

An Investigation of Teacher Practices for the Instruction of French as a Third Language among Spanish-Speaking Students

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Abstract

World Language (WL) instruction in the U.S. can no longer be aimed toward a monolingual English speaker acquiring a second language (L2). Secondary students who take WL courses may speak a variety of languages, bringing their home language and culture into the classroom. Spanish is the second most commonly spoken language in the U.S. and many Hispanic students are enrolled in Georgia public schools, where this research study took place. However, it is presently unknown to what degree WL teachers are equipped to teach a third language (L3) to students who are bilingual or Heritage speakers of Spanish. The authors attempted to uncover secondary-level French teachers' preparation and training with this unique population of learners. A survey was administered to 100 Georgia French teachers and follow-up interviews were conducted with 10 survey respondents. Data were analyzed qualitatively and the results indicated that French teachers do not receive sufficient training on L3 instruction as pre-service teachers nor do they have adequate professional development opportunities as in-service teachers to learn research-based strategies for teaching French as an L3 to Spanish-speaking students.

Key words: *French language instruction, bilingualism, heritage learners, multilingualism, teacher education.*

Introduction

Currently, there is a growing number of bilingual students in the U.S. who engage in world language (WL) study at the secondary level. Unlike their monolingual peers, these students are engaging in the process of third language (L3) acquisition. Several scholars have asserted that multilingualism, or the ability to speak multiple languages, has a positive influence on the language acquisition process (Bild & Swain, 1989; Cenoz & Valencia, 1994; Muñoz, 2000). Furthermore, prior research suggests that bilingualism empowers students to succeed both in school and in life (Bialystok, 2001; Bild & Swain, 1989; Cenoz, 2000; Dewaele & Wei, 2012; Kharkhurin, 2010; Muñoz, 2000; Sanz, 2000).

While research on multilingual and plurilingual language learning has been conducted in Asia (Duan, 2011; Feng & Adamson, 2015; Kärchner-Ober, 2012), Canada (Bild & Swain, 1989; Tavares, 2000; Tremblay, 2006), and Europe (Cenoz & Valencia, 1994; Rauch, Naumann, & Jude, 2011), studies on these populations of learners are lacking in U.S. contexts. This is may be due to the fact that the English language has historically served as a *lingua franca*, or common language of communication, for business and education among speakers of different languages in the U.S. and abroad. The U.S. ideology, with its prior colonial history, has traditionally required linguistic assimilation of all minority groups, supporting the value of English as a dominant language (Kloss, 1998). One of the few studies conducted in the U.S. context (Thomas, 1988) compared English monolinguals to Spanish-English bilinguals for the acquisition of French at the university level. She found that bilingual Spanish-speaking students had greater metalinguistic awareness, which gave them an advantage over their monolingual peers. Despite the fact that research findings support the benefits of bilingualism on L3 learning (Bialystok, 2001; Cenoz, 2000; Muñoz, 2000; Sanz, 2000), many Spanish-speaking students continue to fail high school WL courses (Georgia Department of Education, 2016). Therefore, secondary-level WL teachers may be in need of additional preparation and training for teaching bilingual students an L3 in order for them to better support this unique population of learners.

The purpose of the present study was to examine French teachers' prior training and preparation for teaching high school French to bilingual or Heritage speakers of Spanish. Thus far, the vast majority of research on WL teaching and learning has been conducted with learners who are monolingual speakers acquiring a second language (L2). This study fills a gap in the present body of knowledge on L3 instruction at the secondary level in a U.S. context.

Literature Review

Bilingualism and Research on L3 Learners

The fields of bilingualism and second language acquisition provide the theoretical framework for the current research on L3 acquisition. While L2 and L3 acquisition share many common features, each language that an individual learns has the ability to influence later language acquisition processes. There are a number of L3 learning models that have attempted to explain the phenomenon of multiple language acquisition; however, the present study adhered to the factor model and the multilingual processing model frameworks, both of which are explained below.

The Factor Model

Hufeisen and Marx (2007) proposed a factor model that attempts to explain how L3 learners build on their previous knowledge of language to support further language learning. According to this model, the factors that contribute to the acquisition of the first language (L1), the L2, the L3, and any other languages that are learned are described chronologically. As learners move from one language to another, the factors add up, thereby helping the learner acquire each additional language more efficiently and effectively.

The six factors that influence the language learning process include: neurophysiological, external, affective, cognitive, language specific, and linguistic factors (see Figure 1).

