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Teaching for Transfer: Insights from theory and practices in primary-level French-second-language classrooms
Enseigner en vue d'un transfert : aperçus théorique et pratique en classes de français langue seconde au primaire

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Article abstract

This paper illustrates teaching for transfer across languages by synthesizing key insights from theory and previously published research alongside our case study data from primary-level teachers in core French-second-language (CF) classrooms in Ontario, Canada. Drawing on research that redefines language transfer as a resource, this study drew on several influential theoretical notions and data collected through interviews and classroom observations. All of these sources point to a multi-leveled approach to teaching for transfer that includes considerations of learning, teaching and contextual features. Study data suggest that CF teachers plan for transfer and use a range of strategies likely to promote its use with students. This paper connects theory, research and practice with the aim of strengthening dialogue among researchers and educators.

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TEACHING FOR TRANSFER: INSIGHTS FROM THEORY AND PRACTICES IN PRIMARY-LEVEL FRENCH-SECOND-LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

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ABSTRACT. This paper illustrates teaching for transfer across languages by synthesizing key insights from theory and previously published research alongside our case study data from primary-level teachers in core French-second-language (CF) classrooms in Ontario, Canada. Drawing on research that redefines language transfer as a resource, this study drew on several influential theoretical notions and data collected through interviews and classroom observations. All of these sources point to a multi-leveled approach to teaching for transfer that includes considerations of learning, teaching and contextual features. Study data suggest that CF teachers plan for transfer and use a range of strategies likely to promote its use with students. This paper connects theory, research and practice with the aim of strengthening dialogue among researchers and educators.

ENSEIGNER EN VUE D'UN TRANSFERT: APERÇUS THÉORIQUE ET PRATIQUE EN CLASSES DE FRANÇAIS LANGUE SECONDE AU PRIMAIRE

RESUMÉ. Cet article dresse un portrait de l'enseignement ayant pour but un transfert langagier. Pour ce faire, il effectue la synthèse des idées-clés émanant de la théorie et de recherches déjà publiées, avec les données de notre étude de cas réalisée auprès d'enseignants au primaire dans des classes de français langue seconde (programme de base de français ou CF), en Ontario, au Canada. S'inspirant de recherches qui redéfinissent le transfert langagier comme une ressource, ce projet de recherche se base sur plusieurs notions théoriques influentes et sur des données recueillies au cours d'entrevues et de séances d'observation en classe. Toutes ces sources d'informations favorisent une approche multi-niveaux de l'enseignement en vue d'un transfert, enseignement devant tenir compte des particularités d'apprentissage et d'enseignement ainsi que du contexte. Les données émanant de la recherche révèlent que les enseignants du programme de base de français (CF) planifient en fonction d'un transfert langagier et font appel à un éventail de stratégies pour promouvoir son utilisation auprès des étudiants. Cet article établit des liens entre la théorie, la recherche et la pratique dans le but d'améliorer le dialogue entre les chercheurs et les enseignants.

Introduction

Becoming bilingual or multilingual can be likened to learning a stringed instrument, such as a violin. When the player draws the bow across any single string, the other strings vibrate simultaneously in a phenomenon called string resonance. Although making music often involves playing one string at a time, while other strings resonate, skillful players can also actively play more than one string (called double stops).The teacher helps the violin student to engage one or more strings as appropriate. Thinking of each string as a language illustrates two key notions about transfer that are explicated theoretically and illustrated in field research in this paper: (a) the language learner's multiple languages are always "resonating" somehow even when only one language is being used; and (b) both monolingual and bi/multilingual language practices play roles in making the "music" that is communication. Teachers therefore need to recognize that learners' languages are always present in second-language (L2) classrooms and help students harness the potential contributions of "resonance" or transfer across languages toward L2 learning.

