

**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FOREIGN OR SECOND LANGUAGE
TEACHING IN ISRAELI AND CANADIAN SCHOOLS**

by

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**A Comparative Analysis of Foreign or Second Language Teaching
in Israeli and Canadian Schools**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to compare teaching approaches used by foreign language teachers in Israel and British Columbia. The factors influencing those approaches were examined and related to the research existing in this area. Those factors were identified as follows: the influence of teacher training on current philosophical beliefs regarding teaching foreign languages, instructional designs in terms of time allocation to the target language per lesson, the role attributed to the teaching of grammar, the teacher's role during instructional time and the role that teaching materials play in teaching approaches. The interest for this study was inspired by the researcher's curiosity about what the teachers in Israel might do differently from the teachers in British Columbia in order to achieve better results in foreign language acquisition.

Three teachers teaching English as a foreign language in elementary schools in Israel were selected according to their availability to participate in the research. Then three teachers matching the qualifications of the Israeli teachers were selected for the study in one of the Lower Mainland School Districts in British Columbia. The methodology then followed three phases: (1) analyses of research and the development of the questionnaire for the interviews, (2) six individual one-to-one and half hour interviews tape-recorded and transcribed,

Through an analysis of the data collected, the findings of this study reveal that:

- teachers in both countries share similar philosophical beliefs regarding the importance of time spent in the target language during instruction and the role that grammar should play in the teaching approaches
- initial teacher training did not make an important contribution to teaching beliefs and instructional practices
- teacher roles vary according to teaching situations, but it is believed by all teacher-participants that their role in the classroom is one of facilitator and researcher
- teaching approaches are influenced and altered according to the style promoted by teaching materials, including textbooks

Other factors such as politics, economy, media and motivation were indicated as contributing to the results of language attainment. Some recommendations are provided for further studies including the investigation of effects of teaching a foreign language by teachers with limited knowledge of the target language and the role of professional development on teaching practices.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my daughter

MARIA

whose love and support I cherish the most in life.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

No single volume could presume to introduce the worldwide field of foreign language teaching, let alone treat it in depth.

Gerard L. Ervin (1992)

The Purpose and Rationale of the Study

This thesis is concerned with examining and comparing approaches to teaching foreign or second languages in Israel and British Columbia, Canada. During the last decade, there has been a world wide “shift in second language pedagogy from teaching the second language in isolation towards integrating language and content instruction” (Genesee, 1993, p. 48). Genesee refers to these newer approaches of second language teaching as “content-based, integrated or communicative.” All of the components of the language, such as phonics, vocabulary and grammar are taught in the context of the language and not as separate items. If importance is given to the message that the learner is trying to convey rather than to the correct use of the grammar, then the learning of the language is a process of learning and not a product or result. Language learning is conceptualized as an interactive activity where the learner must become a participant in real life situations using the language in the meaningful context.

Integrated approaches to teaching languages have brought instructional changes to the classrooms. Emphasis is placed on the active use of the language for communication. These functional, active and involving approaches to teaching languages have changed the role of the teacher and the student in the classroom emphasizing student-centered instruction where the teacher is a facilitator. Ellis (1990) describes the teaching of the foreign language as interaction by which he means “teaching-learning relationship” (p. 130) through open communication between the teacher and the learner. The teacher’s role is to provide the learner with opportunities for meaningful communication and to encourage learners to take risks attempting to express themselves in the target language.

While there is evidence in research that the shift in the instructional approaches is towards “function-based” (Johnson, 1992) language instruction, in practice, little has been done to analyze influencing factors on teachers’ decisions regarding classroom practices. The purpose of this study is to examine which approaches second language teachers in Israel and in British Columbia are using in their classrooms and what major factors influence them.

As pointed out by Freeman and Richards (1993), “in the field of second language instruction, we have been slow to recognize that teaching needs to be

examined and understood on its own terms” (p. 193). In their study, they investigated the work of language teachers and indicated that:

Teacher education, curriculum development, program design, research, professional standards, and policy making all reflect to one degree or another implicitly held views of what teaching is and how it should be done. (p. 193)

In view of these factors, I formulated three major questions:

1. Which factors influence the teaching approaches used by educators in both countries?
2. What are the similarities and differences of these factors and approaches?
3. Which of these approaches has been recommended currently to be most successful in the acquisition of foreign or second language?

The Background to the Study

Israeli Educational System

Even though there are similarities between the two countries, there are also some fundamental differences in the structure of the educational systems at the government level and at the level of school administration. In Israel, three people hold equally important positions at the head of the Ministry of Education: the Minister, the Deputy Minister, and the General Director who is responsible for elementary and secondary education. The General Director is

aided by the Assistant to the Director who in turn works closely with the Superintendents of four Districts: North District, Central District, Jerusalem District and South District. Each Superintendent has several inspectors responsible for specific subject and program areas.

The inspector of the English program oversees the curriculum, the implementation of the programs, materials and resources, as well as teacher staffing for all of the schools in the District. Inspectors from the Ministry of Education also work closely with school principals responsible for programs taught at their schools. If we take as an example English as a Foreign Language, the teacher is required to discuss the syllabus for the course with the principal. It is up to the teacher to choose the best teaching strategies, approaches, and materials in order to provide the best learning situations for the acquisition of the language.

The principals in Israel have a great deal of authority. They can decide their school's programs, subjects and even enrollment policies for the student population. For example, if the school has a profile as excelling in Sciences, they can establish entrance criteria for students. This is a common practice for high schools in Israel, while only few elementary schools have this system in place.

ISRAELI EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

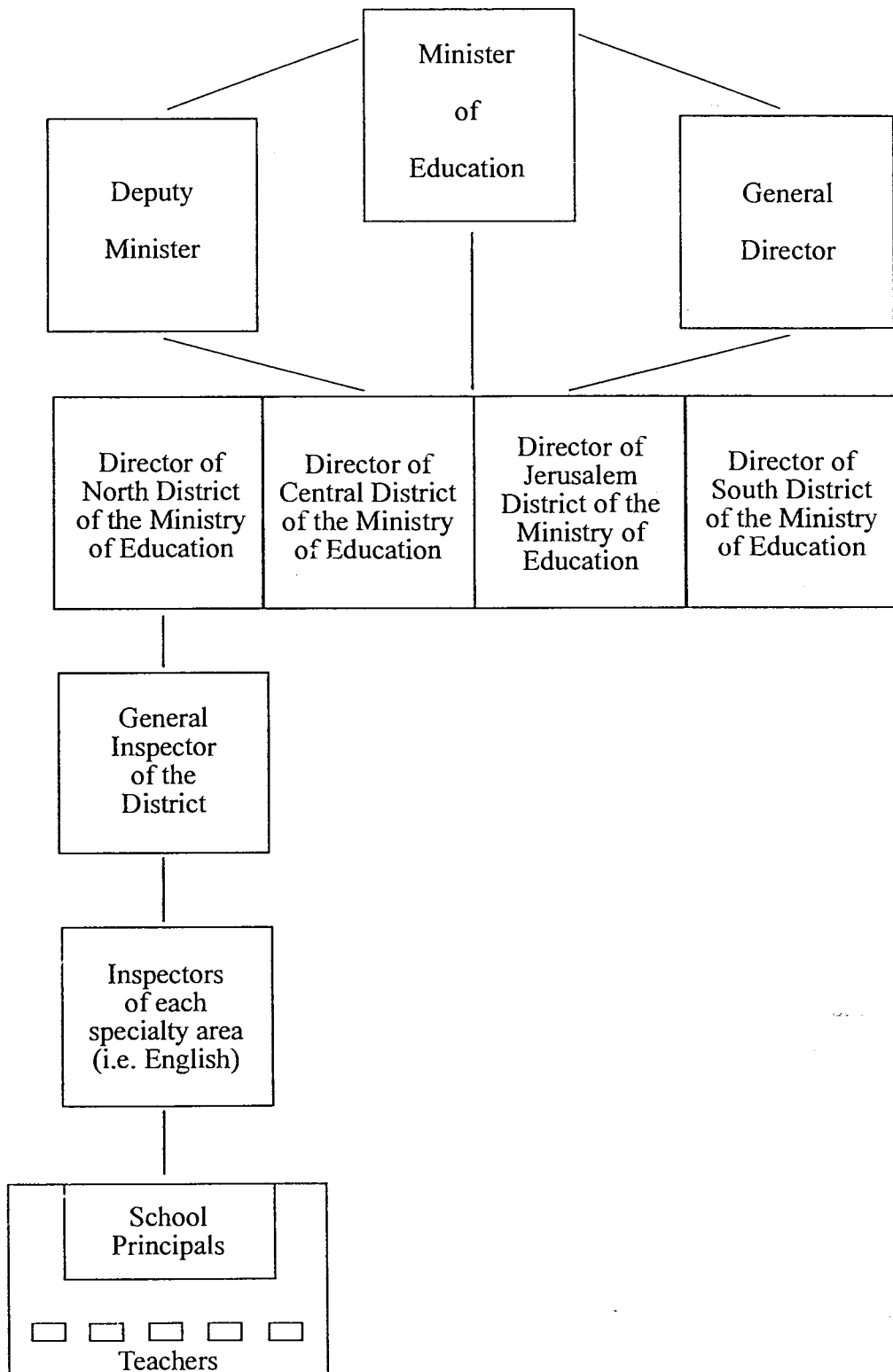


Figure 1. Other functionaries work at the Ministry level, but are not mentioned here as not being important for this particular study.

There are some other differences which warrant mention. For example, parents have to buy textbooks for their children for every school subject. The teacher chooses textbooks at the end of the school year and then provides parents with a list of required materials. In terms of teaching practices, this system has its positive and negative implications. On one hand, teachers have the freedom to try newly available textbooks. On the other hand, even if the existing books do not reflect teachers' philosophies and their teaching styles, they must follow the chosen textbook quite closely since the parents have paid for the book and obviously expect to see that it is used to its maximum.

British Columbia Educational System

In British Columbia, like in Israel, at the head of the educational system is the Minister of Education who, on behalf of the government, provides overall direction and leadership for education in the province. The Minister of Education has a Deputy Minister and a Senior Executive Secretary. They both work with several Assistant Deputy Ministers.

One of those Assistants is the head of the Education Programs Department and, under his direction, has the Director to the Curriculum Branch with three Assistant Directors.

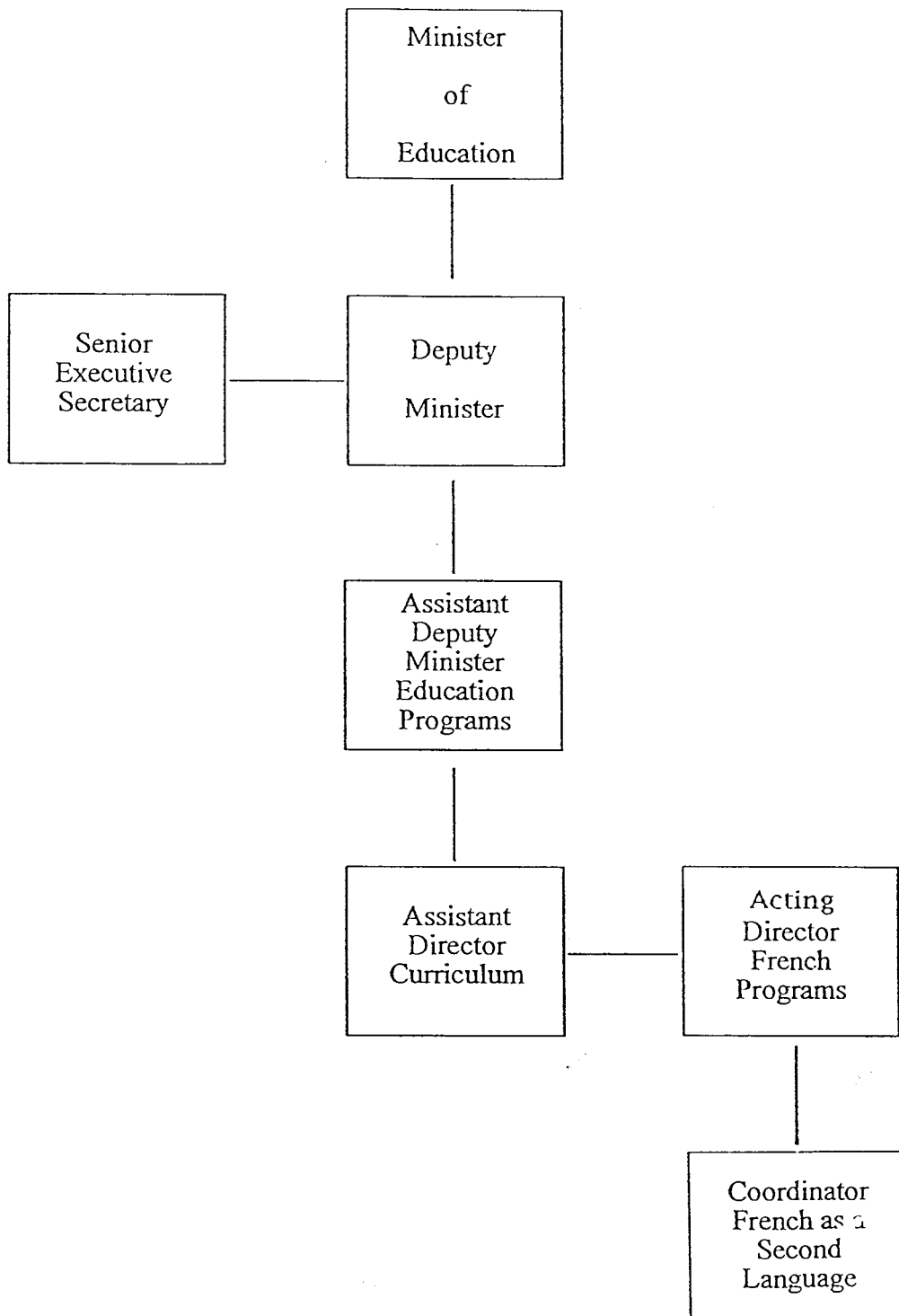


Figure 2. Not all of the Ministry's functionaries are shown in this figure as they are not pertinent for this study.

This branch is responsible for leading and coordinating the Ministry's K-12 curriculum reform agenda through the development and production of curriculum, assessment, career programs, Integrated Resource Packages (IRP), and other support materials for all subjects and areas. (Contacts in Education, 1995, p. 9)

Assistant Directors are responsible for three main strands of curricula:

1. Applied Skills and Research
2. Fine Arts and Humanities
3. Mathematics, Science and Technology

The Assistant Director for Fine Arts and Humanities works closely with the Director of the French Programs Branch. This Branch “organizes and develops French education programs in British Columbia schools and administers federal and provincial funding for Francophone education (including French Immersion, French as a Second Language, and Programme Cadre de Français)” (Contacts in Education, 1995, p. 18). The Director of the French Programs Branch has several coordinators who are, in general, classroom teachers working on contract for the Ministry of Education. One of those coordinators is responsible for the French as a Second Language and other Modern Languages curricula. The duties of this coordinator involves the preparation of curriculum and its implementation in schools around the province.

Similarities in Educational Systems of the Two Countries

In my analysis of foreign language instruction, I have found numerous similarities in the factors influencing the approaches used in second language teaching in Israel and British Columbia. Foreign language teachers “although from different countries and concerned with different target languages, nevertheless have much to share with one another” (Ervin, 1992, p. 52).

In order to make the comparative analyses of teaching foreign languages in Israel and British Columbia relevant, I have investigated the similarities between the two situations. In most schools in British Columbia and Israel, the teaching of foreign languages is introduced in grade five and the allocation of instructional time for the subject is also comparable with few variations according to the specific situations. In both countries, the student population is mixed and consists of many linguistic groups, meaning that the language of communication at home is different from the main language of instruction at school. Another comparable factor is the qualification of the language teachers. In both countries, foreign language teachers are either native speakers of the language of instruction or they have received formal education in this language. The structure of educational systems is also similar in the importance given to the study of foreign languages in public schools in both countries.

Implications on Teaching Approaches

The structure of the educational system of the country has its bearing on teaching practices. The Ministry of Education is responsible for setting and defining the educational policy which has to be implemented by local boards of education. Despite the difference in the structures of educational systems of Israel and British Columbia, the goals, educational trends and problems of implementation are similar in many respects. Programs and curricula are presented in the form of an official curriculum guide for every subject area. Curriculum policy, objectives and programs set by the Ministry of Education reflect current political and ideological beliefs of the governing party.

