychologists rather recently and lies at the foundation of many of today's didactical techniques for promoting motivation in students.

Educational psychologists Ryan and Deci (2000, p. 54) observed that motivation not only rarely exists in pure intrinsic or extrinsic form but that it can also be created by outside influences. If initially extrinsic motivation undergoes the process of internalization, it will over time become very similar to intrinsic motivation. Deci and Ryan

4 An in-depth description can be found in Odendahl's (2015) discussion of the project.

developed the Organismic Integration Theory—later merged into the influential Self Determination Theory—which postulates intrinsic needs of humans for competence and self–determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985, Chapter 5). In extension, Connell and Wellborn (1991, p. 51) state that any individual evaluates his or her status with respect to three fundamental psychological needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Competence can be experienced when one's own actions have positive outcomes and negative consequences are avoided. Autonomy is used in reference to the determination of goals, contents, and progress of their own learning activities. Additionally, the learner should also have some degree of initial interest in or curiosity about the task in order to be able to uphold a persistent autotelic occupation with it. As a result, picking the task of subtitling German short films for a project aimed at promoting motivation in 20–year–olds came rather naturally, since watching movies is one of the preferred pastimes of many Taiwanese students.

One of the prerogatives Ryan and Deci postulated for the process of internalization of motivation is that learners have to feel good about the actual study experience. This corresponds well with Csikszentmihalyi's Flow theory, which defines Flow as an emotion that can be experienced when one is completely involved in an activity for its own sake and when one is using one's skills to the utmost. The flow experience leads to better and more sustained learning (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 71) and is described by eight points (1990, p. 49), four of which were actively incorporated into the task design for this project, namely: clear goals that are challenging but attainable, the ability to concentrate on the task at hand, immediate feedback, and promoting a feeling of personal control over the situation and the outcome. Stoller and Grabe (1997, p. 13) emphasize that especially the engagement in challenging and increasingly complex tasks (which are still perceived as attainable) augments intrinsic motivation. They strongly recommend the combination of flow and Content-Based Instruction (CBI) – a term they use synonymously with Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) – for heightening motivation. In summary, the above paragraph established the principles of cooperative group work with

Self Determination and Flow theories as building blocks for effective group work. Finishing the theoretical framework of this article, the next two paragraphs will discuss peer tutoring and how to distribute students into groups for effectively making use of those components.

1.4 Peer Tutoring

Peer tutoring has several dimensions and may be evaluated with regard to what knowledge or which skills are to be taught, the ability level of tutors and tutees, role continuity (permanent or temporary), tutor characteristics, objectives of the program, and others (Topping, 1996, p. 322). It has been studied extensively and is proven to have significant benefits for learning as well as for promoting motivation and empowering students (Colvin, 2007, p. 3).

With regard to the literature which suggests that an increase in social interaction is associated with correspondingly increased benefits for student's self–esteem (Goodlad & Hirst, 1989, p. 16), this project was designed to maximize social interaction as much as possible. The setup of small–group meetings had very few rules, one of which required physical meetings two times a week. Group members would work individually on a sub–task and give a short presentation on their progress for the benefit of the other members of the group. Each presentation should last five minutes, after which each of the listeners/tutees was required both to give positive feedback and ask one constructive question. Taking turns and switching the role of tutor/tutee when discussing different aspects or subtasks of the group's common task was designed to stimulate respect for each other's skills.

1.4.1 Cognitive Elaboration

Annis (1983) and others demonstrated that the way people conceptualize and organize things when they are learning something in order to teach it later is markedly different from when they are learning for their own use and the material is generally on a higher conceptual level. In other

words, teaching what one has learned has a positive effect on one's own learning (Webb, 2008, p. 205). Moreover, teaching to one's peers has a better effect than summarizing for a teacher, as Durling and Schick's (1976) study shows. "We formulate meaning through the process of conveying it. It is while we are speaking that we cognitively organize and systematize the concepts and information we are discussing" (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, p. 76). For their presentations, temporary tutors quickly learned to summarize tedious details, to focus their presentation on the more interesting problems they encountered, and to involve others in finding the solutions they suggested applying.

The positive effects of cognitive elaboration through peer tutoring were observed in regard of both the micro and the macro perspectives: In preparing to teach a subject to their peers, students not only needed to find a way to re–organize information and vocalize concepts, but also to reflect on the purpose of the whole while organizing their thoughts for teaching (cf. Goodlad & Hirst, 1989, p. 121).