Researchers and educators have become increasingly engaged in considering bilingualism / multilingualism in second language education (e.g., Falk & Bardel, 2010; Peyer, Kaiser & Berthele, 2010); the present research joins and extends this growing dialogue. Students bring all their knowledge and skills — often mediated in multiple languages — to the classroom. How can teachers harness the possibilities that the presence of two or more languages offers for classroom learning? In this paper, we synthesize insights from theory and practice that serve to increase understanding of teaching for transfer, which we define as the contextually-inscribed set of instructional strategies that connect language and literacy across languages. More specifically, we document and theorize findings from an exploratory multiple-case study of primary-level (Grade 3) core[1] French as a second language (CF) instruction in Ontario, Canada. We first propose working definitions for key terms, and then we explain two theoretical notions (multi-competence and interdependence) and their implications for teaching. Subsequently, we present our findings, which lend support to an emergent literature on teaching for transfer. The present study suggests that teachers plan for transfer, even in settings where teaching and learning take place primarily in the L2. Significantly, this research offers a unique, multi-leveled understanding of teaching for transfer that includes consideration for learning, teaching, and the educational setting, which can promote further dialogue among researchers and educators interested in promoting language transfer in classrooms.

Definitions of key terms

Language transfer, sometimes called crosslinguistic influence, refers to the influences that various languages in a speaker's repertoire have on one another (see Cummins, 2007, 2008; Herdina & Jessner, 2002; Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008; Od-

lin, 1989). Despite researchers' varied definitions of transfer (Gundel & Tarone, 1993; Jarvis, 2002) that reflect different underlying conceptualizations of the phenomenon, notable similarities among definitions can facilitate discussion. As it is beyond the scope of this paper to weigh in on the important debates surrounding language transfer such as its relationship to cross-linguistic influence (Herdina & Jessner, 2002; Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008), the process by which transfer occurs (Gass & Selinker, 1993; Schachter, 1993), and the importance / centrality of transfer to language learning (Gass & Selinker, 1993), we draw on common ground developed from diverse research perspectives as a starting point for defining teaching for transfer. In particular, transfer is bidirectional or multidirectional: influence among any languages that a speaker uses / learns can occur. Empirical research suggests that numerous aspects of language and its use (e.g., pronunciation, syntax, vocabulary, discourse) are susceptible to transfer. Finally, that individual and contextual factors affect language transfer highlights its importance for L2 learning and teaching (see Jarvis, 2002; Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008). Although the following definition simplifies a complex phenomenon, we understand transfer as a complex, multidimensional, bi-/ multi-directional phenomenon of influence among languages known or being learnt by an individual, which is affected by individual and contextual factors.

As literacy is the focus of a wider study (Mady, Salvatori, Lapkin, Arnott, Knouzi & Thomas, 2009) from which data are drawn for this paper, we note here that we have used a "'traditional' definition of literacy as reading and writing because the curriculum in the research setting distinguishes among three language skills — reading, writing and oral communication (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1998)[2]. However, connections to oral language and media literacy made by participating teachers reflect, too, the interconnections among language skills as well as research on multiple literacies (New London Group, 1996). Thus, curricular documents, prior research and participants' views all support the exploration in this study of teachers' strategies for promoting language / literacy transfer across languages.

We begin with Stern's (1983) definition of teaching — as a contextualized set of activities that promote learning — to define teaching for transfer. Like other frameworks of second language teaching (e.g., Cummins, 1979b; Freeman & Johnson, 1998), Stern (1983) acknowledges complexity, multidisciplinarity, and multiple levels of influence such as classroom, context, and policy, which provides a compellingly straightforward way of conceptualizing teaching.

Bringing together definitions of transfer and teaching, teaching for transfer is the contextualized set of activities that serves to harness the potential of language / literacy transfer, which would include promoting learning about transfer and promoting transfer within students' language repertoires: it involves learners, teachers, and classroom / institution / policy / social contexts. This conceptualization expands on Cummins' (2008) definition of teaching for

transfer as "bilingual instructional strategies" (p.65) because it takes a wider view of transfer that includes intralingual and crosslingual learning activities (Stern, 1983). It also takes a broader definition of teaching — beyond instruction to include activities related to the context of teaching and learning in the classroom.

INSIGHTS FROM THEORY

An emerging emphasis on multilingualism in educational and language-learning research across disciplines draws on holistic and dynamic understandings of bilingualism and multilingualism (Jessner, 2008; see also Cook, 1995; Coste & Simon, 2009; Council of Europe, 2001; Herdina & Jessner, 2002). Recent insights from theory in multi-competence and interdependence facilitate the reframing of transfer from a hindrance to a resource.