The Ministry's guidelines usually include a list of objectives, topics, and content to be covered during the specific time frame, as well as suggestions for learning resources and instructional materials (Fullan, 1991, pp. 272-274). Even though the curriculum guidelines are clear and the content to be covered is specific, teaching strategies and activities are not specified or developed by the government. This lack of direction on behalf of the government allows for decisions to be made by classroom teachers.

Organization of the Thesis

Chapter 2, the Literature Review, summarizes research in three main areas. The first area outlines teacher training and its implications for teaching

practices. The second presents teaching strategies and approaches to teaching second or foreign languages. The third discusses teaching materials and resources: how they are chosen and what role they play in the instructional design.

Chapter 3 describes the curricula of both countries. Comparisons are made in order to determine their influence on teaching approaches.

Chapter 4 of this study explains the methodology of this research. Teacher-participants were selected according to their specialty area and the grades they were teaching. Ministry of Education officials and School District administrators were interviewed. The interviews with all of the participants were tape-recorded and transcribed. The collected information was analyzed and conclusions are made according to the existing and pertinent research.

Chapter 5 provides the results of the study by relating collected data to research in the following areas:

1. Teacher training and its influence on teaching approaches.
2. Comparison of teaching strategies used by second language teachers in Israel and British Columbia and which of them are more effective according to the research.
3. Teaching materials and resources and how they are used in the second language classrooms.

Chapter 6 provides concluding remarks and some recommendations for further research in the area of foreign language instruction.

Summary

In this chapter, the purpose, rationale and the background of the study are discussed. Research questions are presented in the light of existing influencing factors on teaching approaches in the current instructional practices. A short review of Israeli and British Columbian educational systems are presented in order to better understand the implications of the government policies on teaching approaches.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will provide an overview of pertinent research regarding approaches to foreign language instruction. Such factors as teacher training, philosophical beliefs, curriculum design, and teaching material will be analyzed as they represent integral parts of the instructional decisions that teachers make during their daily practices. This chapter is organized to reflect the order of questions asked during the interviews. The literature is reviewed in the following order:

1. Teacher Training
2. Teaching Strategies
3. Teacher's Role in the L2 Classroom
4. Teaching Materials

Teacher Training

The work of language teachers consists of a multitude of tasks and activities. Even though there are many programs available for language teacher training, there have been very few studies done regarding teachers' conceptions of teaching second languages. Freeman and Richards (1993) examine some teaching techniques in their article *Conceptions of Teaching and the Education*

of *Second Language Teachers*. The authors of the article are trying to inquire on how teachers think about their teaching. They are emphasizing the process of “thinking and reasoning” (p. 193) rather than focussing on teaching activity itself.

Such conceptualization of teaching have been used in structuring teacher education. One of the points that the authors present in this article is that teaching is a process which generates learning as its product (p. 199).

Teachers’ actions could be based on principles and findings of others, if classrooms and learners can be seen more alike than they are different. But such a concept does not address the idiosyncrasies of a particular classroom or groups of learners, nor do they examine individual teaching styles.

Richards (1991) indicates that second language teacher education is based mostly on classroom practices rather than on research or philosophical beliefs. He points out that:

While there is a body of practice in second language teacher education based almost exclusively on intuition and common sense, until recently there has been little systematic study of second language teaching process that could provide a theoretical basis for deriving practices in second language teacher education. (p. 4)

Language teacher education is the area where research analyzes the relationship between theories of language teaching and their practical application. Another component of teacher training was studied in Israel by

Kalekin-Fishman and Kornffeld (1991), in which researchers investigated what influenced the success of training teachers of English as a foreign language.

Even though the teacher training is very similar to the Canadian model, there are some interesting elements to the Israeli case that have not been reported in the Canadian system, such as the relationship between the teacher-sponsor and the student teacher. It is concluded from the study in Israel that human relations between the student teacher and sponsor teacher are more important in determining the success of a trainee than his or her professional abilities and accomplishments. The criterion used by a sponsor teacher to determine the success of the student was simply their motivation for teaching and not so much their pedagogical and didactic skills. The Israeli study also suggests it is necessary to narrow the gap between the methodology courses and their practical applications, as well as to train students in the area of professional relationships before they get to schools.

Teaching Strategies

Strategies is a new term for methods which is, in a way, a reflection of a pedagogy which has moved away from fixed methods. It is important to view teaching procedures as flexible sets of concepts which can employ any effective lesson in order to make the teaching of the language successful. Teaching

strategies are often based on the relationship of the theories of learning processes and instructional procedures.

One of the ways of looking at strategies is described by Stern (1992) who has divided language teaching approaches into three groups of techniques:

1. Intralingual-crosslingual
2. Analytic-experiential
3. Explicit-implicit (p. 278).

The intralingual-crosslingual strategy is based on the role of L1 (mother language) in L2 teaching. In order to better understand the intralingual-crosslingual teaching strategies, Stern uses the following representation:

INTRALINGUAL	CROSSLINGUAL
L2 used as reference system	L1 used as reference system
Immersion in L2	Comparison between L1/L2
Keeping L2 apart from L1	
No translation from and into L2	Practice through translation
Direct method	Grammar translation method
Co-ordinate bilingualism	Compound bilingualism

In Stern's model, the difference between the two approaches consists in the use of the first language as reference during the process of language acquisition. In the crosslingual strategy, L1 is present and actively used while in the intralingual approach it is completely absent. Even though the

intralingual approach to L2 teaching was adopted by the majority of L2 teachers during the past forty or so years, they have always used some elements of reference to the L1 keeping the emphasis on the intralingual strategy. Now more and more educators are persuaded that a complete ban on L1 in the classroom is not a good idea. Duff (1989), for example, indicates that such activities as translation from L2 to the mother tongue involving class discussion develops a better understanding of the elements of the target language.

On a theoretical level, a L2 is built on the existing knowledge of L1 (or mother language) which is constantly used by learners as a reference for understanding and for clarification (Stern, 1992). If this is the case, both of the two approaches, intralingual and crosslingual, can be used in order to facilitate the learning process. Stern suggests that in the beginning, the comparison between the L1 and L2 and the explanations of L2 in L1 can be very useful. For instance, the reference to the mother language's grammar can facilitate the understanding of grammatical rules in L2. As the learner progresses, the connections between the L1 and L2 should be broken and the instructional periods in L2 should be longer. The use of crosslingual strategy to teach L2 is one of the ways of looking at the foreign language instruction. This, however, does not mean that the intralingual approach is not suitable for beginners in L2.

Immersion classrooms are one of those examples where L2 is taught solely by using intralingual strategies.

The importance of a decision about the intralingual or crosslingual strategies has a bearing on the consideration of objectives and content we give to a language course. If the main goal of the program is defined as the ability to master conversational skills, then the intralingual strategy seems to be the one that should be predominant. However, if the goal of the program is to develop understanding skills, then one would likely utilize the crosslingual strategy.

Despite the general acceptance that language teaching should be done mostly by using the intralingual approach, very few studies analyze the effects of one or the other strategy of language acquisition. Stern (1992) points out that a study conducted in Canada on the teaching of French as a second language concluded that the results in the proficiency in French depended on the frequency of the use of L2 by the teacher and the students. Those results indicate that the advantage of using predominantly intralingual strategy is evident when the goal of the program is proficiency in the L2 language. According to Stern, while there have been fewer studies and observations conducted in the area of the crosslingual technique of teaching the L2, there is a clear indication that intralingual strategy is more effective in the attainment of proficiency in the target language. During the last decade, the question of

intralingual or crosslingual approaches have hardly been discussed. Most language teachers do not consider the crosslingual strategies as an option in teaching approaches.

The teacher's role and the activities in the classroom are mainly defined according to intralingual or crosslingual strategies. Teaching strategies are developed depending on a particular view of the nature and goals of the target language acquisition. A significant number of factors contribute to the dynamics of the teaching/learning process and provide support for a successful language program.

Another effective language teaching strategy was described by Raz (1985) in the article *Role-Play in Foreign Language Learning*. She analyzed an experiment involving two hundred students which was conducted in six schools in Israel. The goal of the study was to investigate the effects of a role-play on the communicative competence of a foreign language learner. Tests administered before and after the experiment indicated that students involved in a role-play situation, scored significantly higher in target language competence than those not involved in a role-play.

The kind of role-play that Raz (1985) is describing in her article is obviously very different from the traditional classroom dialogues which are often removed from the student's reality, making this exercise irrelevant. In

Raz's role-play study, the learners were deeply involved in a conflict situation and subsequently felt the urge to express themselves. The language practised through role-play was easily transferable to real-life situations. During this exercise, L2 is kept apart from L1, which would categorize this approach, according to Stern (1992), as the intralingual strategy.

Cooperative learning is another intralingual strategy which is used successfully around the world. The cooperative approach enhances interaction and promotes communication in the classroom. One of the examples of the use of cooperative learning is described by Sharan (1994), who is a coordinator of teacher training in Israel. She was in charge of providing inservice training for teachers of Hebrew in the Israeli Arab schools. In those schools for years Hebrew was taught in a traditional teacher-centered way. Students learned to read and write very well, but they were not capable of carrying on a conversation. In order to change that, teachers were trained to use a variety of simple cooperative structures to promote interaction and communication.

Sharan (1994) indicates that students acquired good communication skills and were not only able to express themselves in the target language, but also developed better understanding of reading materials. This example illustrates once again the successful use of the intralingual approach to teaching of foreign language.

The list of successful strategies in teaching L2 is growing every day as teachers find other ways to make language instruction more effective. The teacher's role in the classroom largely depends on the predominant approach to L2 teaching chosen by the teacher. The next section of this thesis analyzes those roles which are assumed by the teacher according to the methods and approaches used during the instructional practices.

Teacher's Role Reflecting Approach or Method

In the language classroom, the teacher applies theories concerning the nature of language and language learning which lead to different instructional methods. Those methods, in turn, influence and change the teacher's role in the classroom.

In the communicative classroom, the emphasis is on conveying the message without concentrating too much on the mechanics of the language. Legutke and Thomas (1991) offer many activities for the communicative approach to language teaching. However, they indicate that according to many observations in the L2 teaching situations, most teachers who advocate the communicative approach are in fact doing very little in this area. The reason for such a phenomenon is that the teacher's role in the communicative classroom is completely different from a traditional role and must be well thought-out and prepared.

For example, according to the authors Legutke and Thomas, the teacher must concentrate on trust building activities and risk-taking exercises. The self-confidence and the motivation of the learner are essential for a successful communicative classroom. In order to achieve that, the teacher must provide a non-threatening reassuring atmosphere where students could feel free to take risks in an attempt to express themselves in the new language.

The teacher's role is described by Breen and Candlin (1980) in Richards and Lockhart as follows:

First, it is to facilitate communication, the second is to act as an independent participant within the learning-teaching group, and the third role for the teacher is that of researcher and learner (p. 103)

In the communicative language teaching approach, the teacher needs to make sure that all students are involved in meaningful communicative activities. At the same time, the teacher needs to organize materials and must be prepared to assume the role of a facilitator.

The communicative approach to language teaching requires the teacher to have an appropriate knowledge of the subject and the target language. It is also important for the teacher to feel confident and to allow students to act spontaneously in order to create authentic language situations. Such an approach might be threatening to some teachers' authority if they feel they do not have control of the classroom.

Among other methods of L2 teaching, we recognize the following methods and approaches: Direct Method, Active Teaching, Cooperative Learning, Audiolingualism, and Total Physical Response. Every method creates a specific role for the teacher and the learner. For example, the Direct Method, which was adopted as one of the first oral-based methods for L2 teaching, described the teacher's role in very specific terms with respect to what the teacher was "not" supposed to do. Some of these are:

- Never make a speech: ask questions
- Never imitate mistakes: correct
- Never speak too much: make students speak much, etc. ...

(Richards & Lockhart, 1994, p. 102).

In the Active Teaching approach, which is a more recent one, the teacher's main role is to engage students in learning tasks during the lesson. In order to achieve that, the teacher must give accurate directions, promote student involvement, monitor progress, and provide immediate feedback.

In Audiolingualism, the role of the teacher is very active, as it is considered to be a "teacher-dominated method." The teacher models the target language, monitors and corrects the learner's performance.

During the last few decades, in second language teaching, there has been a move away from teacher-dominated modes of teaching to more student-

centered approaches. For example, according to Richards and Lockhart (1994), in the role-play and cooperative learning situations, the teacher “abandons her directive role and the frontal set-up disappears” (p. 229). This shift requires teachers to play particular roles in the classroom. They become facilitators helping out where it is necessary, but keeping a low profile and not correcting mistakes. Work on corrections can be done in another lesson and it must be done in such a manner that it is not diminishing in any way to learners.

Many teachers develop their own personal interpretation of a method or approach, according to a specific situation and their own personality. Teachers create their own roles and often combine several methods.

Teachers’ roles are also perceived very differently by individual students. According to Richards and Lockhart, teachers’ roles also have cultural dimensions. For example, a Chinese ESL teacher’s approach is quite different from a language teacher with a western education. In a Chinese language situation, it is expected that the student will be able, in due time, to reproduce the knowledge that was presented to him by his teacher. A language teacher with a Western education focuses on individual learner creativity and encourages independent learning (p. 107).

Teachers’ roles can also be influenced by the teaching materials and resources that the teacher has to use in the classroom. In the next section, the

influence of teaching materials on the pedagogy and instructional design will be analyzed.

Teaching Materials

Teaching materials and audio-visual aids have always played a significant role in the process of foreign language acquisition. Teachers use textbooks, self-made materials, and all other products available in the field of language teaching media. In the last decade, videos and computer programs have added a new dimension to language teaching and learning.

In his article, O'Neill (1982) presents several positive points on the use of a textbook. He points out that the textbook, even if it does not have all of the elements required for the course, can be adapted according to the needs of the teacher. The textbook also allows the learner to look ahead to what is going to be covered or to look back and review what has been done. It also, says O'Neill, allows for continuity, especially in a situation where one teacher needs to replace another.

It is also important to analyze "how" the textbook is used by a teacher. For example, the same book can be used very differently by any individual teacher. One such possibility is to use the text as a framework which the learner or the teacher can adapt and transfer to their particular needs. Even

though each learner has their particular and unique abilities, a specific textbook can provide the core information for language acquisition.

It has been argued by O'Neill (1982) that the teacher needs to use the element of surprise in order to make the teaching exciting. This would not happen if students were allowed to use the textbook as they want. O'Neill claims that if the book is used to provide the support and the framework for the course, then the teacher can still have the element of surprise or suspense. For example, he says some materials can appear only in the teacher's guide and not in the student's manual.

Another reason for using textbooks is their attractive presentation in comparison to the teacher-made materials. Home-made materials may tend to break down very quickly and, even with the high-quality photocopiers, they cause enormous production and storage problems. Books are often the best suited media for representing the content.

Textbooks, according to O'Neill (1982), should be designed and organized in such a way that they will allow for improvisation and adaptation on the part of the teacher and the class. Teachers have as many different strengths, styles, and approaches as students have diverse learning styles and one single textbook will not appeal to all teachers and all learners. It is, however, possible to design a textbook that can be adapted to many teaching and learning styles. For

example, books can offer engaging stories and dialogues that can promote relevant and meaningful communication. O'Neill suggests that any conventional textbook can be used in a very innovative way.

In British Columbia, there is a system in place for the selection of learning resources. The Learning Resources Branch of the Ministry of Education assembles teams of teachers from around the province to view a variety of resources in particular subject areas and to decide which ones should be recommended for the province. The resources are evaluated in four areas:

1. Content
2. Instructional Design
3. Technical Design
4. Social Considerations

Specific criteria are given to the evaluators and each material is reviewed by at least four evaluators. As a result of this process, resources are chosen and annotated catalogues are sent to schools, allowing teachers to make decisions regarding teaching materials according to their needs. In addition, in order to facilitate the process for teachers, the Learning Resources Branch organizes regional shows which teachers are encouraged to attend.

Generally, teachers understand the need for quality textbooks, even though there may not be enough quality materials available. Ruiz (1990)

observed that the textbook, in most foreign language departments of American universities, is not only used as the basics of a course, but often is the only form of organization and sequencing. The nature of these foreign language materials has a direct effect on teaching programs as teachers voluntarily adopt the existing textbooks as a binding document telling them what and in which order to teach. Most of those books emphasize the approach of teaching language structure versus language use. In the summary of his study, Ruiz (1990) indicates that there is no shortage of Spanish textbooks; however, their organization and content are very similar to one another. They do not reflect recent linguistic and pedagogical trends.