1.4.2 Social Cohesion

Lotan (2003, p. 74) states that working on a tangible product—in our case a film with subtitles—helps create a positive interdependence between group members. According to Johnson & Johnson (1989, p. 61), a positive goal and interdependence are not enough on their own, and they insist that individual rewards are important if group work is to be effective. However, the subtitling project seems to provide evidence that this may not be as important as they believe: it did not offer any extrinsic or individual rewards besides the goal achievement itself. All members shared responsibility for the joint outcome, i.e., supplying adequate subtitles for the film they had chosen. They each took personal responsibility for contributing to the joint outcome as well as for teaching relevant skills to the other members (cf. Odendahl, 2015, p. 113). The level of interdependency and shared responsibility "adds the concept of *ought* to members' motivation -- one ought to do one's part, pull one's weight, contribute, and satisfy peer norms" (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, p. 63).

Through gaining respect for each other's skills, peers can by extension build respect for the person. Johnson & Johnson (1989, p. 113) use the Freudian term "inducibility" for the receptiveness to each other's suggestions and for the interpersonal attractiveness that results from frequent, accurate, and open communication. If group members realize that their success is mutually caused and that it relies on the contribution of each other's efforts, they can build a shared group–identity, which should result in mutual support. Working together on a mutual goal results in an emotional bonding with collaborators, and, as a consequence, external rewards may not be necessary to promote motivation and achieve productivity, as long as group members provide respect and appreciation (cf. Johnson & Johnson, 1989, p. 73; 114).

1.4.3 Self–Esteem through Group Work

Johnson & Johnson (1989, p. 154) state that numerous studies have shown effective group work to increase self–esteem in participants. In our subtitling project, it was assumed that group members specializing in language would have higher group status and self–esteem than the others. With respect to raising self–esteem through the subtitling project, academic self–esteem was treated as being directly proportional to competence self–esteem (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, p. 161). By raising the latter, we hoped to simultaneously influence the former. In order to help students with comparatively lower self–esteem in regard to their academic achievements, skills other than translation were emphasized during the introduction and in classroom sessions. Especially in the initial small–group sessions, when members with computer skills were asked to help set up a foot pedal in combination with a special computer macro for transliteration, they had the chance to demonstrate their usefulness to peers with higher social status and subsequently muster the confidence to actively participate in discussions on other subjects, such as adequate translations. The experience of contributing to language tasks should lead to a virtuous cycle of boosting academic self–esteem with regard to their GFL studies.

Self–esteem is most eminently expressed while dealing with controversy. Peer discussions in general consist of challenging each other in a constructive but nevertheless controversial way. During the classroom sessions of the subtitling project, lively discussions revolved around different styles of translation for a given utterance in a certain situation. During the translation sessions, students tended to have very strong, but disparate, views of how to phrase a Chinese subtitle adequately. The relevant scholarship on work–group discussions suggests that friendly and constructive interaction is likely to result in interpersonal attraction. Moreover, if the process of working together on solving tasks is perceived as leading to either personal or mutual benefit, the readiness to comply with other people's requests is increased (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, p. 116).

1.4.4 Learner Autonomy and the Teacher's Role

Bruffee states that successful group work "provides students with a poly–centralized cooperative learning community which places faculty at the edge of the action, once they have set the scene, a position from which they may respond to needs which students discover for themselves" (1972, p. 466). This concept of changing the traditional teacher role from direct supervision to delegating authority has been widely accepted as a key feature of properly designed group work and harmonizes well with the notion of autonomy from motivational theories. For the subtitling project, the teacher set up a general framework for heterogeneous grouping and group interaction. After that, teacher interference was kept to the minimum of moderating classroom sessions and keeping an open door for student–initiated interaction. The actual work progress relied on autonomous group work.

Learner autonomy, important for Flow as well as for Self Determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000, pp. 59–60) is closely connected to splitting the goal into subtasks. Participants were free to choose their own time and method for solving whatever subtask was at hand at any one time, to experiment, play, discover, and learn while still having the reassuring

presence of an overlying framework from project management. Even if a group would not meet the expectations for finishing a subtask by the next classroom attendance period, this would not jeopardize the project as a whole. True learner autonomy with a genuine feeling of control and self–determination includes the freedom to fail. In this setting, failing at a subtask meant spending time in the next classroom session on a discussion of the problems encountered and accepting solutions from the assembled peers. In other words, the stakes were low enough to permit experimenting, but participants would still strive to avoid the mild humiliation from having to expose one's (perceived) shortcomings to the peer group.