Defined as a language user's first language (L1) plus an additional interlanguage, multi-competence highlights Cook's (1995) distinction between knowing one language and more than one language by circumscribing the notion of language competence in a new way. Rather than defining L2 learners as deficient L2 speakers, multi-competence frames them as speakers of their L1 plus an interlanguage, which can be understood as the L2 learner's developing approximation of the L2 (see Richards & Schmidt, 2002). Thus, the multi-competence framework, echoed in the writings of other researchers (e.g., Cummins, 2007), challenges the interpretation of crosslinguistic influence as interference or liability. Although a number of researchers have long recognized both positive and negative transfer in language learning (e.g., Corder, 1981; Gass & Selinker, 1993; Selinker, 1992), using crosslinguistic influence as a potential resource for teaching has yet to become common practice (Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2011). If L2 learning is a process of becoming multicompetent, then teachers could facilitate it by drawing on transfer as a resource. In Cummins' (1979a) widely referenced interdependence hypothesis, the cognitive and academic aspects of first and additional languages are interdependent, representing a common underlying proficiency that language users access in either language. Teachers can therefore promote transfer in either direction (i.e., L1 to L2 or L2 to L1), particularly of literacy skills, by drawing on the interdependent common proficiency in languages known. In this present study, then, although the Grade 3 students are not bilingual in English and French, large-scale assessment data (Education Quality and Accountability Office [EQAO], 2008) suggest that their English literacy skills are sufficient to enable transfer. In addition, adequate support in FSL within the classroom provides for a context in which students would be adding their L2 to an age-appropriate L1 language and literacy.

The insights from theory described above can help teachers to identify strategies for promoting transfer, with appropriate caution in directly applying research

findings to classroom settings (e.g., Lightbown, 2000; Odlin, 1989). Researchers' "implications for teaching" highlight the need for teachers to understand transfer-related issues (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008), to recognize the importance of transfer, and to "capitalize" on it in their teaching (Benson, 2002).

To summarize, in the context of bilingualism and a multilingual turn in research, teachers can facilitate transfer as an ever-present resource in language learning. In contrast to some pedagogical approaches that prohibit reference to learners' first or known languages, teaching for transfer acknowledges and draws on such languages and literacy skills, without resorting to translating or diminishing the focus on L2 development.

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHING FOR TRANSFER

Empirical support for the concepts explored in the previous section of this paper has been summarized elsewhere (Deacon, Wade-Wooley & Kirby, 2009; Odlin, 1989). Despite debates surrounding, for example, the specific definition of transfer, its role as a hindrance and/or as a resource, and its role in specific language-learning contexts strong support has been established for transfer as bi/multi-directional, including all language dimensions and influenced by multiple factors related to the individual and the setting. Although little research to date has focused on teaching for transfer, we draw on relevant studies that shed light on this phenomenon, with particular reference to settings that share similarities with primary CF in Ontario. In the next subsections, we will discuss these studies as they pertain to learning, teaching and the context.

Learning

Teachers should recognize that language — and in particular literacy — transfer can occur through learners' activities such as bilingual classroom activities, metalinguistic talk (e.g., analyzing similarities and differences across languages), literacy practices that are familiar to students from their home or school literacy experiences and contributing to group discussions / learning. Cummins (2005, 2007, 2008), for example, has described language identity texts that are written bilingually and collaboratively by bilingual students. Similarly, bilingual co-construction of text allows students to explore connections within and across languages (Martin-Beltrán, 2010). Dillon (2009) has reported on students' spontaneous comparison of languages, which reveals engagement in metalinguistic talk. Such opportunities may represent the development of multi-competence in context. For example, evidence from immersion settings suggests that learners create opportunities for cross-linguistic transfer by incorporating English (their L1, or common familiar language) into their FSL learning by moving a task along, focusing their attention on language, and interacting with peers (Swain & Lapkin, 2000; see also Gearon, 2011). In sum, these studies have illustrated the multiple ways in which students can engage

in transfer between their L1 and L2 (and sometimes L3), in either direction, as a resource in literacy development.