Another study in the field of the role of learning resources was conducted by Snyder (1988) in Temple University in Israel. She examined the importance of audio-visual aids in the process of second language acquisition. Such audio-visual aids as audio tapes, pictures, magnetic boards, and games were examined. From the interpretation of the collected data, even though there was little empirical analyses available to support this, it was evident that audio-visual aids played a greater role at the beginning stages of the acquisition of the new language. According to Snyder (1988), with increasing vocabulary and a better understanding of the target language, the learner relies less on audio-visual aids. In the examples she provides, the same text with pictures

was offered to the beginner and intermediate levels. The beginners' group used the pictures constantly looking for clues to better understand the text while the intermediate group almost ignored the pictures altogether.

Summary

The review of relevant literature in this chapter illustrates a close relationship between teachers' training and teaching approaches as well as the importance of teaching materials. It is evident from theoretical studies that a teachers' education is based on the concepts of teaching and learning the language (Duff, 1989; Freeman & Richards, 1993; Stern, 1992). Successful teaching strategies are transferred into philosophical beliefs which the teacher trainee is supposed to form during the time of his/her practicum and consequently use them in his/her own teaching.

According to the research, therefore, instructional materials play a significant role in instructional designs and practical applications, thus being in turn an integral part of teachers' behaviors in the classroom.

Another important factor influencing teaching approaches is the curriculum that the teacher has to follow. In the next chapter, the curricula from Israel and British Columbia will be compared to each other and its influence on teaching approaches will be analyzed.

CHAPTER 3

COMPARISON OF THE TWO CURRICULA

Teachers' decisions about the strategies and activities they are using in their classrooms depends on the prescribed curriculum or on the syllabus designed for the course they are teaching. Thus, looking closely at both the English Curriculum for State schools in Israel and the Core French curriculum for British Columbia schools is integral to this study.

Israeli English Curriculum

The English Curriculum Guide for State schools and State Religious schools for grades five to twelve was published by the Israeli Ministry of Education and Culture in 1987 and was prepared by the English Curriculum Committee. It consists of the following twelve chapters:

1. Rationale
2. Objectives: Primary School, Intermediate Division, Upper Division
3. Methodology: The Oral Approach, the "Modified Audio-Lingual Method," Teaching Grammar, Teaching Vocabulary, On the Use of Translation, Teaching Reading and Writing

4. Some suggested Teaching Situations for Primary School and Intermediate Division
5. The Course of Studies
6. The Length of Lessons in the Primary School
7. Punctuation Model
8. Mother-Tongue Interference
9. Discourse Analysis
10. Using a Dictionary
11. Ability Grouping (“Setting”) in Primary School and Intermediate Division
12. The Grammar Program
 - Patterns for Grades 5-6 (Primary School)
 - Patterns for Grades 7-9 (Intermediate Division)
 - Patterns for Grades 10-12 (Upper Division)

The rationale of this curriculum guide represents the philosophy upon which the teaching of English in Israel is based and is articulated by the following statement in the curriculum guide: “The main aim of teaching English in Israel is to provide pupils with a means of communication with the world at large” (p. 88).

The focus on communication is the major criterion for selecting materials, methodology, classroom activities and teacher and pupil interactions. The curriculum stresses the importance of materials and themes being relevant to Israeli youth and the importance of integration of English with other academic subjects, school activities and projects such as celebrating festivals, commemorating historical events, discussing current events, and so on.

The overall philosophy of the Israeli curriculum guide can be summed up by the methodology section of the guide, which is an interpretation of the “oral-aural” approach for teaching second languages. This means that the cycle of teaching and learning has to be done through listening and speaking first, and followed by reading and writing.

Grammar

In addressing the teaching of grammar, the guide indicates the following:

Grammatical structures are learned inductively in the form of sentence patterns - model sentences based on relevant situations, which are then modified and manipulated by means of various Repetition, Completion, Substitution and Transformation drills, and then used by pupils creatively in a context of controlled communication. (p. 82)

The guide recommends not using a grammar book, but rather selecting a textbook which teaches grammatical structures integrated with other aspects of the language.

The teaching of vocabulary is structured under the philosophy of active mastery and not passive recognition. The criteria for the selection of vocabulary in the Primary and Intermediate Divisions is:

- a) the situations,
- b) pupils' interests,
- c) the frequency of the item,
- d) the productivity of the item (possibilities of its transfer and application to new situations). (p. 80)

The guide does not provide a specific list of vocabulary items to be taught.

This allows for individual choices to be made.

Reading and Writing

In the section "Teaching Reading and Writing" for primary schools, the focus is again on oral activities emphasizing that only limited pre-reading and pre-writing activities should take place during the first year of studies. Reading from a textbook will occur gradually and is meant to "reinforce speech" while writing comes later to "reinforce reading." The amount of reading and writing increases in Intermediate and Upper Divisions. Reading at those levels is divided into "Intensive reading" and "Extensive reading." "Intensive reading" is reading from a textbook and is designed to help students master new vocabulary and grammar as well as to develop the ability to read for

comprehension. “Extensive reading” activities supplement reading from a course book and include reading from newspapers, stories, novels, and so on. The guide indicates that “the ‘Extensive Reading’ materials should be increasingly interesting and enjoyable and should be of a nature that will stimulate the pupil to read it for its own sake” (p. 73).

Grouping

The next section of the curriculum guide, “Grouping,” concentrates on placing students in groups according to their abilities in language acquisition. During the first two years of study in elementary school, pupils are taught English in their heterogeneous groups or “home-class.” Beginning from grade seven, students are divided into two groups, A and B Group. A includes the more advanced group which engages in “extensive reading” in addition to the textbook. Group B on the other hand undertakes more drill work and simplified reading materials. Group C is created in the Upper Division or Grade Nine, for students experiencing difficulties in the area of language acquisition. Towards the end of the program, these students are expected to achieve the objectives of the Primary level. In the program developed for Group C, all four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are emphasized, but more as repetition and memorization than free expression. Teachers in Group C use the

L1 more during the explanations due to the weak conceptualization capacities of pupils in this group.

The last section of the guide is devoted to highlighting the specific grammar rules and language patterns which must be mastered by students at every level.

British Columbia Core French Curriculum

In the Fall of 1995, the Ministry of Education of the Province of British Columbia published the new Core French 5-12 Integrated Resource Package (I.R.P.). This package is “the result of a long revision process and reflects the influence of several movements in language education” (p. 1). One of the catalysts of the change in the British Columbia curriculum was the National Core French Study conducted in 1990 across Canada. At the end of this study, a list of results was published containing 92 recommendations under the following subtitles:

- The multidimensional curriculum
- The language syllabus
- The communicative experiential syllabus
- The syllabus of the general language acquisition
- The integrative pedagogy
- The evaluation process and the importance of teachers’ training

The main goal of the Integrated Resource Package is to provide teachers with the “practical focus - the purposeful use of the language” (p. 1).

The rationale of the curriculum guide emphasizes the importance of learning the language in order to provide opportunities to communicate in French and to better understand Francophones and other cultural groups. It is indicated in the rationale that the aim of Core French is communication, and thus the “instructional and assessment strategies emphasize the practical use of the language” (p. 1).

The Integrated Resource Package for Core French, like all other IRPs, consists of prescribed learning outcomes:

- Suggested instructional strategies
- Suggested assessment strategies
- Recommended learning resources

Grammar

Until the new French curriculum appeared, grammar occupied the central role in the syllabus of the second language. The change of grammar from the central role to a supportive role reflects such a dramatic shift for French instruction that the authors of the IRP emphatically underscored the following:

Grammar is no longer the organizer of the course or the impetus for activities, and it is no longer the main focus of evaluation. Grammar

plays a supportive role only, to clarify and enhance communication and to provide some useful strategies to facilitate communication and comprehension. (p. 1)

From this quote, it is evident that the approaches towards French instruction in British Columbia schools are to be focused around communicative tasks such as sharing and acquiring information. In the IRP, the first actual reference to grammar appears in the Prescribed Learning Outcomes for Grade Ten, where it states that the students “will use a range of useful vocabulary and expressions, and link statements in past, present and future time” (p. 58). It is presumed that these grammatical concepts need to be acquired by students in previous grades, but there is no specific indication in the curriculum guide as to when and how to do so. The IRP does not provide any references to what grammar should be taught or when it should be introduced.

Reading and Writing

The Core French IRP does not specifically address the question of teaching reading and writing in French. In the introduction to the package, we find a few references to the question of reading. The guide suggests the use of reading as one of the ways of acquiring information by using authentic reading materials such as magazines, poetry and a variety of creative works. Reading and writing are treated as means of communication and are promoted by the guide as such. In the Prescribed Learning Outcomes section, it is suggested that

the students in Grade Six should be able to: “view, listen to, and, to some extent, read creative works with visual and contextual support . . .” (p. 24).

Integration

The integration of French with other academic subjects is promoted in the Core French IRP. Since the language is “seen as a practical means of communication” (p. 2), many opportunities should be open for using French when discussing art work, music, career and personal planning. In Appendix C of the document from pages C 3 to C 14, many suggestions related to integration of subjects are given, but we find very few references as to *what and how* to integrate French with other subjects. It is not clearly indicated which subjects can be integrated and when this should be done or how to evaluate students’ work. Integration is more easily achieved in an elementary school setting as there is usually one teacher responsible for many subjects. For example, the simple routine of greeting students in French at the beginning of the day is, in itself, an integrated approach to teaching the language. In secondary school where each teacher is responsible for a specific subject area, integration is much more difficult to achieve.

The Main Differences Between the Two Curricula

The Israeli language curriculum mandates ability grouping to be made from the beginning of Grade Seven. This means that students with higher

ability of acquiring a foreign language will be given more opportunities to learn the language at a faster speed than their classmates who would be placed in the average or lower ability groups. The language teachers' work may therefore be assumed to be different in this environment as opposed to the heterogeneous groups which we have in British Columbia.

Another important difference between the two curricula is that in the Israeli guide, grammar programs from Grades Five to Twelve are specified together with the requirements for examination at the end of Grade Twelve. Even though, in the Israeli curriculum as in the British Columbia curriculum, emphasis is placed on communication and learning the language in a context meaningful to the learner, the Israeli guide has a set of references and a time frame for teaching the structural part of the language. These elements of the guide might be assumed to be very helpful for the language teacher, as they allow for the freedom to organize the course of study according to the specific situations of the individual teacher, but at the same time they provide direction and unity across the country.

The new British Columbian Core French IRP appears to have many positive directions for teaching second languages, but the curriculum is only now reaching classrooms across the province and it will take considerable time until change in the instructional approaches are evident in classrooms.

Table 1

ENGLISH CURRICULUM IN ISRAEL	CORE FRENCH CURRICULUM IN B.C.
Language as means of communication	Language as means of communication
Language integrated with other subjects	Language integrated with other subjects
Teaching grammar inductively - specific list of grammar patterns for each level	No specific recommendations for teaching grammar
Teaching reading - "intensive reading" and "extensive reading" programs	No specific recommendations for teaching reading
Grouping according to abilities	No grouping - heterogeneous groups
English curriculum established in 1977, revised in 1987	Core French IRP published in the Fall 1995

Summary

In this chapter, the two language curricula were compared in order to allow analysis of classroom practices in light of curriculum design. Teachers in both countries must follow the Ministry of Education curriculum guide and, consequently, the strategies used in the classroom depend on the objectives set in the guide. The data for the analyses will be gathered during individual interviews with Israeli and Canadian language teaching. In the next chapter, the methodology used in this study will be presented.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology followed in the present study. The purpose of this research was to compare teaching approaches used by foreign or second language teachers in Israel and British Columbia, Canada, and to analyze factors influencing those approaches.

The Site of the Study

The study was conducted in Israel, in the Central and South Districts, and in one of the Lower Mainland school districts, in British Columbia, Canada. The regions in Israel were chosen according to the availability of the participants during my research in the Summer of 1995. The school district in the Lower Mainland of Vancouver area was selected based on the typical representation of teaching personnel for any district in British Columbia, Canada, where there is a French Immersion Program (where the majority of subjects are taught in French). It was important to select a district with a French Immersion program because in those districts it was more likely that French as a Second Language would be taught by language specialists, this being one of the criteria used for selecting and matching the teacher-participants for the study.

The Participants of the Study

Three teachers, one Assistant Superintendent of the Tel-Aviv School District and the Inspector of English Education from the central region of the Ministry of Education were involved in the study in Israel. In order to match the study group from Israel, three teachers and the Consultant of Modern Languages from the same district in the Vancouver Lower Mainland were interviewed, as well as the Coordinator of French as a Second Language Program from the British Columbia Ministry of Education. (See Table 2)

Table 2

The Participants of the Study

ISRAEL	BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA
3 teachers	3 teachers
Assistant Superintendent of Tel-Aviv School District	Consultant of Modern Languages, School District in Lower Mainland
Inspector of English Education from Central Region of the Ministry of Education	Coordinator of French as a Second Language Program from Ministry of Education in British Columbia, Canada

One of the criteria for the selection of teacher-participants in both countries was their initial teaching training as foreign language teachers. They would be commonly called “language specialists.” This criterion was important because the aim of the study was to examine individual teachers’ decisions concerning their instructional practices. Furthermore, it was analyzed “if” and “how” their philosophical beliefs about teaching second or foreign languages developed during the teacher training influence their teaching approaches. Another criterion for selection was the grade level. Since the research concentrated on grades six to eight, only language specialist teachers of those levels were involved in the study.

There was no difficulty in finding such teachers at the elementary level in Israel, as from the beginning of grade four, all subjects, including the foreign language, are taught by a teacher-specialist. In most British Columbia schools, however, at the elementary school level, from kindergarten up to grade seven, all subjects, including foreign languages, are taught by one teacher. Such a teacher is commonly referred to in Canada as a classroom “generalist.” Usually, in most schools in British Columbia, French as a Second Language is taught by a classroom generalist who has usually not received specific training in teaching foreign languages. Only in the schools where French Immersion programs exist along with regular English programs, language specialists teach

at the elementary level. In those schools, teachers sometimes exchange assignments and teach some subjects in each other's classrooms. For example, a grade seven teacher might teach French as a Second Language in the English classroom, while an English teacher would teach the English component of the program to the French classroom. Those French Immersion teachers who are language specialists and who are teaching French as a Second Language in one of the school districts in British Columbia, were selected for this study. The names mentioned in this study were changed in order to protect their privacy.

Officials from both Ministries in Tel-Aviv and British Columbia, even though their titles are slightly different, have the same duties and were asked the same questions during the interview. The focus of those questions was mainly to establish who is in charge of the curriculum for foreign languages and how this curriculum is implemented in schools.

The Assistant Superintendent of Tel-Aviv School District and the Consultant of Modern Languages Department in the Lower Mainland School District have very different job descriptions. The Assistant Superintendent in Tel-Aviv is responsible for all educational programs in high schools, while the Consultant of Modern Languages in British Columbia is responsible for inservice for language teachers in the district. During the interview, they were

asked questions concerning language programs which were available and mandated in their districts.

Data Collection Instruments

Once the purpose of this study was determined, three types of questionnaires were developed. Each reflected the particular focus of the research and were designed for each individual group: the teachers, the administrators, and the Ministry of Education officials. The questionnaire allowed for a comparative analysis of the data across all ten participants.

The teachers' questionnaire examined three main topics. First, the teachers were asked about their teacher training and if they have developed a philosophical belief about the approach to second or foreign language instruction. Second, teachers' views and beliefs were explored, as well as the philosophies on which their current teaching approaches are based. They were asked to describe their classroom as either communicative or grammar oriented and to provide examples of activities illustrating that approach. In order to verify their understanding of different approaches, they were asked to comment on the frequency of the use of the target language during the lesson and to describe their own role as a teacher. The third topic concentrated on the type of learning resources they have, how they were selected, how they influence

instructional approaches, and what teaching styles they promote (See Appendix A).

The school district administrators were asked about the language programs available in the district and the policies towards new immigrants (See Appendix B).

The Ministry of Education officials were asked questions concerning curricula and teacher inservice (See Appendix B). The main foci of those interviews were to establish the decision making process concerning curriculum changes and teachers' involvement in this process. It was also important to establish how inservice for teachers is organized and how effective it is.

Procedures for the Study

Each participant was contacted individually by telephone and their involvement in this study was explained to them at that time. The time and the place of the interview were established at the convenience of each participant. Teachers in Israel were interviewed at their homes and each interview was one-to-one and a half-hour long. All of the others were interviewed at their work place including teachers in Canada with whom I have met at their schools. All participants were eager to share their expertise with me and some have asked to see the results of the study when it becomes available.