1.5 Ability Grouping vs. Skill Grouping

1.5.1 Ability Grouping

Ability Grouping refers to the grouping of students homogeneously according to their demonstrated current performance level in the subject they are going to pursue (Missett et al., 2014, p. 248). It is used in tracking systems, a predominantly North American practice where stronger students are grouped together and receive different instruction than weaker students. By way of testing, the starting point and progress pacing for the students' further studies are determined, and students are grouped accordingly. Research into the question of whether or not to group students by ability started in the early 20th century (Kulik & Kulik, 1992, p. 73). It mostly focuses on the impact of the practice on academic performance (effectiveness), equity, self–concept or self–esteem of students, as well as students' or teachers' attitudes toward the practice. Although there have been hundreds of studies and reviews on the topic of ability grouping, the discussion is ongoing, and findings are not universally conclusive (Kulik, 1992, p. viii; Hoffer, 1992, pp. 206–207). Major debates revolve around the questions whether teaching is more effective with homogeneously grouped students and whether all students (instead of just a certain group of students) benefit from the

ability grouping arrangement, especially since in terms of equity, lower achievers in homogeneous groups may be deprived of the example and stimulation provided by high achievers.

It is an established fact that teachers' expectations and preconceptions about their students' performance influence the quality of instruction (Liu, 2014, p. 196; Missett et al., 2014, p. 256; Bernhardt, 2014, p. 38). Therefore, one major concern about ability grouping is that teachers who teach lower ability students are more likely to have lower expectations for them, which in turn might lead to lower–quality instruction. There seems to be a consensus that ability grouping generally helps academic achievement; provided that the course progression is adjusted to the requirements of each group and the teacher has adequately high expectations of the group. The greatest gains in student achievement from personalized pacing are noted when the curriculum is differentiated (Missett et al., 2014, p. 250; Brulles, Saunders, & Cohn, 2010, p. 346; Neihart, 2007, p. 336). These findings are true for all kinds of grouping, but Kulik & Kulik (1992, p. 76) especially stress the positive effects of differentiated education for within–class grouping of students.

1.5.2 Skill Grouping

Because ability grouping is very common and literature on skill grouping scarce, I had to rely on findings from studies on the former to assess the feasibility of the latter with respect to the goal of raising students' self–esteem and study motivation. The major difference between the grouping used in the subtitling project and ability grouping is that of homogeneity versus heterogeneity in group composition. Ability grouping aims at assembling members with similar abilities into homogeneous groups in order to further the very ability that served as the selection criterion. In contrast, what I call skill–heterogeneous grouping matches students with different skill sets in order to exchange those skills via peer tutoring, so that in the end all participants will be able to master all skills involved. In the setting of the subtitling project, skill–heterogeneous grouping was designed to cultivate co–constructive

learning and cognitive elaboration, as well as social cohesion and self–esteem. There is strong evidence that the positive effects of peer tutoring in heterogeneous groups are reciprocal for tutors and tutees, since students gain significantly from peer teaching by preparing elaborated explanations for other students and thus creating the effects linked to cognitive elaboration (Webb, 2008, p. 205).

Differences aside, there are some major proven benefits of ability grouping that can safely be assumed to be valid for skill grouping also. These include the influence of teachers' expectations for students' success, the importance of differentiating tasks in order to match each student's personal skills and abilities, as well as the adequacy of the task in regard to both each student's needs and the achievement of the task's goal. According to the above theories, differentiated and adequate tasks combined with high teacher expectation should lead to improved learning. The presence of high achievers should positively influence lower achievers in the right setting, and peer tutoring effects in heterogeneous groups should benefit both tutor and tutee. Overall, it was expected that the cooperative work would have positive effects on the participant's self–esteem, motivation, and study habits.