Teaching

Many researchers have argued convincingly that the teacher plays a central role in "orchestrating" classroom activity (Cummins, 2001; Martin-Beltrán, 2010). Illustrations of teaching for transfer in the literature reflect two crucial dimensions: planning for transfer and providing opportunities for language transfer. Analyzing curriculum documents to find connections between expectations for L1 and L2 represents a starting point in planning for transfer (Harris, 2008). Secondary-level English and modern language teachers in England, for example, communicated enthusiasm for incorporating similar attention to learning strategies in their respective language classrooms (Harris, 2008) but identified lack of class time and common planning time as barriers to such planning. Similar obstacles to implementing collaborative planning for transfer have been found in the Canadian elementary-level immersion context (Lyster, Collins & Ballinger, 2009) where the participating teachers could not engage in systematic collaboration due to a lack of planning time which led to missed opportunities for transfer.

Research highlighting teaching for transfer has generally focused on bilingual teaching strategies, including the teacher's use of code switching (Cook, 1992, 2001; Kim & Elder, 2005; Liu, Anh, Baek & Hahn, 2004; Moore, 2002), metalinguistic talk (Cummins, 2008; Dillon, 2009), highlighting something learnt in another context, using bilingual or multilingual resources (Cummins, 2005; Lyster, Collins & Ballinger, 2009), and twinning classes for communication across languages and locations (Cummins, 2005, 2007, 2008). Although significant debate in research — and school systems — surrounds classroom language use, second language researchers generally agree that language choice should benefit L2 learning in the L2 classroom (Cook, 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Turnbull, 2001). The definition of appropriate L1 use — including the purposes for using the L1 and different amounts of L1 — differs across contexts.

In addition to using teaching strategies that draw on two or more languages, teachers can foster a classroom culture that promotes transfer as appropriate to the school context (Martin-Beltrán, 2010). Teachers can influence social interactions in the classroom to (re)position students as competent contributors to (multilingual) learning groups. Teachers and students can collaborate to establish classroom language(s) practices that will promote L2 learning in the L2 classroom and that can promote transfer across languages (Levine, 2011).

With specific reference to literacy, familiar practices in the classroom provide opportunities for students to transfer known literacy practices to activities in their L2. Activating prior knowledge promotes transfer because it enables students to connect their L1-mediated knowledge to what they are learning in the L2.

Relevant prior literacy knowledge could be developed in school, but literacy practices familiar from home or community should also be recognized in the classroom (Orleanna, Reynolds, Dorner & Meza, 2003). For Cummins (2008), activating prior knowledge represents a cornerstone of teaching for transfer.

To summarize, teaching for transfer involves a range of planning and teaching strategies that can be operationalized in diverse teaching and learning contexts, and that include comparing curriculum documents, collaborating with colleagues teaching different languages, considering appropriate bilingual teaching / learning strategies, fostering a transfer-friendly classroom culture, and activating prior knowledge through familiar literacy practices.

Context

Within a multifaceted context including the school setting, the education system, and a sociolinguistic landscape, ideally teachers would not work alone in teaching for transfer. First, although multilingual materials are scarce (Jessner, 2008), research on the development of multiliteracies has shown how students can create texts that draw on and show their multiple language resources and thus promote transfer among languages (Cummins, 2007, 2008). Second, at the school level, promoting teaching for transfer could include facilitating collaboration among teachers of different languages (Lucas & Katz, 1994; Lyster, Collins & Ballinger, 2009). Also, school administrators can play an important role in promoting transfer, for instance, by timetabling for collaboration among teachers teaching for transfer and also by allowing / promoting planning for transfer (Harris, 2008).

Curriculum writers could define learning goals that challenge the objective of developing native-speaker competencies, and that include expectations related to bilingual skills (Cook, 1992, 1995; Liu, Ahn, Baek & Han, 2004). For example, albeit more implicit, the Ontario CF curriculum also acknowledges that "knowledge of a second language strengthens first-language skills" and that CF activities should integrate learning from other subjects mediated in English (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1998, p. 2; see Harris, 2008, for a British example). Such officially-sanctioned openness to teaching for transfer can help administrators and teachers create transfer-friendly approaches in schools.