The interviews were conducted individually. They were tape-recorded and are transcribed in the thesis (Appendix C and D). Participants were given the choice of using their own names or a pseudonym. Before the recording of the interview would begin, each participant was given the questionnaire to read and time was allocated to clarify the purpose and the chronological order of questions. The participants were also invited to indicate the questions which they might want to omit because they did not feel comfortable answering them.

In most cases, it turned out to be more of a conversation between myself and the participant rather than a rigid format of questions and answers. Participants felt comfortable just talking and occasionally glancing at the questions in order to guide themselves. As Mishler (1986) pointed out, as the balance of control over the interview shifted towards the participants, they produce more narrative accounts than answers to questions. At times, it was important for me, as the researcher, to either be an active listener or an active participant. As the conversation took a natural flow, the interview acquired a more open-ended format which, according to Burgess (1984), became a “conversation with a purpose” (p. 102). This situation enabled me to explore topics emerging during the interviews and to answer some questions from the participants.

Methodological Considerations and Limitations of the Study

The major source of information upon which I draw the conclusions in this study are the transcriptions of individual interviews as well as my background knowledge as a foreign language teacher in both countries. When analyzing the results of this research, I had to take into consideration that during the interviews the participants might have been influenced by some external factors, such as social desirability as described by Skehan (1991).

If answers to particular items can be constructed by respondents as “the desirable answer,” then some people will provide this response even if it is not true. (p. 11)

In my case, such a situation could occur with the question concerning the teacher’s role in the classroom. It is understandable that from the choices of “researcher,” “facilitator” or “authority” given in the question, it is more acceptable to be a researcher or facilitator than it is the authority. All teacher-participants answered this particular question choosing the “desirable answer” and indicated that their role in the classroom is a researcher or a facilitator. This information was received by the researcher from the interview, and not from the actual observations in the classrooms which limits data analyses and the interpretation of results.

Interviewing is one of the primary data collection techniques in ethnographic research. This technique is important as it provides the researcher

with “a means of clarifying, elaborating and/or validating hypotheses” (Smith, 1991). Erickson (1986) argues that a “more deliberative approach to field work enables the researcher to frame research questions and seek relevant data” (p. 140). The researcher’s prior knowledge of the setting provides the perspective for formulating and organizing questionnaires and the actual process for conducting the interviews.

For this study, according to Sevigny (1981), the “triangulated inquiry” approach was used where “multiple operations [are employed], each of which is important and holistically related to others” (p. 79). First, the literature review about the influencing factors on teaching of L2, provided the necessary background in order to formulate the process for the data collection and analysis. Second, the actual data collection was conducted through interviews and their transcripts. This was followed by the last stage of the study, data analysis. During this process, the patterns of teachers’ behaviors and decisions were determined and linked to the existing research in the related field. The study is concluded by offering the reader some suggestions for practical applications.

Summary

In summary, the methods used in this study to analyze and compare teaching second languages in Israeli and British Columbia schools consisted of

gathering data through interviews. This allowed the researcher to do the analyses and conclusions which will follow in the subsequent chapters of this thesis.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This study was concerned with the comparison of the instructional approaches used by Israeli and British Columbian foreign language teachers and the main factors influencing those approaches. In order to examine teachers' behaviors in the classrooms, data on teachers' beliefs regarding the strategies and what factors encourage them to use those strategies were gathered. In the previous chapters, the educational systems and the language curricula of both countries were described and compared. The factors influencing teaching approaches were established.

This chapter undertakes to examine the major findings from this present study which compares the instructional approaches in foreign language classrooms in Israel and British Columbia. The parallel between the influences of these approaches will be drawn and related to research existing in this area.

Teachers Training and Its Influence on Teaching Approaches

Language teacher education has an influence on teaching in terms of the decision-making process, skills, attitude and awareness (Freeman, 1989). In the following section, the teacher training of the participants of this study will be analyzed.

Teachers from both countries have received formal post-secondary education in their respective target language of instruction. All three Israeli teachers involved in this study hold a degree in English language and literature which they obtained before beginning their training as teachers of English as a foreign language. Two were born in Israel and speak Hebrew as a mother tongue while one was born in Russia. Her principal language of communication now is Hebrew, but her mother language is Russian.

The teachers in British Columbia have degrees in French language and literature as well as training as second language teachers. One of these teachers was born in Canada and speaks English as her mother language. The second is a native of South America and Spanish is her mother tongue. The third is a Francophone born in France and trained as an English second language teacher in England. All six teachers from both Canada and Israel are completely fluent in the language of instruction and feel very comfortable conversing in those languages. They are also experienced teachers with ten to twenty-five years of classroom teaching practice.

Their training as second language teachers was very similar in many respects even though it was obtained in very different environments. As Richards (1990) points out, in second language teaching, most teacher education programs “typically include a knowledge base, drawn from linguistics and

language learning theory, and a practical component, based on language teaching methodology and opportunity for practice teaching (p. 3).

During the interviews, the teachers had difficulty identifying second language methodology courses they have taken during their training. However, most of them did their teaching practicum in second language classrooms. For example, Judith in Tel-Aviv responded to the question of what specific courses for teaching English as a foreign language she had taken, by:

Yes, I had specific courses by Professor L[. . .] and he was teaching us how to teach English grammar. I do not remember any more specific courses but I do know that I went through special training to become an English teacher.

Michelle, in British Columbia, had a similar comment about her training as a second language specialist:

I was trained in a very traditional way. I was trained how to teach English language in France, so I was trained as a second language teacher and I did my training in England in a very traditional way which means grammar exercises and literature and that is the way I learned English myself, so I was trained in a very traditional way . . .

Contrary to what Freeman states, it was found that it is common that training does not make a significant impact on present teaching practices. Most second language teachers develop their own teaching approaches during their years of practising the teaching profession.

It also has been observed that the teachers who have participated in this study do not hold the same philosophical beliefs now as they had when they

were receiving teacher education. Some do not even remember if they had developed any philosophy on teaching second languages during their training. Presently, their philosophy of teaching second languages is based on contemporary views of language acquisition and has been derived from their practice, observations and expertise. Mona, in her conversation with me, shared the following observation:

I received my training in Calgary, Alberta and have a B.A. in French and B.Ed. in teaching French as a second language in high school. . . . in terms of methodology and teaching during my training, I remember that my professor taught the different approaches that were used at that time for teaching foreign languages. To tell you the truth, I did not really develop any philosophy during my teacher training but it sure happened when I started to teach.

Some of the participants in this study, being trained in a very traditional, grammar and memorization method, observed later in their teaching careers that this was not the best or the most effective way to teach a foreign language. Furthermore, modern trends of communicative methods in the second language teaching are dominating language classrooms around the world and are making a tremendous impact on philosophical beliefs of all second language teachers. For the last two decades, the teachers have also noticed that the shift in the second language pedagogy from teacher-centered to learner-centered instruction has brought positive results in language acquisition.

Although teacher training did not originally make a significant impact on current teaching approaches of second language teachers in this study, it is evident that they have developed some strong philosophical beliefs about instructional practices they presently use in their classrooms.

Instructional Designs

In order to determine what influences the decisions made by teachers regarding teaching approaches, the participants of this study were asked questions concerning the frequency with which they use the target language during instructional time, students' activities and the role they assume in their classrooms. According to Richards and Lockhart (1994), "it is necessary to examine the beliefs and thinking processes which underlie teachers' classroom actions." The first area that was investigated during the interviews was the instructional time allocated to the target language and the importance contributed to that by teacher-participants.

The amount of the target language used by the teacher during classroom time influences the level of comprehension and attainment of the language by students in the class. It has been observed by some researchers that the predominant use of the target language during the lesson constitutes "good language teaching" (Fanselow, 1987; Stern, 1992). However, as Stern (1992)

pointed out “the time dimension of learning activities is curiously left unspecified in most observation schemes.”

Legutke (1991) states that one of the “important functions of the teacher” in the second language classroom is being a “provider of language” (p. 300). In this environment, the teacher is the only language model that the students have. Teachers help students to expand their language skills during instructional time and, according to Met (1994), they respond to students directly, or as they observe student-to-student communication teachers provide opportunities for linguistic interactions. She also points out that it is up to the teacher to make the language of instruction accessible to the students’ level of comprehension by accompanying their speech with many contextual clues thus maximizing the time of the exposure to the target language.

Although it seems evident and logical to language teachers that the longer are the periods of instructional time in the target language, the more beneficial it is for the learner, there is very little study that verifies this assumption. The teacher-participants of this study in Israel and British Columbia made similar comments regarding the time they remain in the target language during the lesson and the activities they do using this language in the classroom. For example, Yael, who teaches English as a second language in Grades six to eight in Tel-Aviv, made the following observation:

From Grade seven, the students are divided into levels of abilities. In the level A, we use less Hebrew because the students are more advanced. In this classroom, I would only use Hebrew for five minutes out of one hour lesson and I only would do that if I need to explain something totally new.

Polina, who teaches the same grades as Yael but in Beer-Sheva,

answered to this question by saying:

Generally I would try to do everything in English and use different ways to explain and if the students still do not understand, I will try to find one of the students who would be able to explain it in Hebrew. It is important that they would be exposed to English, so even in the weaker classes, I say it first in English and then if they do not understand, I would do it in Hebrew.

The third teacher in Israel, Judith, when commenting about the time and activities in the target language said:

It depends on the level. Very often, I speak English and takes time for them (students) to understand, but at the same time they get used to that and they start to understand from the early age. Hebrew is important to use sometimes if they do not understand something or if I have to explain something new in grammar. Because our grammar is so different, it is very important for me to know that they understand the grammar rules.

From the comments made by all three teachers in Israel, it is evident that they teach students who are placed into groups of ability: Group A is more advanced in language acquisition and Group B is lower. It has become evident to me during my research that most schools in Israel operate in this system and only few now are starting to change to the heterogenous education. The positive or negative influences of ability grouping on teaching practices will not

be discussed directly in this present study as this was not one of the questions that was to be investigated. It is important, however, to keep this fundamental difference in instructional settings of both countries in mind for the rest of this comparative analyses.

Michelle, who teaches French as a second language in one of the Vancouver Lower Mainland schools, has a heterogeneous class like all the other teachers in public schools in British Columbia. Out of three teachers from the study group in British Columbia, only Michelle is a “subject teacher” as she teaches French in a secondary school, from grades eight through twelve. Students in her class come from different elementary schools and have different levels of exposure to French in their elementary years. Most of them have very little experience with the French language due to the limited knowledge of French by their generalist grade six and seven teachers. Her answer to the question of how much she relies on L1 (English) during her lessons was as follows:

In Grade eight, for example, I do not start right away in French. I do not want to traumatize the students from the beginning, so I use English to explain the rules of the class and then English slowly disappears, but I do use English at the beginning, I would say, for at least two months until they (students) feel comfortable.

I only use English if I come up with something abstract, for example, a grammatical rule and only in the case of where I know for sure that I will not be able to demonstrate it in any other way. Then I would use English and I would explain this abstract rule but it is quite

rare. I am referring here to Grade twelve. In Grade eight I do not teach grammar rules because grammar is taught in the situations.

Miriam, another teacher in British Columbia who is a grade four French Immersion teacher, teaches also grade six/seven French as a Second Language class, made these comments during the interview:

Initially when I started, I was speaking much more French and then I realized that what they (students) needed was more repetition of the same structure . . . Slowly I realized that their level of understanding was quite low and I needed to go very slowly and start from their previous knowledge. It is also very difficult to teach new vocabulary because I would see those students only twice a week and sometimes the whole week passes before I can continue something that I just started. It would be much easier to teach the language if I would see those students at least three times a week or even more. The lessons are also very short - 40 to 45 minutes.

Mona teaches in the same setting as Miriam but in a different school where she mainly teaches grade seven French Immersion. She provides French instruction in the English classroom in exchange for English being taught for her class.

I would like to use a lot of French in the classroom but I was afraid of scaring the students with a lot of new vocabulary, because to begin with, they all have this kind of negative attitude towards French so first of all I have to work in order to show them that learning the language can be fun and useful so my instruction is after a few months during the beginning of school and is probably half in English and half in French. I see that my students get used to some of the terminology and just respond to that automatically in French. For example, we do not call it 'exercise book' in English anymore, they all know when I say 'cahier'. So the part of the lesson that I always do in French is probably opening exercises when we do calendar, weather and my directions are usually in

French. When it comes to new materials, I do have to explain in English or when directions are more complicated.

It is evident that all teachers from Israel and British Columbia who participated in the study shared the same beliefs about the importance of maximum exposure to the target language per instructional time. It is clear from their comments that they always try to do their best in conducting the lesson in the target language and to use L1 only in the situations where the comprehension of concepts was involved. On the theoretical level, even though they never made the parallel themselves, those teachers seem to use two methods of teaching foreign languages: the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) and the Cognitive Code Method. In both methods, the assumption is that the teacher is a model of the language and through the language transmission the learning will be achieved.

In further analyses of this study, it will be evident that the methods mentioned above but a few out of a wide range of strategies and approaches used by language teachers in their classrooms. The next section will examine what role grammar plays in the instructional approaches described by the participants in this study.

The Role of Grammar and Language Curriculum

For the last two decades, the question of the amount and time allocation for grammar exercises during the first stages of the language acquisition was

discussed by many researchers (Breen, 1983; Larsen & Freeman, 1986; Legutke & Thomas, 1991; Krashen, 1981; Stern, 1983). The importance given to this aspect of language learning automatically creates teaching approaches chosen by the teacher in the classroom. If the knowledge of grammar rules and their use in the target language is the prime goal of teaching, then the lessons will be structured around grammar drills and exercises. If, on the other hand, the main goal is to express oneself in the target language, then the activities will concentrate on communication. The debate of how language teaching should be done is not new to contemporary linguists. As Pennycook (1989) points out, “arguments for the inductive teaching of grammar were made by Saint Augustine in the 4th century, Francis Bacon in the 17th century, and Henry Sweet in the early 19th century” (p. 599). During the time that the transition from structural grammar approaches to communicative language teaching was reflected in research, language teachers in many countries were developing and using effective teaching techniques based on their own philosophical beliefs, observations and personal experience.

This present study was concerned with two major questions in this area of investigation: first the participants were asked to identify their classrooms as grammar or communicative oriented, and second, they were to describe teaching strategies and activities illustrating those approaches. Before looking

at the responses given to those questions by the participants of this research, it is important to establish what constitutes grammatical or communicative approaches of language teaching. While there is no doubt which elements are constituting the communicative method, there is really no such name describing grammar-oriented teaching. Pennycook (1989), in discussing the terminology of method, approach and technique, indicates that:

. . . before the emergence of communication as a term around which a new claim to Method could be built, it was argued that the Audiolingual Method had been replaced by the Cognitive Code Method based on rationalist/deductive procedures and transformational grammar. (p. 604)

Furthermore, Pennycook (1989), in the same article, points out that the relationship between the theories about pedagogy, language learning and classroom practices are highly complex. Pennycook points out that in their daily practice, teachers make instructional decisions based on curriculum and textbooks available to them.

Yael's comment about the approach she uses in her classroom was as follows:

I really try to make it communicative. Grammar represents a big part of our curriculum, but I think that understanding is more important. After presenting the grammar rule, I let the students practice it. It depends on the situations, sometimes we do dialogues or exercises in the activity books. For example, I give them pictures with different situations and they have to describe those pictures using either adjectives or verbs in a specific form according to the focus of the lesson.

Polina described communicative activities she does with her students as learning of vocabulary in order to prepare them for reading texts. Her grammar exercises are based on the text and writing compositions and her primary goal is to teach the reading. She says: “nobody actually knows exactly how to teach communication, but a lot of methods develop from what works.” Judith, the third participant in Israel, also expressed the feeling that there is too much grammar that is prescribed by language curriculum as it is described in Chapter 3 of this study. She also made an interesting comment regarding communicative activities:

I have some classes where I have only ten students and it is fantastic, and I can do all kinds of communicative activities, and then I also have classes with twenty seven students. In those situations, it is more difficult and the lesson would look more like reading together or more teacher directed activities. I do some communicative activities, but it is much more difficult for me to control what the students are actually doing in the small groups.

Teachers in Canada responded to those questions without hesitation identifying their classrooms as communicative. Here are their comments: —

Mona. Of course my class is communicative. I try to do grammar, but I think that the students of that age (Grade six/seven) do not understand the way the language works. They understand some of the simple things but in general grammatical rules are too complicated for them and they do not understand how it works in the language. They can certainly do specific exercises following a model, but they can not use the acquired concept in a conversation or while writing a composition, so I do very little grammar and only in the middle and at the end of the year.