2. Setting of the Subtitling Project

The subtitling project involved several layers of groups, including informal ad hoc groups during preparation, skill–heterogeneous small work groups, and the plenary meeting of all participants. The concepts of a) co–construction of knowledge, b) cognitive elaboration, and c) peer tutoring with tutor/tutee role–switching were the core components for the group work design in the subtitling project. This setup could be expected to trigger the beneficial effect of group cohesion, which occurs when students want to help each other because they care about the group and its members (cf. Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994, p. 424). In order to enable group cohesion, cooperative learning methods should include the development of interpersonal skills, in particular, active listening, stating ideas freely, as well as social small–group skills (Webb, 2008,

p. 205). Accordingly, weekly classroom sessions were set up to promote brainstorming and mind–mapping, hoping that the spirit of uninhibited discussion would spread to the autonomously acting small groups.

Three outcomes of cooperative learning were emphasized in this project: academic motivation, group cohesion, and self–esteem. These outcomes are interconnected and will only be marginally approached in this paper, which focuses on group design. The following section describes the general setup designed to enhance the first two of the above outcomes, and reasons why a boost in self–esteem should follow.

2.1 Effective Cooperation through Group Work and Task Design

Group cohesion should lead to increased self–esteem; therefore, the group work in this project was designed to promote group cohesion inside small workgroups as well as in the larger group of all project participants. Properly designed group work verifiably produces positive results, with high–, medium–, and low–achieving individuals all benefiting academically from participating in heterogeneous cooperative learning groups (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, p. 47; Goodlad & Hirst, 1989, p. 84). Nevertheless, not every task and not every teaching goal are suited for group work. The Johnsons' model of cooperative learning states that five criteria must be satisfied for instruction to qualify: positive interdependence, individual accountability, face–to–face promotive interaction, teamwork skills, and group processing (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, pp. 82–83). The main question discussed in this section is the setup of group work with tasks that make use of cognitive elaboration and that allow co–construction of knowledge as well as frequent role switching between tutors and tutees.

There are differences between learning groups and work groups with different goals being attached to group work. However, there are some common design factors that influence the chance of group work being successful. In order to create an environment in which effective cooperation can occur, three areas must be addressed: group creation

(including size and homogeneity), the design and implementation of structured activities, and appropriate facilitation of group interaction (Graham & Misanchuk, 2004, pp. 190–196). It seems to be crucial to carefully evaluate teaching goals for suitability and pay minute attention to the design of tasks that can be deemed group–worthy by the amount of work involved and by the tasks' inherent complexity.

In order to incorporate these theories into the subtitling project, the main task had to be split into smaller subtasks (see below). Group interactions consisted in a mix of individual work and peer tutoring. Subtasks were set up to be worked on individually by mastering the appropriate skills and then passing on those newly acquired skills to peers in small tutoring groups (cf. Büttner, Warwas, & Adl-Amini, 2012, pp. 2–3). In the past, peer tutoring as a form of cooperation has most often been associated with written composition. Generalizing from current definitions of cooperative writing, cooperative group work may be described as situations in which members of small groups engage in a common task, cooperate intensively, make all process decisions collectively, and where the group as a whole takes responsibility for the outcome (cf. Bosley, 1989, p. 6; Ede & Lunsford, 1990, p. 15).

The method employed here could be described as a variety of the jigsaw method. Each group member is assigned a part of the project which is essential to the finishing of the project (Slavin, 1980, p. 320). While constructively challenging another person's view leads to more active participation and to greater identification with the outcome (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, p. 70), destructive controversy might jeopardize all beneficial effects of peer tutoring and effectively poison the interpersonal relationships of group members, especially so, as members with stronger self–esteem might try to use coercive means to achieve their goals. It was therefore crucial to have an effective set of rules for interaction during peer discussions and to establish a climate of respectfulness and reciprocal support. For small–group discussions, the rules were established as follows:

1. Small–group meetings are twice a week; every member presents

every time.

2. Allocate exactly five minutes for each presentation and moderated discussion.

3. Tutors present clearly, to the point, and use at least two adequate visual aids.

4. Tutees must pay respectful attention and take notes.

5. Tutees must give at least one positive comment and ask one constructive question concerning the contents of the presentation before criticizing.

After one such round of presentations, groups were free to continue discussing, socialize, or do whatever they wanted. For the classroom sessions, where mostly the teacher played the role of moderator and the presenting groups acted as single entities, rules had to be more flexible, while still upholding the principle of constructive and respectful criticism. This specific group work mode—combining individual effort with group sessions—represents a new combination of established practices.