Finally, language policy within and beyond schools could also foster transfer-friendly learning environments. Most discussed in terms of language-in-education debates where separation of languages and monolingual assumptions are supported or contested (e.g., Cummins, 2007, 2008; Liu, Ahn, Baek & Han, 2004; Lucas & Katz, 1994), policy could promote teaching for transfer in several ways. Classroom language policy may be tacit (Rolin-Ianzitti & Brownlie, 2002), or might involve class discussion about how language choice could support language transfer (Levine, 2011). Beyond the school, societal

attitudes toward transfer and multilingualism also influence possibilities for the classroom: "multilingual education can only be successful if the cognitive potential of multilingualism is explicitly acknowledged on the societal level" (Jessner, 2008, p. 91).

Overall, prior research demonstrates the complexity of teaching for transfer by illustrating a range of possibilities for teaching for transfer that span learning, teaching and / or context. The current study shows how teachers' practices connect to all three of these levels and that teaching for transfer in a target-language dominant environment extends beyond the bilingual teaching practices emphasized in previous research.

METHODOLOGY

The data analyzed for this article are drawn from an exploratory multiple case study that aimed to describe and discuss current literacy teaching practices in primary CF in Ontario. A multiple case study design was chosen for this study to facilitate the exploration of the complexity of classroom research using multiple methods (Johannsson, 2003). It is important to note that this range of practices in the primary CF context reflects the case study methodology used, which sought to describe and discuss teachers' practices rather than identify an approach to teaching for transfer or compare the merits of different teachers' approaches.

One aspect of the study focused on how planning and teaching might facilitate transfer from English to French or French to English (Mady et al., 2009). In Ontario, English-language school boards implement the CF program, where students learn FSL for approximately 1.5 to 3 hours per week. It is obligatory from the Grade 4 level, yet school boards may opt to offer CF earlier. In order to remain at the primary level as requested by the Ministry, this study focused on Grade 3 CF where we estimated that children would have age-appropriate strong English language and literacy proficiency (EQAO, 2008) as well as some French language and literacy proficiency such that CF instruction would benefit development in both languages. Teaching multiple grades in three different regions in the province, including urban and rural settings, the 3 participating CF teachers had strong reputations as identified by board administrators, between 10 and 33 years of teaching experience, and additional qualifications in teaching FSL.

Each teacher participated in 4 or 5 classroom observations (of 20-40 minutes per lesson) and four interviews (following ethical clearance and informed consent), which all took place in the spring of 2009. Classroom observation data were recorded using the Communicative Orientation to Language Teaching (COLT) scheme (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995), with an added literacy section and detailed field notes. The COLT scheme was selected for its familiarity, ease of use, and credibility: it has been validated in numerous settings and has

also been used for numerous CF studies (e.g., Allen & Carroll, 1988; Arnott, 2005; Harley, Allen, Cummins, & Swain, 1990; Mady, Arnott & Lapkin, 2009; Turnbull, 1998, 1999). The literacy section, created and piloted for this study, was developed from current views on primary-level literacy practices including research (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004; Taylor & Pearson, 2004; Taylor, Pearson, Clark & Walpole, 2000), policy (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2003), and a teacher resource (Anderson, Carr, Lewis, Salvatori & Turnbull, 2008). Especially relevant to this analysis were transfer-related activities recorded on the adapted COLT scheme. The following examples illustrate transfer-related activities possible within the scheme:

- Language use could be English or French (or another language);
- Decreasing teacher support could include the gradual release of responsibility (e.g., Buehl, 2009);
- Metalinguistic talk involves comparing two languages to note their similarities and differences;
- Activating prior knowledge, important in any learning context, includes activating knowledge mediated in English or another L1;
- Vocabulary could include using cognates or learning about cognates; and
- Teaching literacy strategies includes teaching literacy skills that could transfer both English to French and French to English.

The research team consisted of English / French bilingual FSL educators (graduate students and professors) who trained on the adapted observation scheme using video recordings of elementary FSL classes. Following this training period, in each participant's classroom, two observers recorded the classroom activity using the adapted COLT scheme for the first two lessons in each site. Inter-coder reliability was above 86% in all cases (Mady et al., 2009). A single observer recorded classroom activity for the remaining observations. In order to document additional relevant data, field notes included observations of the classroom space, classroom interaction, and patterns within or across lessons (Mady et al., 2009, p. 61). The interviews each focused on an aspect of literacy teaching, including experiences, beliefs and practices and one observed lesson.