Michelle. Oh yes, my classroom is communicative. I do a lot of group work, interactive activities. For example, a group of three, where they have to ask each other a question and at the end of the activity, each of them is going to tell what they have found from their friends. I use those activities very, very often. We also do a lot of skits, theatre and we do oral presentations.

Miriam. My class is more communicative. I want my students to be able to express their ideas. Sometimes they work individually, for example, when they have to say the words and sentences they learned. Sometimes they work in pairs when they are doing a little dialogue, but it is difficult for me to supervise what they are doing, so I do not use that very often. Sometimes I ask them to do a little sketch and then it is group work, but that only happens towards the end of the year when they have a little bit more vocabulary.

From those interviews, it is evident that all teachers in both countries are favoring the communicative approach of teaching the language over the grammatically-structured one. However, there seems to be an agreement about some concerns expressed by the teachers from both countries regarding the large classrooms which prevents the effective practice of the target language during the instructional time. It is also evident that teachers in Israel are more restricted by their demanding curriculum which specifically indicates which grammatical concepts must be acquired at the end of each grade. As Richards (1991) indicates:

Grammar has traditionally had a central role in language teaching. Particular theories of grammar and theories of learning associated with them have provided justifications for syllabuses and methodology in language teaching for thousands of years. Despite the impact communicative approaches have had on methodology in recent years, the bulk of the world's second- and foreign-language learners continue to

learn from materials in which the principles of organization and presentation are grammatically based. (p. 144)

Another interesting observation can be made regarding the activities that teachers provided as examples of communicative activities they do in their classrooms. All six participants talked about learning vocabulary, doing dialogues, sketches and oral presentations of some sort. However, communicative activities are defined in research as meaningful oral situations where the students feel the need to express themselves in the target language (Freeman & Richards, 1993; Krashen, 1983). Even though language teachers around the world recognize the benefits of the communicative approach of language teaching and learning, it is still only at its beginning stages of the development of effective communicative strategies. Such strategies may include active, real projects where talking in a target language would be the essential component of successfully accomplishing a task or the interaction is initiated by the learner in order to seek information of their interest. Enright and McCloskey (1985) point out that the best language learning occurs when activities are designed to allow children to inform, persuade and ask for relevant information as well as to demonstrate to students the purpose of their language acquisition.

X The elements of communicative strategies should be provided in the language curriculum in order to facilitate teachers' implementation in classroom

activities. The curriculum has to reflect the classroom practices and cannot be just a list of grammatical concepts and vocabulary that has to be learned during a specific time (Breen & Candlin, 1980). The Israeli language curriculum is much more restrictive in terms of grammar as it contains a specific list of verbs, grammatical structures and language patterns that must be taught during each year (See Chapter 3 of this study). Such curriculum has its direct influence on teaching practices which becomes evident during the interviews with all three teachers in Israel.

The curriculum in British Columbia promotes a much more communicative approach and suggests to teach grammar when it is necessary to enhance or to facilitate communication. Even though this curriculum has just started to reach the classrooms across the province, language teachers are already using communicative approaches more than grammar-oriented ones.

Some teaching approaches and strategies often require teachers to assume a different role in the classroom. In the next section of this paper, the teacher's role and its implication on the language classroom will be illustrated.

Teacher Roles

It is indisputable that the teacher is responsible for the learning process. With new directions in language teaching, the role that teachers assume in the classroom is also changing. When teaching consisted of grammar-dominated

language lessons, the instruction was teacher-oriented. The activities consisted of repetition and work which came directly from the textbook. The control of each student's activities during every minute of the lesson was one of the important tasks of the teacher. In short, such teaching was referred to as "teacher-centered" where the teacher acts as an authority in the classroom. In such situations, teachers were often obligated to follow "an imposed syllabus or undertake a task which does not engage the learner" (Legutke & Thomas, 1991, p. 291).

The role of the teacher in the communicative classroom includes a different set of responsibilities such as observations, reflections on the learning process, experimentation and research of new techniques and materials. Engaging students in meaningful communicative language activities in the classroom require the teacher to be an active participant in the lesson. Teachers need to be more flexible and encourage students' initiatives and risk-taking by providing a positive and supportive environment. Those new roles emerge as "teacher-researcher" and "teacher-facilitator."

Legutke and Thomas (1991) describe the teacher-researcher as the one who is involved in personal and professional development in order to "improve learner and teacher performance." A teacher-researcher needs to identify the focus of investigation or to formulate the research question and then to develop

the method for data collection. It is important for those teachers to share their findings and results with colleagues and in this way become a living example for their students. Furthermore, such engaging, investigative processes on the part of the teacher might bring positive changes to the language curriculum as will the improvement of the learning resources.

Another role that the teacher assumes in the communicative classroom is one of facilitator of the learning process. In this model, the teacher ensures the active participation of every student in the class, provides feedback and alters the instruction according to the needs of students.

The participants of this study were asked to identify their role as a teacher in their language classrooms. The choices in the question were as follows:

- teacher as an authority
- teacher as a facilitator
- teacher as a researcher

All six participants from both countries have identified themselves as facilitators and researchers. When they were asked to explain what they actually mean by choosing those descriptors and by providing examples from their classroom practices, they referred to such actions as “trying something,” “reflecting,” “changing” and “adapting.” Those elements represent some qualities of a

teacher-researcher, however, such important elements as recording, researching and sharing were absent from their activities. It is also evident that maintaining discipline and keeping control of student activities in the large classrooms is one of the main concerns voiced not only by teacher-participants of this study, but many language teachers thus preventing them from using more innovative teaching strategies and assuming more often the role of an authority.

The teacher's role and instructional designs often change depending on the availability of the teacher learning materials and resources. In the next section, the influence of teaching materials on the syllabus of the courses and classroom practices will be analyzed.

Teaching Materials

When new trends in teaching are infiltrating into curricula and the classrooms, the publishers are trying to follow with the development of new teaching materials. However, even after a certain period of time when the resources are finally available on the market, they are still often unavailable for classroom teachers due to a number of factors which will be discussed later. Thus, teachers must continue to teach by using outdated materials causing them to execute their teaching strategies according to the style of textbooks available to them in their classrooms at that time.

The findings of this study demonstrate considerable differences between the two countries in teaching materials. First of all, teachers in Israel are responsible for choosing the textbooks for their students and the parents purchase those books. In British Columbia, teaching materials are paid by school districts and even though teachers are involved in the process of selection of learning resources for their classrooms, it is still not a well-established process. Secondly, Israeli language curriculum has remained almost unchanged for the last two decades allowing authors and publishers to create materials which correspond to the curriculum and to the needs of classroom teachers. In British Columbia, French Language curriculum has undergone major changes over the last five years. New teaching materials are increasingly available through the annotated resources catalogue published by the Ministry of Education, but it still will take some time for it to reach all the classrooms around the province.

Only one teacher participant of this study in British Columbia, who teaches in the high school, expressed satisfaction about teaching resources she has at her school, as she participated in the selection of those materials herself. Two other teachers stated during the interview that the textbooks were so bad that they do not use them at all. Teachers in Israel were relatively satisfied with their selection of textbooks. They all agreed that the materials for some grades

are better than for others. It was a common feeling from all six teachers that they all have to use their own resources which they have created in order to supplement the commercial materials available to them. Met's (1994) comment about teacher-made materials very much reflects this situation. She writes:

While teacher-made materials have the distinct advantage of being designed to address the needs, abilities, and cultural background of students, they do require a considerable investment of teacher time and energy . . . (p. 167)

Instructional materials play an important role in planning teaching and learning activities. At times, the textbook becomes a syllabus for the course especially if the textbook reflects the current methodology adopted by classroom teachers. Miriam's answer to the question if the textbook represented the syllabus of her course, was as follows:

Yes and no. Yes because it gives me some direction as to what I am expected to teach because I know that this is the material decided by the School Board as the basic textbook for the subject, but at the same time, I don't use it enough for it to be my teaching program.

Such a comment would be very common among British Columbian language teachers, especially before the recent publication of the new curriculum.

Teachers in both countries have indicated that they also use such resources as videos, magazines, story books, newspapers, games and computers. Clearly, all resources available to the teacher are utilized to

maximize the language acquired by every student even though students may have different learning styles.

Summary

In this chapter, the results of the study were presented in the following areas:

- teacher training and its influence on teaching approaches
- instructional designs
- the role of grammar and the curriculum
- teacher roles
- teaching materials

From the information provided by teacher-participants, it is evident that all of the above components play an integral role in daily teaching practices in the classrooms in Israel and British Columbia. Language teachers, even though working in such different environments in two different continents, have more commonalities in their instruction than differences.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents conclusions of this present study and some recommendations for further research. The research was conducted in the following areas:

1. Which factors influence teaching approaches used by teachers in second language classrooms in Israel and British Columbia?
2. What are the similarities between the instructional strategies?

First, the results of this study will be summarized and then the effects of politics, motivation and media on language instruction will be discussed. The chapter concludes with suggestions for further related research.

Summary of Influences and Similarities

The study concentrated on five factors which contributed to the influences on second language instruction: teacher training, instructional designs, the role of grammar, teacher roles and teaching materials.

1. Teacher training - Teacher training received by all six participants in Israel and Canada was very similar in the sense that it all involved formal education in the target language and foreign language pedagogical techniques. Despite the training, none of the participants appeared to

develop a strong philosophy about teaching a foreign language during the training. Their philosophical beliefs regarding the acquisition of language were developed in their classrooms and those beliefs influence their daily teaching approaches.

2. Instructional designs. The participants from both countries believe that the more time during the lesson they spend utilizing the target language, the better the results in students' language acquisition. They all express the feeling that it is vital to at least attempt the explanation in the target language and then go to L1 to help the understanding of concepts.

3. The role of grammar. In the area of the role that grammar plays in the instructional approaches, slight differences were observed due primarily to the role attributed to grammar in the language curricula. Even though teachers from both countries believe that we should not concentrate on grammar in the teaching of languages, the teachers in Israel are obligated to teach specific grammatical concepts prescribed by their curriculum.

4. Teacher roles. Teacher roles in the classrooms of both countries depend on teaching situations and context of the lesson. Concerns about large numbers of students in the classroom and their effects on language acquisition were voiced by teachers from Israel and British Columbia. Teachers indicated

that with more students in the classroom they have less opportunities to allow students to practice the language actively.

5. Teaching materials. Teaching materials play a major role in instructional designs. Israeli teachers must closely follow their textbooks as they are accountable to the parents who are not only paying for those books, but also want to see them being used to their maximum. Textbooks in Israel better reflect the curriculum and consequently respond better to teaching styles and students' interests. The majority of textbooks and other learning materials for French as a Second Language courses in British Columbia are published in France and Quebec, and thus they do not correspond as well to the culture and specifics of the program as the textbooks published in Israel.

My research indicates these factors influence teaching approaches and consequently, the results of language acquisition. Along with the factors analyzed in this study, other conditions play an important role in teaching and learning processes.

Other Effects on Language Acquisition

Despite all the similarities observed in the teaching approaches in the two countries, classroom practices and the results of language acquisition among the student population are quite different. I have observed that in Israel all high school students understand much more English than the students in

British Columbia understand French. This observation inspired me to do this study and to investigate what teaching approaches use Israeli foreign language teachers that are better than the ones we use in British Columbia. After completing this study and concluding that the teachers in both countries are doing almost the same thing in the classroom (except with minor differences), I looked at other external factors influencing the results in language acquisition.

It is a well known fact that language teaching has always been very political. The foreign language chosen for the instruction at schools depends on to which language the government gives priority. In the case of this study, it is evident that the Israeli government has the closest economic and political relation with the United States of America, thus making English one of their foreign languages taught at school. The other language which is as important to the government and taught as much as English in Israeli schools is Arabic. However, the attitude and the importance given to English is much greater than to Arabic. In fact, to be proficient in English in Israel is regarded as a ticket to success and prosperity. We, in British Columbia, do not have that kind of attitude towards French, because of the long-term political problems. On the contrary, the latest political problems with the possibility of the province of Quebec separating from Canada adversely affected the popularity and the importance of teaching and learning the French language.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) have investigated empirically the influence of motivation and attitude on second language acquisition. Since then other research has been conducted to find the relationship between the motivation and the results of the language acquisition. A few years ago, at the Tel-Aviv University, a study which examined two important variables—cognitive/academic proficiency in L1 and motivation towards English as a foreign language—concluded that the motivational factors play an important role in the learning process of a foreign language, thus explaining better results of the language acquisition in Israel (Olshtain, Shohamy, Kerap, & Chatow, 1990).

Foreign or second languages must be taught and learned in the context of its culture. Belanger (1995) points out that learning the language without the knowledge of the culture will slow down the process of acquisition. In Israel, English media, as well as American businesses and lifestyles surround and influence the daily life of every student. Television series and special programs are adapted and created in the English language for young children and adolescents. In British Columbia, not all the teachers who teach French know enough about the French and French Canadian culture. The cultural context which exists in Israel and is absent in British Columbia provides another factor in the language acquisition.

Another component which can be attributed to the success of language teaching in Israel is the fact that foreign languages are taught at all levels by a teacher specialist. Such teachers possess adequate knowledge not only of the target language, but also the teaching techniques necessary to maximize the acquisition of the language. In British Columbia, however, language specialists can be found on a regular basis only in high schools while the teaching of the foreign language is mandatory from grade five in elementary school.

All of these factors contribute to better acquisition of a foreign language and explain better language attainment by Israeli students. Other research is needed in order to verify the above statement such as students' performance in language skills.

Implications for Further Research

With the growth of the importance of the subject French as a Second Language, more studies should be done to investigate which factors most influence the acquisition of the language in the classroom circumstances in British Columbia. This study compared teaching approaches of teachers who are foreign language specialists, however, teacher specialists represent a very small number of teachers involved in teaching French in elementary school.

First, it would be interesting to research teachers' attitudes towards the task of teaching French while having a limited knowledge of the language

themselves and also the implications of such language instruction at the elementary level on students' attitudes and language attainment in high school. Such a study should concentrate on cognitive implications of teachers' motivation on students' achievement of language acquisition.

Another interesting area of research would be to analyze the type of experience non-specialist teachers had while learning a foreign language and how their personal experience influences their teaching. Another area to explore would be how they can cope with the language curriculum oriented on communication while they have limited communicative skills themselves.

According to the Ministry of Education officials in Israel and in British Columbia, the problem of inadequacy of language teachers exists in both countries. The way this problem is addressed is very different. In Israel, language teachers are encouraged to engage in professional development and by doing so thus gain points to improve their salary. In British Columbia, professional development is not reflected by salary unless it is formal university courses. However, a teacher's salary in British Columbia is approximately four times higher than an Israeli teacher in the beginning of their careers. The monetary rewards for Israeli teachers works in the way that they not only arrive at the same salary scale, but they quickly surpass it. Which approach is more

effective and brings better classroom practices would be another interesting area to investigate.

In summary, all of the above factors: teaching a second language by a non-specialist, teaching a new communicative curriculum, and involvement in professional development are the topics that need to be further investigated in order to help provide better instruction in language classrooms.

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APPENDIX A

Appendix A

Questions for Interviews

With Teachers

Teacher Training

1. What type of teacher training have you received as L2 teacher?
2. On what type of methodology and approaches to teaching L2 was your training based?
3. Did your philosophy as an L2 teacher coincide with your training program? If so, how?

Teaching Strategies

1. How much instruction do you do in a target language?
2. In your instruction of L2, how much do you rely on L1?
3. Which part of your lesson, if any, is always conducted in L2?
4. In your opinion is it important to use L2 as the language of instruction in the classroom, and why?
5. Do you describe your classroom as communicative or grammar oriented?
6. Provide some examples which would indicate your teaching strategy.
7. In what situations are your students practising the target language in your classroom?

8. How would you describe your role as an L2 teacher: as a facilitator, an authority, or a researcher and learner?

Teaching Materials

1. What type of teaching materials do you use in the classroom?
2. What importance do teaching materials play in your instructional approach?
3. Are you satisfied with the textbooks that you are using in the classroom? Explain.
4. In your opinion are your students enjoying the textbooks you are using in the classroom?
5. Does your textbook represent the syllabus for your course?
6. What other learning materials do you use aside from the textbook?
7. What teaching styles does the textbook promote?
8. How are the textbooks chosen?
9. Does the textbook respond to the objectives and is it coherent with your philosophy and methodology? If so, how?