2.1.1 Splitting the Task

Fearing that the ultimate goal of presenting 14 German short films with Chinese subtitles to a Taiwanese audience might seem too broad and intimidating, and in order to prevent the demotivating effect of a looming deadline for a large and unfamiliar task, the process had to be broken into smaller, more specific subtasks that presented short–term objectives (see Odendahl, 2015, p. 129). These were designed to correspond to one of the three skill–sets represented by at least one member in each group.

The public screening of German short films with Chinese subtitles

involves three major fields of preparatory work. The most visible part consists in adequately translating the spoken originals into short written passages. The second part involves a considerable number of technical aspects, which are all crucial for the successful completion of the task. These include FTP file transfers, file format conversions, mastering unfamiliar software, and building an educated opinion of using softcoded versus hardcoded subtitles. The third part of the project was the event management, which included negotiating contract terms and keeping track of the progress of the project as a whole.

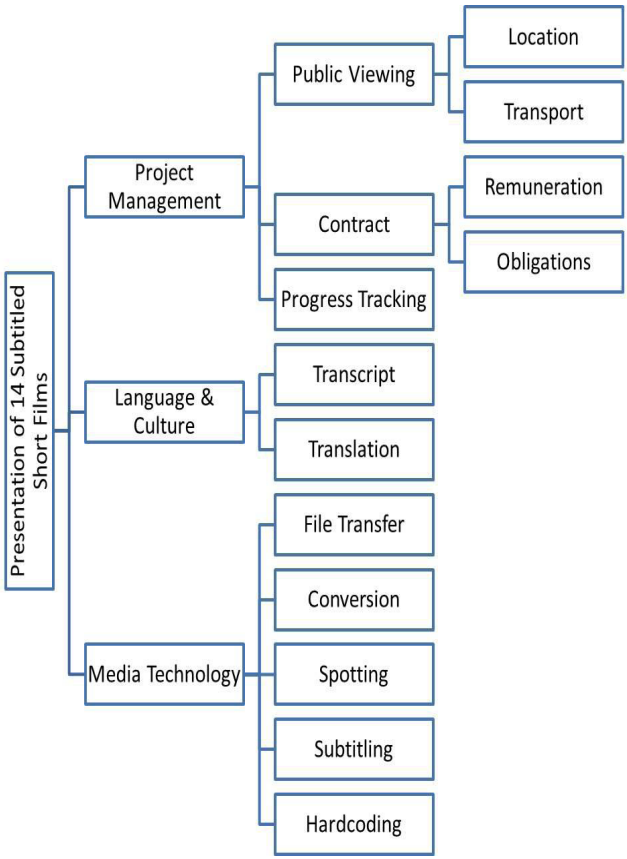

Figure 1: Task Explanation Chart (For ease of reference, the following explanatory text uses capitalization to indicate the corresponding nodes.)

The main goal, Presentation of 14 Subtitled Short Films, is achieved by the cooperation of group members specializing in Project Management, Language & Culture, and Media Technology. The tasks in the field of Project Management are twofold, concerning the Public Viewing as well as the Contract. Subtasks for the Public Viewing include securing a Location and organizing Transport. The terms of the Contract have to specify Remuneration and Obligations. Members specializing in Language & Culture will have to compose a Transcript of every word uttered in the films, which would subsequently have to undergo Translation. Team members specializing in Media Technology arrange the File Transfer via FTP and administer Conversion so that the files can be manipulated with the specialized subtitling software. During Spotting, appropriate time points for the beginning and end of showing each subtitle on screen are determined. The Subtitling process involves breaking the translation into parts that fit on the screen and writing those in a file with time stamps next to each subtitle. In a final step, Hardcoding combines the subtitles and the film into a single computer file in order to make sure the film can be played from any device.

Knowing my students and their study background intimately, I decided to employ some tweaks in order to prevent students with good language skills from dominating the group work. In order to make the technical aspects appear more attractive and challenging, special attention was drawn to every step of computer file manipulation. Furthermore, only freeware or open source software programs were to be used during the project. The reasoning for this requirement was that in order to build a real–life skill which any participant could readily offer to potential customers, students should not be forced to invest money in specialized software programs before their business has even started.