Quantitative analysis of observation data reveals the prominence of certain practices in each teacher's observed literacy teaching. Themes related to teacher beliefs and practices emerged through the qualitative content analysis of field notes, interview data and curriculum documents. By triangulating different sources of data for each case, we have developed an interpretation of each teacher's approach to teaching for transfer as it relates to learners, teaching and the educational setting.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, we outline the transfer-related themes that emerged from each teacher's Grade 3 literacy practices, in particular as they show the interconnections among language transfer, teaching for transfer, and context. Examples of transfer identified in this study echo themes identified in previous research and reveal two additional themes: L3 beyond English and French, and a literacy focus. First, we will summarize common transfer-related themes that emerged from all teachers' practices, and then we will provide a brief case study of each teacher.

Table 1 summarizes teaching for transfer as revealed through the observations and interviews. Evidence of transfer is documented and referenced in terms of the three levels theorized earlier and also represented in the literature — student, teacher and context. Further subdivision of these levels of analysis reflects emergent themes.

TABLE 1. *Teachers' teaching for transfer summary*

Dimension (Data source)	Adelaide: Student Transfer	Beatrice: Bilingual Possibilities	Christine: School-Wide Literacy
Student Transfer (Interviews)	Students initiate transfer Plurilingual students transfer	Students initiate transfer Teacher requests translations	Students initiate transfer
Teaching: Beliefs (Interviews)	Teacher as L2 model; students transfer	Beneficial to connect languages	Draws on English literacy strategies
Teaching: Classroom Language Use (Observations)	100% French-dominant[3] Some translation	57% French-dominant Links to English, Italian, Spanish	95% French-dominant Explicit links to English (metalinguistic talk)
Teaching: Planning (Observations and Interviews)	French-dominant approach	Creates bilingual materials Cognates (romance languages)	Familiar Literacy Practices Experience in homeroom (English)
Teaching: Collaboration (Interviews)	Informal, proactive, supportive	Challenging	Proactive
Context: School (Interviews)	Some possibilities	Isolation, timetabling challenges	Proactive involvement but challenging
Context: Curriculum (Interviews)	French-dominant Transfer-friendly	French-dominant Transfer-friendly	French-dominant Transfer-friendly Teacher does curriculum comparison

NOTE. All names of teachers in this article are pseudonyms.

As is evident in Table 1, as revealed through interviews and observations, teaching for transfer is a part of all three teachers' CF teaching practices at the Grade 3 level. All participating teachers plan for literacy transfer, emphasize oral language development as a base for literacy, and acknowledge students' first languages and / or other known languages. In research from ESL contexts in English-dominant settings, researchers argue for a stronger presence of L1 in the learning-teaching process (Cummins, 2005, 2007, 2008; Lucas & Katz, 1994; Martin-Beltrán, 2010). Such L1s are generally unsupported minority languages. In contrast, in the FSL setting described here, English is a dominant language to which students already have access. The focus on maximizing French during FSL classes is therefore warranted. The French-dominant environment seems to contrast with the promotion of bilingual classrooms in other research. Adelaide and Christine use the French-dominant gesture-supported teaching strategies and resources of the Accelerated Integrated Method (AIM), which explains in part the near-exclusive use of French in these classrooms. Beatrice reported using bilingual teaching practices, such as creating bilingual glossaries, while also maintaining a French-dominant atmosphere in the observed lessons. All three teachers stressed the importance of using French in line with the provincial FSL policy (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1998). These teachers also tend to focus on transfer from English (the dominant language of their students) to French (the additional language), perhaps reflecting their professional role as teachers of French. The participating teachers seek in particular to build on students' English literacy skills or knowledge by using familiar literacy practices.

In contrast, participating teachers' practices illustrate diverse possibilities for teaching for transfer, as described in the following paragraphs. Adelaide teaches in a rural area where CF begins prior to Grade 1, in Senior Kindergarten (SK). In her 10-year career, this teacher, qualified in FSL, has spent one year as a homeroom teacher and nine years as a CF teacher. At the time of the study, she taught CF from SK to Grade 6. In the 30-minute daily CF periods, Adelaide uses the French-dominant AIM method, which is mandated in the school board. Like many CF teachers, Adelaide travels to students' homeroom class to provide daily instruction. An itinerant schedule as such may explain the presence of classroom decorations and resources in English (Mady et al., 2009, p. 20).The split Grade 3/4 class observed in this study had 25 students (15 in Grade 3 and 10 in Grade 4) who worked at table groups of 6 students.