APPENDIX B

Appendix B

Questions for Interviews with the

Ministry of Education Officials

1. What are your responsibilities at the Ministry of Education?
2. How is the curriculum being determined?
3. How is the new curriculum or the curricular changes being implemented at schools?
4. Who chooses and what is the process of selection for the learning resources?

Questions for Interviews

with the School Board Officials

1. What language programs are available in your District? Which of them are mandatory and which if any are optional?
2. What is the policy towards new immigrants in terms of foreign language instruction?

APPENDIX C

Appendix C

Interviews in Israel with Teachers

1. Yael in Tel-Aviv - The Teacher

Q: What grade are you teaching?

A: I teach grades 6-9, but English is taught beginning in grade 4 and now parents want us to start to teach English from grade 3, but it would be the program paid by parents and not by the Ministry of Education.

Q: How much is the target language, in your case English, used as the language of instruction?

A: From grade 7, the students are divided into levels of abilities. In the level "A", we use less Hebrew because the students are more advanced. In this classroom, I would only use Hebrew for five minutes out of one hour lesson and I only would do that if I need to explain something totally new. I was taught that in order to facilitate the learning process, I have to use Hebrew first to introduce the new concept so that the students would understand better English. When I have a good class like this year, they were very good and in grade 6, I already spoke 80% of instructional time in English. Two years ago in the same setting, I used only 60% of English, so it all depends on abilities of my students in the classroom.

Q: Do you teach any other subjects at school?

A: No. I teach only English, even though I could teach other subjects, but I don't want to because I like teaching only English.

Q: What part of your instruction is always conducted in English?

A: Sometimes I realize that I did not explain something in Hebrew and the students are asking me questions because they didn't understand what I was saying. I feel that they need to understand the materials in their mother tongue and then in the foreign language. This is especially important when you have weak students in your class. So, to go back to the question, no, it is not good to speak all the time in English in the classroom.

Q: I understand that English and Hebrew grammar are very different.

How do you teach the grammar?

A: For example, I am explaining to the students that in Hebrew language if you say "any omed" it means both "I am standing" and "I stand." So, by giving this example, I am pointing out that in English the sentences are constructed very differently. I find that by explaining one example in Hebrew, students' understanding is much better. Another example that I am using often is to demonstrate that in Hebrew we don't use a verb in such a sentence as: "any mora" meaning "I am a teacher."

Both concepts of the verb and the article are very difficult to understand. Very often I just put “a” with “teacher” making it one word “ateacher” and I concentrate on “am.”

Q: Would you describe your classroom as communicative or grammar oriented?

A: Yes, I really try to make it communicative. Grammar represents a big part of our curriculum but I think that understanding is more important.

Q: How do you do communication in the classroom?

A: After presenting a grammar rule, I ask the students to practice it. It depends on the situation; sometimes we do dialogues or exercises in the activity books. For example, I give them pictures with different situations and they have to describe those pictures using either adjectives or verbs in specific form according to the focus of the lesson. For example, one of the pictures that I use represents a disorganized room which a boy left before going to school in the morning. The student's task was to describe what was needed to be done in the room by using the verb “should.” Most of the time this is an oral task and they work in pairs, sometimes I ask them to do the same thing, but in writing and individually. We also have at school a special English Room. The problem is that this is one room for four teachers and we have to take

turns for taking students in there. In order to make my class communicative, it is very important how the classroom is organized by the home room teacher. If the students are sitting in the groups, it's easier to organize communicative activities. However, if they are sitting in the rows, I don't like to change that as it usually takes too much time from my lesson, so I don't do that unless it's a very special lesson that I have planned. Here are some other tasks that I ask the students to do: compare the menu from one restaurant to another and say which one is better and why, to compare cars using pictures from magazines, etc. I try to make them understand that grammar is a part of the language and I try to create particular situations for use of the grammar rules.

Q: How would you describe your role as an L2 teacher: as a facilitator, an authority, or a researcher and learner?

A: I think it's everything. I like being a researcher in my classroom. I try some things and then I think and I change them. I often realize after the lesson that my students were not able to accomplish some tasks because it was too difficult and they didn't have enough knowledge in order to enjoy the activity. For example, I gave them in the exam a joke. I know it was not difficult in terms of vocabulary, but 90% of the class didn't understand it because they were so stressed in the test situation.

Now I know that I can't include jokes in the tests. In other situations I must be an authority in my class, but in the ideal situation I would want to be always a researcher.

Q: *What type of teaching materials are you using in your classroom?*

A: I use books, exercise books, video tapes, computers and the materials that I make myself: flashcards, worksheets, etc.

Q: *How do you use computers?*

A: I take my grade 8 class to the computer room and I ask them to use the word processor in English. It is difficult in the beginning for them to use the English alphabet and write text. Such a task helps them to review the vocabulary from previous lessons and they can also do editing. When they finished everything, they exchanged their stories among them. It turned out to be a very good exercise.

Q: *How do you use the television in the classroom?*

A: We have a special television program which is based on our grade 8 textbook, or if there is something that I can use as a special project.

Q: *How much do you use a textbook and do you rely on it as being your guide for the course?*

A: If the book is good, I use it a lot, but if not I add or change, or adapt the textbook. I can not use the book at all because parents are paying for the books and they want to see those books to be used to the maximum.

Q: What teaching styles do the books promote?

A: Some books are better than others because they have attractive illustrations and interesting stories for students. Some books have good activities such as jigsaw, dialogues, etc. and some, especially for younger students, are not so good, so I have to do a lot myself.

Q: What type of training did you receive in order to become the English teacher?

A: I received my diploma at the Tel-Aviv University in English literature and then I did my training as a teacher at the Levinsky College of Teachers.

2. Polina in Beer-Sheva - The Teacher

We have new types of exams at the end of Grade 12. This exam is quite difficult and includes oral tests and written tests and the students being able to be exposed to the media has nothing to do with what they have to know in order to pass the exam. They can listen to the television and they can go to the States or another English speaking country and they can maybe communicate but this

is still not sufficient for them to be able to pass the exam. You can look at what is required.

Q: What type of strategies and materials do teachers use in order to prepare the students for this type of exam?

A: First of all, we teach English five times a week and there is a lot of speaking and reading activity and not as much writing although they write because they are required but not that much. They have to write a composition. We do not spend as much time on writing as on reading and speaking and I will tell you about some of the strategies we use for reading. Nobody actually knows exactly how to do it but a lot of methods develop from what works.

Q: How do you achieve speaking or communicating in the classroom? Is it done with the whole class?

A: I will tell you how we do it. We first do it like a pre-reading activity. We look at the text and we have different levels of text. We also have different levels for students. We start teaching English in the fourth grade and then we teach the A B C and mainly the vocabulary and a little bit of speaking. I really don't know because I don't teach those grades. When they get to grade 5 they start to read what they have acquired orally in Grade 4. When they get to Grade 7 they already

know quite well how to read. We do oral activities before they start to read; for example, I bring an article from Jerusalem Post about something that has happened in the country and we talk about that. I write a topic in the middle of the blackboard and I make it like a sun and I write all of their ideas that jump into their heads and then I write their ideas on the blackboard.

Q: What happens if they don't know how to say it in English?

A: I usually prepare the vocabulary ahead of time and I give them the vocabulary to study before the discussion. It also helps for them to watch the news on the television. If you are not prepared and have no ideas written on the paper, you just start from writing the words on the blackboard.

Q: Does everybody participate in the lesson?

A: I ask everybody and if somebody doesn't have something to say, I tell them that every intelligent person has a mind and has something to say and if the student is low then we are saying the words together and the idea is not to memorize the words but to use them in the context so that they can write down the ideas.

Q: Do you continue to go with the words that you have used on the blackboard from your brainstorming activity?

A: Yes, that is right. What I do sometimes in the upper grades or with more advanced students, we group the ideas and what we do here is we often group the students in groups of 4 or 6 and what I am asking them to do is to develop their ideas and to write their ideas into forming some type of paragraphs, that way you also teach them how to write a composition and then I bring the article.

Q: Alright, how do you actually teach reading?

A: All articles are divided into paragraphs and I ask them to read those paragraphs.

Q: Do you use a jig-saw approach?

A: No. I don't like jig-saws and I'll tell you why - it makes a lot of noise. I do it only if sometimes somebody comes to watch a lesson. I will tell you what I do. I tell them that they must read the first sentence of the paragraph. It gives them the idea of what the paragraph is going to tell us about which again gives them an idea of what the main idea is all about. You see, each paragraph has a main idea. This main idea is either in the first sentence, last sentence or the middle of the paragraph so what I am doing is I am teaching the technique of finding the main idea. The main idea of each paragraph is giving them the idea of this whole thing and before that, we provide them with the vocabulary and

sometimes I give them a list of words which they have to find in the dictionary. We also teach them the parts of the speech, the way how to construct the sentences. Using the vocabulary words that they prepare for the lesson and their knowledge of the speech, I ask them to read the article and it is usually done silently. In the weaker classes, we read it out loud because when they read it silently they might mispronounce the word and not understand the meaning. The next step is to work on the questions. For example, multiple choice questions. In that situation, they have to choose the answer and we teach them to be able to prove their answer. Since those questions are formulated the way that they are quite confusing, we ask the students to identify the part of the question which they chose as the main part to find the answer. In the whole text, we also teach the students the role of each paragraph. For example, introduction, continuation or summary. Reading those kind of articles teaches them how to use the correct sentence construction and how to use actively the vocabulary that they have learned. In the lower grades, we used to have, before, groups A B and C. Now, all students are in the heterogeneous classrooms and it is very difficult to teach those kinds of classes.

Q: How much instruction do you do in English and how much in Hebrew?

A: If it is a weaker class, then you do it in both languages but generally I would try to do everything in English and use different ways to explain and if the students still do not understand, I will try to find one of the students who would be able to explain it in Hebrew. It is very important that they would be exposed to English so even in the weaker classes, I say it first in English and then if they do not understand, I would do it in Hebrew.

Q: Is there any part of the lesson that you always do in English?

A: Everything is in English unless it is a specific exercise where they have to do the translation.

Q: Would you say that your classroom is grammar oriented or communicative?

A: Never grammar, it is communicative. You see, fashion changes. We used to teach a lot of grammar but now grammar is taught through reading. I teach grammar inductively. I give a lot of examples and I ask the students to observe the examples and find the rule. Then I explain the rule. First of all, they have to understand and then I ask them to apply the rule because grammar is so different.

Q: *Who makes the decisions about the curriculum?*

A: It is done at the Ministry of Education.

Q: *Who at the Ministry of Education decides about the curriculum?*

A: The Chief Inspector. I have an example of the curriculum and I can give it to you. There are also teachers and former teachers who participate in writing the curriculum.

Q: *Are those teachers practising teachers that they pull out of the classroom to work on the curriculum?*

A: No way. Those are the people who work just at the Ministry of Education. The books that we have in the classrooms are designed according to the curriculum. All of the books have to be approved by the Ministry of Education.

Q: *How do you feel about the curriculum? Do you feel your curriculum is too demanding?*

A: No. The curriculum is fine, except the part when we have to prepare the students for the exams.

Q: *Is the curriculum helping the teachers or making the teacher's life more complicated?*

A: Not complicated or easier, just keeps you in shape so it tells the teachers what to do because otherwise, God knows, how they will prepare the students for the exams.

Q: Do you feel that your curriculum is too restrictive? Does it tell you to teach too much grammar?

A: At the higher level, it is more restrictive and we teach the students how to pass through exams. We also have this literature program that we have to teach.

Q: Do you feel that from Grade 7 on, the English teachers are teaching under the pressure of preparing the students for this final exam at the end of Grade 12?

A: No. Actual pressure comes in Grades 11 and 12. We teach a lot of different genres of literature, poetry, novels, drama.

Q: What type of teaching materials do you use in your classroom?

A: We have a lot of companies that produce different types of books and the teachers get different catalogues from different companies, so we have a wide variety of choices.

Q: Would you choose a book that would go with your curriculum?

A: All of our books are created according to the curriculum and all of them must be approved by the Ministry of Education.

Q: Who, exactly, at the Ministry of Education is approving those books?

A: I do not know. In our case, the Ministry of Education chooses a variety of books for each level.

Q: How much do you use textbooks in the classroom?

A: Most of the time it is to assign some homework but I personally bring a lot of articles.

Q: So do you bring a lot of additional materials to the textbook?

A: Yes, I do.

Q: Do you use video cassettes?

A: Yes. I use video cassettes and also computer programs and some books have video cassettes with them as well as audio tapes.

Q: Are your textbooks usually designed in a way that they represent a specific teaching approach?

A: In a way they do because they do not contain any more specific or just grammatical exercises so surely grammar is taught but is not essential— it is done in the context and not as a drill.

Q: So you do not have grammar as a drill anymore?

A: No, we do not but it is funny, we used to.

Q: When did it change?

A: Lots of years ago. I don't even remember. At least 10 years ago.

Q: *What type of teacher training have you received?*

A: I graduated in one of the universities in Russia with two majors - English and Education. In Israel, there is a different system. You can finish the teacher college to be a teacher for elementary school but you have to finish university to be a high school teacher. After the college, you can teach up to grade 6 and after university you can teach from grade 7 up to grade 12 but teachers, after the college, can upgrade themselves while they are working.

3. Judith in Tel Aviv - The Teacher

Q: *What type of teacher training have you received as L2 teacher?*

A: I have graduated from the University of Jerusalem and my major was English literature and Hebrew literature.

Q: *Did you have some specific courses for teaching English as a foreign language?*

A: Yes. I had specific courses by a Professor Livingstone and he was teaching us how to teach English grammar. I do not remember anymore specific courses but I do know that I went through special training to become an English teacher. I believe that kids should start learning teacher at a very young age and it should be done by different activities

and not through any kind of drilling. The language should be a part of their life.

Q: *Is this something that you were taught?*

A: No. I have developed it. I developed it through a lot of years. I have been in this business for 25 years.

Q: *How much instruction in your classroom do you do in English?*

A: It depends on the level. Very often, I speak English and it takes time for them to understand but at the same time they get used to that and they do start to understand from the early age but Hebrew is important to use sometimes if they don't understand something or if I explain something new in grammar. Because our grammar is so different, it is very important for me to know that they understand grammar rules.

Q: *Do you describe your classroom as grammar or communicative?*

A: Well, it depends. We have a lot of grammar that is prescribed for us to teach in the curriculum from the Ministry of Education and we have to cover all of this curriculum with which I very often do not agree. For example, in some of the books we have a lot of grammar and I do not think it is necessary, especially at the lower grades.

Q: *How does the Ministry of Education check and do the check, what you are doing in the classroom?*

A: Well, it is evident especially in the case where the students are transferred from one school to another if they are not prepared and do not know and are not at the level that they are supposed to be so teachers and parents can compare and they can verify where the student was before.

Q: Who designs the curriculum?

A: It all comes from the Ministry of Education.

Q: How do you know about the curriculum? Do you have a book? Do you receive new instructions?

A: Yes, we have a book. Here, you can look at the book.

Q: Is the book in English or in Hebrew?

A: Half and half. It gives us a specific vocabulary, specific sentence structure and grammar that we have to teach at each level.

Q: What kind of teaching strategies do you use mostly in your classroom?

A: It really depends on the individual child. For some children it is so difficult and they are so much stuck on Hebrew that they cannot make connections and if I do not translate, they do not understand anything but I do try to leave or do less in Hebrew and use more English, but for me the most important is the individual child. Everything is based on their own rate and ability.

Q: *How do you deal with that in the classroom when you have 30 students?*

A: It is very difficult but most of the time I go over the same material in different ways. Sometimes I have a group of children that are going to read something. Meanwhile, I am explaining something else to another group.

Q: *How would your ordinary classroom look if I walked into the classroom?*

A: It all depends again. I have some classes where I have only 10 students and it is fantastic and then I have others with 27. In those situations, it is more difficult and the lesson would look more like reading together or more teacher directed activities.

Q: *In a classroom with 27 students, do you do any type of communicative activities such as dialogues?*

A: I do some but it is much more difficult for me to control what the students are actually doing in the small groups.

Q: *What type of teacher materials do you use in the classroom?*

A: I choose from a variety of things that the Ministry of Education approves.

Q: *Do you know who is involved at the Ministry of Education in the approval of those books?*

A: No, not really but the thing I do know is that the book has to be approved.