As discussed in the theoretical framework, the internalization of external motivation requires the task to make the learner think of it as challenging but attainable (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 49). Dividing the assignment into more manageable subtasks and assigning these to designated roles inside the work groups provided students with weaker language skills the opportunity to play an equally integral and meaningful part in the

project.

Most of the subtasks have their own intricacies to be explored and subsequently shared by the group member acting as moderator for that skill area. After having participated in the project, every student could expect to have sufficient expertise in all steps necessary to independently and professionally offer subtitling services to customers. The following sections will deal with the organizational aspects of the group work from a didactical point of view, with special attention to facilitating in–group peer tutoring.

2.1.2 Selection and Placement of the Participants

In order to find students who were genuinely interested in the project, a two–stage online application form in combination with an online language test was used. At the end of the first page of the online application form, candidates were asked to enter their score from a separate online language test. Only participants who filled in a minimum score from the language test were taken to the second stage of the application and issued an invitation to the initial information meeting. Although a show was made of checking attendance at the beginning of the meeting, the main purpose of this arrangement was to either attract participants whose language competency was above a certain level, or at least such students motivated enough to cheat on their score. From the 40 students who came to the initial information session, 23 stayed after the short break that was purposely arranged between project explanation and the forming of work groups. Three more participants left before the project was finished. None of the participating students had prior experience with the processes involved in subtitling. The participants who professed themselves as technically inclined mostly knew how to edit videos on their computers, but none of them had ever even thought of subtitling. Similarly, students who thought of themselves as more proficient in German than their peers had some experience with translating short text passages during German class, but never formally thought of translation as a service to readers who do not understand the original.

The grouping aimed at creating small skill–heterogeneous groups with three distinct areas of expertise (cf. Fig. 1) as discussed in the last paragraph. In the introductory session, after having been informed of the nature of the task and given the chance to use a short break to leave without losing face, participants were asked to physically move to one of the areas in the room labeled German, Computer, or Project Management. During task explanation, they had learned that the nature of their group work would be to assume responsibility for one area, doing individual work on the parts manageable by one person alone, identifying difficulties, exploring solutions, and preparing a report on that subtask for the other members. An appointed moderator would streamline the efforts of the whole group for those parts of the task which required cooperation with the other members of the group.

In the group-formation process, I could observe that participants confident enough to choose translation aimed to put their skills to work in a challenging, interesting, and GFL–related way. Students who chose to be technical experts of their groups mostly did not feel comfortable with their German proficiency but had some confidence in their computer skills. Those who chose to be in project management often did not feel confident enough in either one of the other two areas. In some cases, they just wanted to be part of a group on the basis of personal affection.

Since all participants majored in German as a foreign language, those who chose to be moderators for transliteration and translation were also the ones with stronger self–esteem, often playing leading roles in the regular German classroom. There, they perceived themselves as successful and were acknowledged by their peers. These students showed no lack of motivation for their studies, had a generally positive attitude towards curricular and extra–curricular activities, and were mostly willing to help other students – as long as they were treated as academic higher–ups. During the project, one of the challenges for peer tutoring was to get those students to acknowledge other group members' superior skills in other fields, which were equally important for the successful completion of the project.

As pointed out by Cohen and Lotan (2014, pos. 829), skill–heterogeneous groups, provided they work well, eliminate the undesirable domination of a group by an expert member. By taking turns at being the experts, group members break up the hierarchy established by academic status in favor of mutual respect. One of the findings of this project was that if skill–heterogeneous groups are to work well, then special attention needs to be paid to reducing the gap between high–status and low–status students' participation rates. Especially the design of project– or event–management tasks has to be carefully constructed so as to facilitate inter–skill exchanges.

2.1.3 Structuring Activities, Facilitating Interaction

Effective cooperation requires skills in leadership, trust, decision–making, and conflict management. Because of the time constraints of one two–hour plenary meeting a week a formal training in all required social skills was not feasible. In order to prevent counterproductive behavior, the teacher instead provided instructions on how to give respectful negative feedback and urged groups to stick to a set of simple interaction rules during their peer tutoring sessions. These instructions included the allocation of five minutes of uninterrupted talk time to each (temporary/revolving) tutor and the recommendation to start and end each member's feedback with a positive remark concerning the contents or presentation of the talk, before going into specifics.