Like all teachers in this study, Adelaide recognizes that students bring L1 language and literacy skills to the classroom, and notices that they initiate transfer when learning FSL. She has observed that plurilingual students (who are learning French as a third language) seem adept at transfer among languages, an experience that echoes a trend in studies on L3 acquisition (Cenoz, 2003; Klein, 1995). Although Adelaide provides some "sandwich translation" where one English term is "sandwiched" between the repeated French equivalents,

her teaching is strongly French-dominant, because she prioritizes speaking French with students in her role as a language model. Informal collaboration with colleagues who teach in English supports some planning for transfer. She reports informal conversations with homeroom teachers, proactively informing colleagues of her CF programming, and support from these teachers through reading English versions of a CF play in homerooms. Whereas Adelaide's teaching for transfer touches on each of the levels (students, teacher and context), her approach to transfer centres around students' initiation of transfer within a French-dominant approach: "I guess deep down I'm hoping that they themselves are drawing from it, because that's obviously what their comfort level is" (Teaching Writing Interview).

Beatrice teaches in a culturally and linguistically diverse urban region where CF instruction begins in Grade 1, and in a school where students can take optional Italian instruction alongside English and French. An FSL specialist teacher with over three decades' experience, at the time of the study, Beatrice taught CF to Grades 2 to 8 and had been teaching CF for over 25 years. The twenty Grade 3 students in her observed class sit in their homeroom at desks organized in rows or on a carpet at the front of the class. In the 20-minute daily CF periods, Beatrice uses French and English, as well as connections to Italian and Spanish, to build a multilingual learning experience for students. For instance, she creates bilingual materials and points out cognates (e.g., days of the week in French and Italian), particularly among the Romance languages that students know. Similar bilingual strategies have been well documented in diverse classroom settings (e.g., Cummins, 2005, 2008; Moore, 2002). These practices reflect Beatrice's belief that connecting languages explicitly facilitates learning in that it captures students' attention, motivates them to learn, and builds on prior knowledge mediated in other languages. "I think it's really beneficial to connect the languages, anything that's known to them, and then they're happier and they can say 'Oh, I know this because it's the same as this'" (Teaching Writing Interview).

However, contextual challenges inhibit extending this multilingual experience beyond Beatrice's CF teaching. Due to short daily periods and the large number of classes that Beatrice works with each day, it is difficult to find time to collaborate with homeroom teachers. During one observation of this class, a student pointed out a poster in the English homeroom while the CF teacher was reading a story on the same topic. Beatrice had been unaware of the connection because it is not feasible for her to keep up with the English literacy programming in all classes. Feelings of isolation, not uncommon among CF teachers (Lapkin, MacFarlane, Vandergrift & Hart, 2006), and timetabling challenges seem to impede but not deter Beatrice from teaching for transfer, particularly through exploring bilingual — and multilingual — possibilities in the CF class.

In the town where Christine teaches, CF begins in Junior Kindergarten with the mandated use of AIM throughout the board. The observed Grade 3/4 class receives 40 minutes' French instruction per day in a classroom dedicated to FSL, where desks facing the carpet area and blackboard are arranged in L-shaped groups of six students. This print-rich environment includes dictionaries and reference materials such as vocabulary charts, a word wall, a reading strategies poster, grammar-oriented song lyrics, and photos depicting Francophone cultural connections. Christine draws on 15 years' teaching experience, including 4 years in CF, time as an English (L1) homeroom teacher, and English immersion teaching outside of Ontario, an FSL qualification, and a master's degree in second language education. She recognizes that students bring rich English-L1 literacy skills to her CF program — all of the students in her group use English as their L1 — and emphasizes the transfer of literacy skills from English to CF in particular through metalinguistic talk (e.g., highlighting different spelling conventions in English and French for days of the week, with capitalization in English), familiar literacy strategies (e.g., using reading strategies instruction such as activating prior knowledge), and curriculum comparisons (e.g., referencing English expectations in lesson planning).