Q: *In your teaching, do you rely a lot on the textbook?*

A: Not always even though I do try to find the right book for my style but what I do, I add to it. I add my own materials which I create myself. Again, it depends on the individual students. If the student weakness is in a specific area which the book does not address, I provide for that student some additional materials. For example, for some grammar exercises or specific vocabulary I have lots of games and I create their spelling test in a funny way so I have a lot of materials that I have made myself.

Q: *Do the students enjoy the books that you have in the classroom?*

A: It depends. Some books are better than others.

Q: *Do you use computers?*

A: Sometimes I do but it is very difficult to find a specific program that would answer to my needs and the needs of the student. We do not have that many computer programs and are still very limited in that area. We also do not have enough computers in the school. It is probably one

computer for two students. If I find that using computers would be the best way to teach something, I would use a computer. I find that it is more beneficial for weaker or average students to use the computer program. Very often, I ask the students to bring something from home and we use concrete things to learn the vocabulary. For example: I would ask them to bring fruits or vegetables and we would learn those names in English and then eat the salad. They also taste different things and learn the words to describe the taste, texture and colours.

Q: Do you use TV and videos in your classroom?

A: No, usually I do not because it is very difficult for me to have a TV and video in my classroom.

Q: Do your textbooks contain specific objectives and are they usually in the students' textbooks or the teachers' guide?

A: Yes, we have objectives and they are usually in the student textbook. We have very few teacher guides accompanying our programs.

Ministry of Education

Ofra Inbar - Inspector of English. The Ministry of Education, the Tel-Aviv

District

Q: I have a few questions that I would like to ask you.

- 1. How is the curriculum being determined for English instruction?*
- 2. How are the changes in the curriculum implementation done at the school level?*
- 3. Who decides and what is the process of choosing the learning materials?*
- 4. How is teacher training and in-service organized?*

A: Our curriculum is from 1987 and it is being updated already. It has goals and scope and sequence and the skills that are emphasized in this curriculum are communicative. Communicative activities are promoted throughout the curriculum as well as reading skills are emphasized. Reading is one of the most important components and there are also specific skills that are indicated in the curriculum, especially grammatical forms that need to be taught at the level of elementary school, junior high and senior high and that contradicts the initial communicative approach. The teachers see the structure and they teach

according to the structure. That is why the existing curriculum needs to be changed and advised and communicative approach should be made as the main goal of the curriculum because the existing format is not acceptable for all the teachers. The teachers have access to the curriculum and receive in-services but at the same time they often get confused which part of the curriculum should be more emphasized in their teaching. Our curriculum now is not very user friendly and the new curriculum that is going to be developed will reflect a truly communicative teaching. It will be more useful for a larger population. As far as specifics such as grammatical structures and lexicon - it needs to have its place in the curriculum but not the emphasis on it. Our text books are written according to the existing curriculum. We have an incredible amount of textbooks coming out every year but all of the publishers are following the line of the curriculum. Teachers' conception is that their curriculum is represented by textbooks. It really should not be that way. Teachers should be able to go to different sources and not follow the textbook as closely as they do and it is a very faulty aspect taking the textbook as their curriculum. We still have a lot of teachers who are following traditional ways of teaching. They are teaching the same way as they were taught. Often teachers also are

restrained by the matriculation exam at the end of Grade 12. A lot of skills need to be taught in higher levels in order to prepare the students for this exam while in elementary school, we see the change and much more activities are oral oriented and the textbooks are reflecting those approaches. Teaching styles also depend on classroom population, textbooks, levels in the classroom. Hopefully, all of the teachers and I won't say all, will see new approaches and will try to make it more experiential teaching. We still have a long way to go and we still have a huge gap between the teacher and the curriculum which is not bridgeable. The way that today is, is that you take an average teacher and this teacher never had a look at the curriculum, maybe only during training and not after that.

How do we supervise the curriculum? It depends. First of all, we have seminars. There are courses which are selected by the Ministry of Education and those courses have to apply to the people being trained as teachers. The trainees have to take a variety of subjects - for example, computers for being computer literate, teaching in the classrooms and it is not just the methodology, it is evaluation, reading comprehension, different strategies. Hopefully, all of those teachers, after universities and colleges, have basics and know what it takes to be

a teacher. Now we also make sure that their level of English is good enough for them to go into the classroom. That is what we should have under normal circumstances and that is what we are aiming for. What happened in the last few years is that there has been few developments. First of all, tremendous demand for English as a Foreign Language in Israel. The understanding from the public is that the better you know English, the more successful you are. There is also parental pressure to start teaching English as early as Grade 4 and even earlier, causing us to start English instruction from Grade 3. Some of them actually even like us to start English from Kindergarten. This is on one hand - on the other hand there has been certain swaying away from the teaching profession. People are not so interested in going into teaching, the kids are more difficult discipline-wise. Parents are also very involved and the pay is very, very low average. Therefore, people with a BA in English, after being certified as teachers, either do not start to teach at all or drop out of teaching after a few years and go elsewhere which creates a lack of English teachers. Now, we have special programs that were initiated by the Ministry to draw people back into teaching. Last year, for example, we were lacking about 50% of teachers before the beginning of the school year so when we have a lack of manpower

situation, of course we are not as demanding in terms of qualifications. If we have people that will go into the classrooms, we let them stay on and teach even if they do not have enough qualifications. What we do have is a lot of inservice in order to upgrade their skills and we are offering a lot of courses such as teaching heterogeneous classrooms, drama for English teachers, how to teach literature in a high school and other courses. People who take those courses get credits but in order to get those credits, teachers have to be certified and this is another motivation for people to get their certification for teaching English. We also have lots of programs offered in order to receive this certification. That is, now we are trying to cope with the problem. We used to initiate regional testing which created a lot of fear among the teachers and was not worth all of this effort. We are now initiating the reading program for Grade sevens because our research is indicating that it is the most effective age to improve learning in English. A lot of resources are going into helping the average kids. This is not happening so much in Tel Aviv but in places like Jaffa where we have a special project running where we try to give to teachers, more time and we have another teacher assisting them during the instructional activities.

What else? We are trying to introduce computer programs which has been our goal for the last few years using the computers for teaching English and there are a lot of programs available now. We also have a lot of video programs, some of them are television programs initiated by educational television. The idea is that the kids are cooperating around computers, they get data about a certain topic, video clips, songs, texts and they have to put all of that together and start a portfolio and to present it on the computer. The programs are new and have been piloted in some schools in Tel Aviv. Another thing we are trying to do is to provide additional help for grade sevens, non-readers. We are taking the students that cannot read Grade 7 and giving them additional help outside of their regular classrooms and sending them back to join their classrooms after their reading skills have improved. With that, we have special training for teachers to provide those special programs for students. It is important for teachers to be aware of the special needs – which is the situation in many regions in Israel.

We are also encouraging the companies to produce materials and different types of teaching aides such as newspaper articles for the lower levels as well as video programs and texts for special needs. In schools we are trying to organize English rooms where we can store all of the

available materials for easier access for classroom teachers and for the students who would be able to go to those rooms individually or in groups.

Grade Seven is the first year in Junior High and we have students coming to those classrooms from different areas so we have different levels of preparedness in those classrooms because of kids' backgrounds and so far up until two years ago they were placed in different levels. The new policy of the Ministry of Education, not only for English, is to place the kids into heterogeneous classrooms and to abandon the mainstreaming. Teachers have rebelled miserably against this policy because they find it very difficult to teach in those kinds of situations and they go back and forth from heterogeneous to mainstreaming. That way, they feel that they can cope better and when they have heterogeneous groups, they are smaller in size and they exist only for Grade 7 and 8. In Grade 9, we go back to mainstreaming. A lot of workshops are offered for teachers to learn the techniques of teaching in heterogeneous classrooms.

Q: Who usually sits on the Committee deciding the curriculum?

A: I can tell you that there are people from the Ministry of Education, myself, trainers from Teacher Colleges, people from training seminars, people from universities and people from General Planning Committees.

Q: Do you have classroom teachers involved in curriculum planning?

A: Yes, we try to involve some teachers. Sometimes we observe that some of our teachers are trying to use “immersion” method of teaching English as a Second Language. It is not a total immersion, but partial. We have a problem with that in Israel with a strong opposition to this approach from Hebrew academy who fear that the quality of the Hebrew language is deteriorating because of all of the English words used in everyday situations. They fear that it will worsen the situation. So what we are trying to do now is to allow teaching some non-academic subjects such as Art in English in Elementary School but we have to be very careful to teach the same subject in equal amounts, in Hebrew. I would be interested to know more about your immersion programs in Canada as well as the results of your research. Could you please leave me your phone number and send me some more information as well as your new curriculum guide when it is available.

Interview at the School Board, Tel-Aviv Central District

1. Lea Rosenberg - Assistant Superintendent of Tel-Aviv School District

Q: What are your main responsibilities at the board office?

A: I am responsible for all high schools in Tel-Aviv District. I am coordinating academic programs in all schools and I make sure that all students are placed into schools according to their individual abilities. I also supervise the implementation of the curriculum and we work together with several inspectors such as languages, sciences and math, religious studies, etc.

Q: What languages are offered in your schools?

A: All students are learning besides Hebrew which is the main language of instruction, they have to take English and Arabic. They start both languages in grade five and must pass the grade twelve governmental examination in order to graduate from a high school and to receive their diploma.

Q: What is the policy towards immigrant students? When are they expected to join the foreign language classes?

A: All immigrants are placed in the Hebrew intensive language classes. They remain there as long as they need to learn the language to allow them to function in the regular classes at their academic level. When

they are in their regular classrooms, they are also expected to start learning the foreign languages. Usually with Russian immigrants and also others, they want to start learning English as soon as possible.

APPENDIX D

Appendix D

Interviews in British Columbia and

Lower Mainland School District with Teachers

1. Michelle - The Teacher

Q: What type of teacher training have you received as an L2 teacher?

A: I was trained many, many years ago about 28 years ago in a very traditional way. I was trained how to teach English language in France so I was trained as a second language teacher and I did my training in England in a very traditional way which means grammar exercises and literature and that is the way I learned English so I was trained in a very traditional way but my philosophy involved because I was trained for three years in audio visual methods. Then I switched into much more active methods which is communicative methods.

Q: So if we look at the teaching strategies, how much do you teach in the target language?

A: In Grade 8, for example, I do not start right away in French. I do not want to traumatize the students from the beginning so I use English to use the rules of the class and then English slowly disappears but I do use English at the beginning, I would say, for at least two months until they feel comfortable.

Q: *How much do you rely on English to teach French?*

A: I only use English if I come up with something abstract, for example, a grammatical rule and only in the case of where I know for sure that I will not be able to demonstrate it in any other way. Then I would use English and I would explain this abstract rule but it is quite rare. This is in Grade 12. In Grade 8 I do not teach grammar because grammar is taught in the situations.

Q: *So, after presenting the situation, you go away from that and you synthesize a grammatical rule?*

A: Only if it is needed. I am aware of our student population. Most of them are left brain and they like to be organized and they like the structure of the formal grammar lesson. They like it and they learn that way so I don't think that we can do it too much in one direction and I do a little bit of everything which is my own style, basically.

Q: *Which part of your lesson is always conducted in French?*

A: Any active part or any group activity is always conducted in French. I give instructions in French and they go on in that activity.

Q: *Is it important for you and why?*

A: It is important because I do believe in Krashan's theory of the input and shower of the language - the more drops the more you will absorb. I

very much believe in that and it also forces the kids to pay more attention because they have to understand. I think that English should be used only when needed.

Q: *Is your classroom grammar or communicative oriented?*

A: Oh yes, my classroom is communicative.

Q: *Could you give me an example of one of the activities that would illustrate that your classroom is communicative?*

A: I do a lot of group work, interactive activities. For example, a group of 3 where they have to ask each other a question and at the end of the activity, each of them is going to tell me what they have found from their friends. I use those activities very, very often. We do a lot of skits, theatre and we pretend that we are so and so and also oral presentations.

Q: *How would you describe your role as an L2 teacher; as a facilitator, an authority, or a researcher and learner?*

A: I would see my role as a facilitator. In other words, I give them the tool and when they have this tool in their hands, they have to use it. I am only here to give them something and then they go on their own. Of course I correct them when they do something wrong but I do not see myself as an authority.

Q: What type of teaching materials do you have in the classroom?

A: We have “Entre Amis” and “En Directe” and we have this material for all of the grades from 8 to 12 and all of this material suits my style.

Q: Does the whole district buy into those programs?

A: Yes, we all do. Some schools have the program from Grades 8 to 10 and they are keeping the old program for Grades 11 and 12.

Q: What importance do teaching materials play in your instruction approach?

A: A lot because we are given so much material to choose from and this is wonderful which is the way it should always be to have more materials to choose from. I have been experimenting with this new program and I use it for Grade 8 as experimental materials before everyone else so I have been using the program for four years but by the same token I don't think the teacher should be a slave of the teaching material. You still have to be able to adapt it to your own style and you have to be able to change if you do not feel comfortable about it. When this program, “Entre Amis” was not available, I was creating my own material and I never used “Passport.” I could not stand this program. I was so happy to get rid of it.

Q: *Are you satisfied with the textbooks?*

A: Yes, because it is a very rich source of materials and is presented in a very attractive fashion. The kids like it and it is done the way that the teachers are happy and when teachers are happy, everyone is happy. I understand that you were in a group of people who evaluated this program "Entre Amis."

Q: *Do you think other teachers are enjoying these materials?*

A: I think so even though for some of them, it represents a transition from the traditional way of teaching into more communicative because they had this old program for so long and they were used to the old worksheets and grammar drills. Some of the students that we have are very shy and it is difficult for them to talk in the beginning but then they get used to it and participate more.

Q: *Does your textbook represent the syllabus for your course?*

A: Yes I guess so because we do not have our new curriculum yet and from what I know "Entre Amis" represents, very much, the new program.

Q: *What other learning materials do you use besides the textbook?*

A: Of course we are lucky here with all this technology. I use films, videos, computer programs. We have so much materials in this new program we really do not need any additional materials. Sometimes I

use some authentic documents such as newspapers, magazines. With all these new materials, we have so much that I don't really have to dig and create new files and new materials. I just do not understand some teachers who would complain about this program. We have everything in it.

Q: Who decided to buy this program?

A: At the Board office, we had a meeting of Department Heads from all of the Secondary Schools. We discussed and evaluated the different methods and finally we thought that this one was the best from all of them. It was not a decision of one person but all of us.

Q: Were you given some kind of training workshops to facilitate the use of this program?

A: Not for myself. I started by myself just by reading Teacher Guides, but now workshops are available that we can attend.

Q: Does the textbook respond to the objectives? Is it coherent with your philosophy and methodology?

A: Yes, of course.

2. Miriam - The Teacher

Q: Where did you receive your teacher training?

A: I graduated from S.F.U. seven years ago.

Q: Was there any specific philosophy during your teacher training regarding Second Language Teaching?

A: What I remember during the practicum was that teachers wanted to make connections between the language and the child's real experiences so building the connections was very strong so all of the brain-storming activities were directed in the way that the ideas come from the children.

Q: This seems to be a general approach, but do you remember anything about specifics in terms of teaching the language? Was that a direct or more open approach, was it grammar oriented?

A: I think it was a much more communicative approach than grammatical. The teaching was more holistic, whole language approach.

Q: Do you teach French as a Second Language now and what grades?

A: I teach F.S.L. to Grade 6 & 7.

Q: How much instruction do you do in a target language?

A: Initially when I started, I was speaking much more French and then I realized that what they needed was more repetition of the same structure so they needed me to repeat the same things over and over so that they

would be able to repeat the same things over and over so I was forced to use a lot more English because I think also due to the age of the students they need a lot of quick responses and I started to use a lot more of what they already knew so that I was able to build the new materials on their previous knowledge. Slowly I realized that their level of understanding was quite low and I needed to go very slowly and start from their previous knowledge. It is also very difficult to teach new materials because I would see those students only twice a week and sometimes the whole week passes before I can continue something that I just started. It would be much more easier to teach the language if I would see those students at least three times a week or even more. The lessons are also very short - only 40 to 45 minutes.