The subtitling project consisted of several modes of group work. Individual participants would work alone or cooperate in virtual space, often with members of other groups. They met twice a week in small groups of three or four members, each of whom paid attention to different subtasks. In weekly classroom meetings with all groups present, peers would review the results of the groups' efforts. Although Johnson & Johnson (1989, p. 42) find significant evidence that pure cooperative work yields better academic results than forms that mix cooperative with individualistic work, the approach of individualistic

learning with subsequent peer tutoring promised adequate results with benefits in regard to self–esteem and group consensus between members with very distinct skill sets, especially since the subtitling project was extracurricular and participants were sometimes hard put to set up a physical meeting (cf. Odendahl, 2015, p. 123).

The group work was designed to distribute responsibilities and cooperation through communication in the form of reports and structured discussions. Small–group interaction in the form of regular meetings was to take place not less than twice a week, each meeting scheduled to last 15 minutes or more. During the in–group discussions of problems and solutions, moderating members would act as tutors, passing their insights on to the other members in structured reports and asking them for support with specific problems. In the spirit of cognitive elaboration, learning not only occurred through peer tutoring, but also during the process of organizing and preparing reports in a manner the other members would understand.

Motivation–inducing interaction was first realized within the small group by tutees giving constructive face–to–face feedback and also during classroom sessions by the teacher's encouragement of each group's overall performance and his giving informational feedback regarding each member's learning achievement. Aside from cooperating in small groups, participants were expected to join weekly classroom attendance periods. These followed the same basic principles as the small–group meetings, with the groups replacing individual members as the basic entity of interaction and the teacher taking the role of moderator. Classroom language was mostly German on the part of the teacher and predominantly Chinese among the students. The focus of classroom interaction was on summarizing progress, the inter–group exchange of problems and solutions, and, most importantly, the peer review of finished subtitles.

The highlight of most classroom attendance sessions was the screening of a subtitled film (or section thereof), where the audience would objectify their first impressions with a prepared mini–questionnaire

using a forced–choice four point Likert scale.

Translation Adequacy	.....	bad	❍	❍	❍	❍ good
Spotting	.....	bad	❍	❍	❍	❍ good
Readability of Subtitles	.....	bad	❍	❍	❍	❍ good
Overall Viewing Experience	.....	bad	❍	❍	❍	❍ good

Tips.....

.....

.....

Figure 2: Peer Review Questionnaire

Before using the questionnaires for the first time, classroom time was devoted to the explanation of the technical terms it contained. Students knew that Translation Adequacy evaluated the naturalness of the translated wording in that particular context. The question they should ask themselves was: if that person were Taiwanese, would s/he use that term in this situation? Spotting concerns the timing of beginning and ending of the subtitles, which should correspond to the lip movement of the actors. By Readability of Subtitles, we understood the equilibrium between duration of subtitle and amount of information involved. For considering the Overall Viewing Experience, students had to judge whether a Taiwanese audience would experience the same feelings as the originally intended target group. In the Tips section, students could make some notes that they would refer to in the plenary discussion which followed immediately after the screening. The questionnaires were collected after the discussion and passed to the group responsible for that film.

Several of the high achievers in German thoroughly enjoyed the process of working on finding the most adequate translation for colloquialisms. During classroom sessions, group cooperation was realized by the presenting group paraphrasing the German original for the plenum, and pointing out the literally translated meaning, as well as the contextual meaning within the film's plot. After every member of the audience understood the intricacies of that particular passage, all of them were equally able to contribute to an adequate rendering in Chinese. This

meant that many of the more colloquial subtitles were truly the product of a lively and pleasant group brainstorming, during which ludicrous slang was discussed alongside overly formal speech as well as literary translations and so on. Discussions of the adequacy of translations were also the highlights in classroom sessions, where the plenum often polished the finer points of the Chinese renderings.

3. Observations

The current literature on cooperative learning comprises a vast amount of qualitative and quantitative data. For the years between 1898 and 1989, Johnson & Johnson (1989, p. 16) count 521 studies on "the relative impact of cooperative, competitive, and individualistic situations on a wide range of dependent variables, including achievement and productivity, motivation to achieve, intellectual and creative conflict, quality of relationships, social support, self–esteem, and psychological health." The data, mostly collected in controlled environments, proves unanimously that cooperative learning, if deployed on group–worthy tasks, is superior to its individualistic or competitive variants with respect to academic achievement and positive effects on study motivation. Given this abundance of evidence, there was no reason for this study to set out replicating these findings; instead, it was designed to find out whether collaborative learning in small, skill–heterogeneous groups employing peer tutoring can help Taiwanese GFL students master a complex task and regain a positive attitude towards their studies and towards themselves.