Christine's descriptions of her collaboration with other (English-homeroom) teachers reveal a proactive approach that moves toward promoting a school-wide literacy. Despite scheduling challenges and although English-homeroom teachers do not necessarily ask about her programming, Christine informs other teachers in the school of her CF teaching. Also, by attending literacy team meetings, participating in school-wide initiatives such as common assessment approaches and literacy strategies, and highlighting for students where she is drawing connections to their learning mediated in English, Christine promotes continuity in literacy instruction in both languages. In this way, Christine's practices provide a new example of collaboration in teaching for transfer — and some of the challenges that teachers face — where teachers work across classrooms and languages to promote transfer.

To conclude, each of these three cases illustrates a different approach to teaching for transfer suggesting that student transfer, teaching practices and contextual factors all play a role in the classroom. Thus, these cases highlight the interconnectedness among dimensions of teaching for transfer (see also Cummins, 1979b). For instance, Adelaide's approach to transfer centres around students' use of L1 in keeping with a strong French-dominant approach in her setting. Beatrice, in her "bilingual possibilities" approach, values languages through drawing on several languages in the classroom. Christine's "whole-school literacy" approach to teaching for transfer draws on her agency, her background teaching experiences, opportunities in her teaching context, and students' initiation of transfer. The synergy of these influential factors reveals a positive approach to language(s) as a resource. Given these teachers' strong reputations but different practices, these data show the potential for promoting

transfer through diverse teaching approaches, thus expanding on prior work on teaching for transfer that focuses on bilingual teaching practices.

CONCLUSION

This study indicates how teaching for transfer involves consideration of the levels of student, teacher and teaching context. The theoretical concepts outlined earlier in this article as well as the data that emerged from this multiple case study of three CF teachers with strong reputations suggest insights for teachers and researchers interested in promoting L2 learning through harnessing the potential for language transfer as a resource in the classroom.

Although this study focused on three cases, its methodology allowed for a multidimensional reporting and observation of teachers' CF practices at a specific grade level. These teachers were selected on the basis of strong reputations; however, we do not know if teaching for transfer represents a particular strength in the practices of any of these teachers. All teachers included consideration for language transfer in their teaching practices, yet the particular ways in which teachers teach for transfer vary. Further research into the effectiveness of various practices, with particular attention to relationships between teaching practices, contextual factors and student L2 learning, will be necessary to extend the present research.

This research suggests that teachers view the complex, multifaceted process of transfer as a potential resource in their students' L2 learning. In the classroom, teachers (in collaboration with students themselves) can acknowledge students' transfer by including languages in the classroom, making explicit connections among / between them, and also connecting literacy practices across languages. In planning for transfer, L2 teachers can compare curricula for different languages with an eye toward creating learning experiences to activate prior knowledge mediated in any language (Cummins, 2008) and create new connections. This potential for cross-linguistic transfer points to a redefinition of the CF teacher as a literacy teacher, and thus as a contributor to a school's literacy team (see Arnott & Mady, 2013).

However, given that teachers' professional practices are inscribed in institutional, social, and political contexts, we also emphasize the influence of contextual factors on the CF teacher's work, such as policy, curriculum, materials, timetabling and possibilities for collaboration. On the school level, principals could include CF teachers as part of the school literacy team, and could encourage collaboration among teachers teaching different languages (e.g., homeroom English teachers and CF teachers). Additionally, scheduling for CF teachers that facilitates collaboration with other teachers could allow these teachers to include a greater focus on transfer in their literacy practices. Finally, institutional support for professional development could allow teachers

to review and renew their literacy practices as necessary, with specific reference to teaching for transfer.

This article opened with a reference to string resonance, a phenomenon whereby all the strings of an instrument vibrate when just one of the strings is being played. Using string resonance as a metaphor for language / literacy transfer, we notice that the various languages known or being learnt are always present even when focusing on learning, or using, just one of them at a time. Such an analogy attests to the importance of teachers and of stringed instruments or languages: the strings resonate, and the teacher guides the player to make music.

NOTES

1. Core French-as-a-second-language refers to French taught as a subject for one period each day, or a few times a week, throughout the school year.
2. This was the curriculum used at the time of the research. The reading and writing strands remain present in the current curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013).
3. French-dominant was defined in the coding scheme as episodes in which French was the only language or the dominant language used (see Spada & Fröhlich, 1995).

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