Q: *During the lessons, what kinds of activities do you do?*

A: I use an eclectic approach and use themes such as sports, clothing, cars and I use my own materials. I do a lot of phonics which the program does not require but I feel that the students need to know their phonics in order for them to read French and learn how certain sounds work. For example, when I give them a few words I want them to be able to detect a certain indicated sound. I think it is important for them to tune their ears for the sound of the new language. I think this is an important

element for the acquisition of new vocabulary. So to practice this skill, I give them very general words that do not sound at all the same and slowly I make it more complicated where it is more difficult to distinguish between different sounds. Before they come to the lesson, they have to study their vocabulary and know it quite well in order to be able to do the exercise successfully. Another thing that I do is to teach them how to make connections between their first language and the new language, for example, there are a lot of words in English that they know that are written almost the same way as in French and I teach them to recognize such words and to pronounce them in French. For example, gymnastics, gymnastique, or when we were studying animals I gave them the sentences and they had to match those sentences to the pictures. I asked them to do that before I introduced any vocabulary and they were perfectly able to do that by just looking at those sentences.

Q: *So would you say that your approach to teaching F.S.L. is more communicative or more structured?*

A: Probably more communicative, I think, because I want them to use their own ideas.

Q: *What type of activity do you do the most during your lessons? Are there individual tasks, pairs or groups?*

A: There is a combination. Sometimes it is individual, for example, when we were studying clothing, they had to say - he is wearing this or that, etc. Sometimes they work in pairs when they are working on a little dialogue but it is difficult for me to supervise what they are doing so I do not use that very often. Sometimes I ask them to do a little sketch and then it is a little group work but that only happens towards the end of the year when they have a little bit more vocabulary.

Q: How would you describe your role as a teacher in the classroom? Are you more of a facilitator, researcher, learner or in authority?

A: I think it is more of a combination. I am a researcher because I like to try some things and then I evaluate how it works and I either change or continue with the same teaching technique.

Q: What type of teaching materials do you use in the classroom?

A: Since I am a French Immersion Teacher, and I have been teaching at the lower grades, I have a lot of materials of my own that I use in the classroom such as games, vocabulary words and worksheets. We have at school, textbooks, but I do not use them. I find them to be not very interesting for students, however, sometimes I use them for the themes that I have to teach and I refer to them to see what basic vocabulary my students need to acquire. Some things in those textbooks are okay but I

find that the teacher-guide is not very user-friendly; it is maybe a good program for teachers that do not speak French. The Teacher-Guide has, step by step guiding lessons but for me it is a waste of time.

Q: Does your textbook represent the syllabus of your course?

A: Yes and no. Yes because it gives me some directions as to what I am expected to teach because I know that this is the material decided by the School Board as the basic textbook for the subject, but at the same time I do not use it enough to be in my teaching program.

Q: Do you know what teaching styles promote this textbook?

A: Not really. There are some dialogues and some exercises for individual tasks and there are also some games, but really it does not have a specific approach to language teaching.

3. Mona - The Teacher

Q: What kind of teacher training have you received?

A: I received my training in Calgary, Alberta and have a B.A. in French and B.Ed. in teaching French as a Second Language in high school. I am teaching French Immersion because the School Board has offered me this position and in terms of methodology and teaching during my training, I remember that my professor taught the different approaches that were used at that time for teaching foreign language. To tell you

the truth, I did not really develop any philosophy during my teacher training but it sure happened when I started to teach French Immersion.

Q: How much instruction do you do in a target language?

A: I would like to use a lot of French in the classroom but I was afraid of scaring the students with a lot of new vocabulary because to begin with, they all have this kind of negative attitude towards French so first of all I have to work in order to show them that learning the language can be fun and useful so my instruction is after a few months during the beginning of school probably are half in English and half in French. I see that my students get used to some of the terminology and just respond to that automatically. For example, we do not call it exercise book in English anymore, they all know when I say cahier, what it means. So the part of the lesson that I always do in French is probably opening exercises when we do calendar, weather and my directions are usually also in French. When it comes to new materials, I do have to explain in English or when the directions are more complicated. It is still difficult for me to switch to English because I am so used to speaking French in a French Immersion classroom. I think my students in F.S.L. classes understand that and they get used to me speaking French more often and they try to respond also in French and what I am

working on the most with them is to try to make them say their responses in full sentences instead of separate words. It is also interesting to notice that half of my class are E.S.L. students and it does not seem to matter. In fact, I think it is one of the more positive things that happens to those students because I tell them they are all equal in my class because nobody knows French and we all started from the same level. My E.S.L. students feel proud of themselves and work hard and achieve quite good results. I find that if I repeat the same thing a lot of times, the students start to understand and even if I say or give directions just in French, it is amazing how quickly they start to catch the sense of what I am saying.

Q: *Would you describe your class as communicative or grammar oriented?*

A: Of course it is communicative. I try to do grammar and do it in French Immersion class and in F.L.S. and I think that the students of that age do not understand the way the language works. They understand some of the simple things but in general grammatical rules are too complicated for them and they do not understand how it works in the language. They can certainly do specific exercises following the model but they cannot use the acquired concept in a conversation or writing composition

so I do very little grammar and only during the middle and the end of the year.

Q: *What type of activities do you do most in your classroom?*

A: We do lots of different things. Something we do not do enough is reading and we do not do enough reading because we do not have any appropriate reading materials. Otherwise, my students like to do sketches, dialogues and other communicative activities.

Q: *How would you describe your role as a Teacher?*

A: I think mostly I am a facilitator because I like to give my students a direction and I like them to go ahead and try to come up with something that they can show me in the language. For example, I like them to present to the class a dialogue where they learn something about each other.

Q: *What type of teaching materials do you use in the classroom?*

A: I use only my own materials. The textbooks that we have in the classroom I do not like at all. When I came into the classroom at the beginning of the year and I had just started to teach F.S.L., I showed them the book that I was supposed to use and the reaction was - Oh no, not this book again. So I said to my students, I only wanted to know if you had seen this textbook before. They told me yes and we do not

want to see it again. I understand their reaction towards this book. The pictures are too babyish, the text is boring and the teacher-guide is simply awful.

Q: So I understand it was not your choice to have those textbooks as your language program?

A: Oh no, the books were at school when I started to teach F.S.L. and I think that the decision to have this textbook was made at the School Board. What I would like to have is some kind of books with short stories appropriate for this age and the level of the language but I think this is wishful thinking.

Interview at the Ministry of Education

June Hunter - Coordinator, Ministry of Education in British Columbia

Q: First of all, what is your role in the Ministry of Education? Who are you subordinate to? Who do you give the orders to?

A: I am seconded from the school district. I am not a bureaucrat, I am still a member of the Teachers' Union. I have been working at the Ministry for four years and this is my fifth which is beyond the usual term which I finished double time and my appointment has been extended again and I am working in the area of developing the curriculum and revising the

curriculum because it has been in the process of being changed so I have to bring that to closure. During the time I have been doing that, the rules have been changed three or four times so we have to keep changing what we are doing. I am also responsible for the implementation of the new curriculum which is just being distributed in the very early stages. I have been covering the Province for the orientation throughout different regions where teachers are grouped in one regional area instead of doing the orientations for each district separately. I just came back today from one of those orientations and it is my first day in the office. My responsibilities also include the liaison with different conferences that go on with different groups of teachers, professional associations of language teachers and I speak of those conferences. I also work with language coordinators around the Province so I would be speaking at their conferences too. During the year I am involved in different projects and I represent British Columbia on the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers and I am involved in this very interesting project which is the follow up to the National Core French Study and I am on the working group for that. I am also trying to oversee the evaluation of learning resources and the criteria for the examinations in light of the new curriculum. So this is the whole spectrum of activities

that I do but it is not all of the spectrums although I wished it was because some of the decisions are made higher up and they are out of my hands so when the discrepancies occur, it is difficult for me to explain them to other people because I am not the one making those decisions.

You asked me who I report to. In terms of curriculum development, along with every other curriculum area, have very definite perimeters that we have to fit into in doing this new curriculum so where I began very autonomous knowing exactly where this whole process is moving in the Province. However, because of the results of the Core French Study and all of the movements taking place at ground-level in the classrooms, the movement was very clear that when the curriculum branch which is not my branch and is responsible for all the curriculum areas comes out with its vision of what the curriculum should be, it might be quite the opposite from the one which was taking shape around the Province and in the country for the last ten years and according to my particular studies in curriculum development, they come up with a vision which might be 50 years out of date and I have to follow it. Things are not always as they seem and they are tricky to negotiate between what we think is right and good for the children and teachers from what the other branch believes.

Q: *Is there someone who is responsible for curriculum for Second Languages?*

A: That is a very good question because the curriculum branch has no expertise in languages per se, but since the languages are mushrooming into other languages such as Mandarin, Punjabi, Japanese and others, they say it should not be in the French Programs Branch but in the Curriculum Branch so we have the responsibility shifted to the Curriculum Branch and coming at times of the fiscal restraint they have not hired anyone with language expertise although they did actually second somebody over there but what we see is people being given this dossier without the expertise to do it and there are coordinators who are responsible to recognize this fact and they come and ask me to advise them on the drafts so they are recognizing that they are not able, even though they have teachers and committees working on it, they don't know if the product that they are producing is a good one or a bad one. So they have to go to the experts and ask them to do revisions and reviews and give comments and suggestions. For example, last week we were working on a Punjabi curriculum where some teachers were brought in from the French area to do a review for the Punjabi

curriculum. Even though they don't know the language, they can apply the principles of the Second Language Acquisition.

Q: You are very much in support for this new IRP Curriculum?

A: Yes, that was my responsibility to produce. The only thing that I was not able to control is the format. We were restrained by the format and actually the format has dictated the content rather than the content dictating the format which is a very ironic situation so the medium has the message and when we were given the medium we have to make it fit.

Q: Do you feel that the Ministry will provide the in-services for teachers and the documents which teachers will actually be able to use?

A: Yes, this new document is very user-friendly. It has no jargon, it is written in plain English. There is only one word of jargon in the whole document which is "cognitive." Everything else is straight forward, even the learning outcomes so that they can be taken out of the document, enlarged and reproduced for students so that they can understand what is expected of them or it can be reproduced for parents so that they can understand what their kids have to do. For example, participating in short conversations or something like that.

Q: How has the problem of having generalist teachers in elementary school been addressed?

A: I have some teachers who respond to that document by saying “this is great, even I could do that” because they look at the very plain and straight language and there are very few outcomes - that is very deliberate on my part because the point of doing this revision has very often been lost in terms of simplifying down to the very very essentials so that the teachers cannot even cope with the things that they’ve been asked to do as well as finding ways of integrating things to maximize the time that they are spending on them. For the teachers that are generalists, on one hand that is a problem because when we are in the communicative teaching when they do need to have some facility with the language but on the other hand, they often have many opportunities of integrating the language which secondary teachers do not have and those opportunities are not often recognized. The non-specialist teachers have to recognize that they bring many many strategies into language teaching and the problem of not having the facility of the language, there are many courses that are offered by Universities in many districts where you do not have to go to the University - the University brings those courses to the districts offering courses with credits or without and there are also courses available through the open learning agencies. There are many many teachers who are not being able to take part in any

of those courses because French is not one of their priorities in which case they can follow the commercial programs that they have available in their districts which sounds like a terrible pedagogy, but it is the best form of professional development for the teacher who wishes to get a handle on teaching a foreign language and how to present the language and after doing that for one year it gives them some confidence of how to use the textbook. It is very essential for us to emphasize that in this new huge IRP curriculum, there are very few learning outcomes for each grade.

Q: Who would be the people who would assist you in your enormous task in the writing and the in-servicing?

A: In the writing, I have a committee of teachers who have been working with me for several years because we had to change several times.

Q: Does the new curriculum represent the revised form of the old "framework document"?

A: No. There was the one in between which was the curriculum guide which came out last November, 1994, so there were three different stages. The teachers for the committee were chosen by the Teachers Federation among the teachers around the Province and in the implementation it was always up to me to do it but we have now a new

system that just began which is very very helpful. It has been done by a branch called Field Services for people who are willing and capable of providing the in-services for Core French. We have about 15 people who responded and they will provide the in-services around the Province. This is a new direction because before the Ministry had no direct commitment to actually give hands on workshops for teachers. The Ministry's policy was called "arms length" to which they would send fundings to the districts and the districts would provide their own in-service which is actually the way many districts wish to work because they know their teachers and their local needs. All they needed was the money and with the money, they were deciding what to do and the Ministry actually sent 10 million dollars to every district for implementation of the new curriculum. Now they are going to use 5 million dollars out of this money to provide the in-services for the districts. Each district has been offered a minimum of 10 workshops... and they have to pay for lunches, facilitators, teachers on call and other expenses.

Q: *Do you think that this curriculum is going to stay for a long time even if we have a change of Government? I know this is a difficult question but I would like to know your personal opinion about that.*

A: I would have to second-guess what any new Government would do but there seems to be quite a lot of, I guess, contentment at the moment with the way things are presently moving since education became such a political hot potato and the Government decided to change the way it was going so they seem to have taken part of whatever the opposition was anyway. So I don't know what other position the opposition party could take rather than continue what has been started.

Q: What is the requirement for the students in terms of a foreign language in order for them to be admitted to a University?

A: They need a course at the level of Grade 11 - Language 11. Students can take any language - it does not have to be French. In fact, from elementary school, Grade 5 - if the district has teachers who are capable of providing instruction in a language which has a developed curriculum such as Mandarin, the instruction in foreign language can be provided in Mandarin - they do not have to take French at all. Some Universities... are now discussing the dropping of the requirement of Language 11 as a prerequisite for the entrance to University. S.F.U., for example, requires only beginners 11 if you did not take any foreign language courses at all which would mean that one semester at the beginners level

would ensure entrance to the University for the foreign language requirement.

Q: Do you think that it would affect the students' attitude toward foreign languages in schools taking into consideration that we already observe a lot of negative attitude towards the languages?

A: If the language is taught in a communicative way and the students are using the language in a practical way, we might find students staying in language classes and continuing with languages all the way through high school. With this new communicative approach, we have reports of 100% retention of students in Grades 8, 9 and 10 because of this new program which students are enjoying and teachers are enjoying and which replaced this dry, repetitive way of teaching through which most of our teachers were trained.

Interview at the Lower Mainland School District

1. The Consultant of Modern Languages

Q: What are your main responsibilities at the School District?

A: I am the Consultant for modern languages and also I am responsible for multicultural education in our District. I am the liaison person between the Ministry of Education and teachers in our schools. I provide the

teachers with information relative to the modern languages such as workshops, resources, conferences as well as practical help in the classrooms if it is needed.

Q: What language programs are available for the students in the District and which ones are mandatory?

A: In our District, we have French Immersion programs. Four elementary schools have early French Immersion where the kids start learning French from Kindergarten and continue to grade seven and then in high school to grade twelve. We also have one elementary school with late French Immersion program where students start to intensively learn French in Grade six and continue to grade twelve as well. In the rest of our elementary schools, the students are taught French as a Second Language from grade five through grade seven in elementary school and they have continued with French in grade eight in the high school. After that the students have a choice of either continuing with French or taking another language such as Spanish, German, Mandarin, Chinese or Japanese. They can also do a combination of two languages or drop the foreign language completely after grade eight if they don't plan to continue their education in university. The university requirement now

is one foreign language which allows students a choice of the language they want to learn in high school.

Q: What is the policy towards immigrant students? When are they expected to join the foreign language class?

A: Generally, those students are expected to start learning a foreign language when they are not considered any more ESL, which means that they have acquired English as the main language of instruction at school adequately and they do not need any help in this language in order to function at a normal academic level. This decision is usually left to the teacher and the student mutual agreement.

APPENDIX E

Appendix E

Information for Subjects of Research

Simon Fraser University
Ethics Committee

To whom it may concern,

The subjects of the study will be informed that their participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw from the project (or stop answering my questions during the interview at any time).

Participants will be guaranteed absolute confidentiality. The names, addresses, telephone numbers and any other personal or confidential information will not be mentioned, printed, or released.

The name and telephone number of the Dean of the Faculty of Education at S.F.U. will be provided for each participant.

A copy of the research will be available to all participants either from myself or from the S.F.U. Library.

Although I am aware that copies of acknowledgement letters permitting the research are required from the other institutions, I have not yet obtained them. Due to a different organization and system in one of the countries I will be researching in, I have not yet been able to contact the appropriate authority. However, I will be obtaining acknowledgement letters at the time of my trip and will submit them upon my return.

Sincerely,

Luba Banuke

APPENDIX F

Appendix F

Administrators' Letter of Approval

**RE: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FOREIGN OR
SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING IN ISRAELI
AND CANADIAN SCHOOLS**

Research in the Master of Arts (Education) Program
Simon Fraser University

I hereby declare support for the above-named research being undertaken in this school by Luba Banuke of the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University.

I agree in principle with this study and agree that it is a worthwhile area of research.

Administrator's signature

Administrator's name (please print)

School

Date