The crucial point discussed in this paper is the setup of skill–heterogeneous group work with a group–worthy task, i.e., a task challenging and complex enough to justify the involvement of several members at once. Subtitling German short films seemed to be near perfect, since it is a rather challenging endeavor from both its technical aspects as well as the translator's point of view. What might have helped even more is the fact that all participants had a very positive attitude towards the medium, which of course is part of most students' daily consumer experience

– foreign films on Taiwanese TV are subtitled. Still, even in the age of YouTube and 30–second advertising clips, the short film is an art form with its own rules for epic storytelling with which most participants had never before come in contact. Similarly, even though subtitles are very common on Taiwanese television, consumers normally don't realize the intricacies involved in formulating sentences that fit a standard screen width or in synchronizing the appearance of subtitles with the actor's lip movement. However, by taking part in the project, students gained knowledge of these intricacies through hands–on experience, and so creating subtitles for short films became a challenging and rewarding task for them.

The small–group peer tutoring rules, which explicitly ask participants for sharing their newly acquired skills and insights in a structured way, enable cognitive elaboration. Furthermore, the frequent switching of tutor/tutee roles is crucial for the intended effects of reciprocal skill appreciation. In the beginning, not everybody was comfortable with their roles as peer tutors/tutees, neither in structuring their knowledge nor in constructively discussing solutions as equals. This initial awkwardness passed rather quickly through repetition, because every non–virtual session of group work, including classroom sessions, would include presentations followed by discussions. Rather unsurprisingly, some of the lower–achieving students who would not actively participate in regular German classroom settings gained self–esteem through respect from their peers by showing exceptional computer skills which were directly applicable as a solution to problems at hand. The internal hierarchy of these groups flattened notably and the atmosphere of group discussions became more animated and cordial; the group cooperation in a flattened peer hierarchy was an important new experience that helped students experience social interdependence in pursuing a complex task. The newly gained self–esteem of formerly shy students spilled into their general behavior even in regular German class, which was completely unrelated to the project and most of its tasks.

The success of the project shows that one of the prerogatives for skill–heterogeneous groups to work well is reducing the gap between high–

status and low–status students' participation rates. The synergetic effects of group work were not limited to the formerly lower achievers. As predicted by the literature, intense group work with peer tutoring led to a deep understanding of the subject matter as well as social cohesion in and between groups.

After participating in the project, all students had a clear understanding of the processes and subtasks involved in subtitling films and organizing a public viewing. This included transliterating, translating, and several file conversions and manipulations. Of course, the details and challenges in delivering high–quality work were understood most clearly by the members who had explored that particular area themselves, but through the small–group and classroom reports, everybody had at least an idea of the intricacies involved. More significantly, they included a profound understanding of the underlying principles of translation adequacy (see Reiß, 1984), the importance of timing subtitles in accordance with the video picture ('spotting' cf. Mälzer-Semlinger, 2011), general subtitle conventions (cf. ARD Das Erste, 2014), and customer–oriented planning.

Overall, the project and its work group design turned out to be very effective in keeping work progress on track while simultaneously facilitating social cohesion and mutual respect. The division of the project into subtasks and the completion of multiple subtasks helped participants perceive competence, a prerogative for the Flow experience (cf. White, 1959, p. 297; Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 40; Connell & Wellborn, 1991, p. 51). Another factor for nurturing the perception of competence came from assigning specific skill areas to each group member, so that everybody was given the opportunity to tutor the other members in one particular area. Students learned to give concise and structured reports of their work, take responsibility, plan inside a given time frame, meet deadlines, organize their group work, and communicate their work's progress with people outside their own skill set. All students said they especially enjoyed the fact that they had been able to use their skills in a real life application. On a personal level, several new friendships emerged between students with different skill sets who without the peer tutoring experience would probably not have recognized the

other's talents. Evaluating these results, I propose introducing skill-heterogeneous peer tutoring into general classes as part of a mix of motivational devices.

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