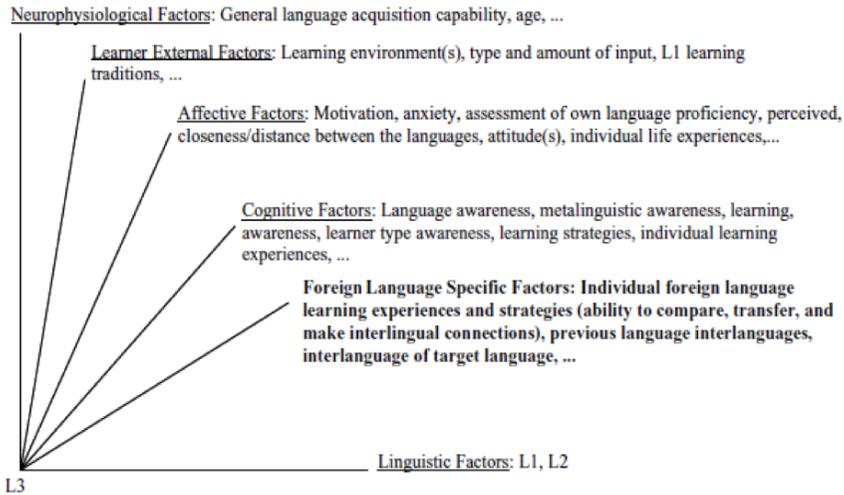


Figure 1. The Factor Model of L3 Learning (Hufeisen & Marx, 2007)

According to the model, the most benefits are derived from linguistic factors such as learners' individual experiences, strategies and techniques that were utilized during previous language learning, and knowledge of the L1 and L2. Hufeisen (2004) asserted that foreign language specific factors may be more predominant in some L3 learners, while being irrelevant for other learners, likely because every language learner has different cognitive abilities, learning experiences, motivation, and emotional reactions and anxieties when learning a new language. Prior research has examined the following learners' individual traits, which have been shown to have the greatest impact on language learning: aptitude, motivation, personality types (such as extraversion and introversion), temperament, risk-taking, intelligence, anxiety, creativity, and self-esteem (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2008; Skehan, 1991). For example, Furnham's (1990) study demonstrated that extraverts are more talkative and more fluent speakers than introverts. Therefore, learners have their own way of building a repertoire of successful strategies and techniques that are effective given their unique cognitive and personality traits. However, the same strategies and techniques that are helpful for some L3 learners may be ineffective for others. Thus, Hufeisen and Marx' Factor Model is highly dependent upon an individual's unique traits and experiences.

The Multilingual Processing Model

Meissner (2004) set forth the multilingual processing model to explain L3 acquisition while simultaneously helping speakers of Romance languages to build a stronger linguistic foundation in which to foster the language acquisition process. Meissner (2004) asserted that learners who have already mastered one Latin-based L2 will approach L3 written and oral discourse that is Latin-based through the lens of the L2. In other words, knowledge of the previously learned Latin-based L2 helps learners build their own hypotheses about how the new Latin-based L3 works. At the

beginning stages of L3 acquisition, the learner relies heavily on the grammatical and lexical systems of the previous languages learned, selecting either the L1 or the L2 depending on the closeness and similarities with the target language (TL). As learners grow more confident and proficient in the TL, their language learning hypotheses are constantly revised and developed toward the systems of the TL. Thus, each multilingual language learner constantly formulates, tests, rejects, and approves theories regarding how the L3 works. This process is known as a spontaneous grammar and Meissner (2004) asserted that the following conditions must be met for a spontaneous grammar to exist: (1) the languages must be typologically related, (2) the learner must be proficient in the L1 and L2, and (3) the learner must be instructed on how to use L1 and L2 knowledge for L3 acquisition. The pedagogical implications are the greatest for the last condition because simply knowing two or more languages of the same group is insufficient for successful L3 acquisition; rather, multilingual learners must be instructed and coached on how to tap into and appropriately use their previous linguistic knowledge to their advantage as well as how to build their receptivity for further language learning.

Overall, prior research supports the assertion that the L3 acquisition process is facilitated by prior L1 and L2 learning experiences (Cenoz & Valencia, 1994; Jessner, 1999; Thomas, 1988) due to the fact that multilinguals have developed a repertoire of language learning strategies and metalinguistic awareness (Thomas, 1988). Therefore, the tenets of the multilingual processing model (Meissner, 2004) suggest that L3 learners who already have advantages in language learning should benefit from strategy training to help them activate their prior language skills to advance their acquisition of the L3.

Research on General Strategy Use and Strategy Instruction

Each language learner is unique and learns at his or her own pace, which is largely determined by factors such as motivation, the instructional context, cognitive and affective individual differences, and the quantity and quality of the TL input among others. Individual differences, such as motivation, aptitude, age, socioeconomic status, and language background are closely related to the language learning strategies that students may employ to make their language learning easier, faster, more efficient, and/or more self-directed (Oxford, 1999). Some researchers have investigated the traits and qualities of good and bad language learners as well as what specific strategies are used among specific populations of learners such as males, immigrant students, and L3 learners (Dewaele, 2005; Griffiths, 2003; Lee & Oxford, 2008; Oxford, 1999; Reis, 1985; Rubin, 1975). Those individuals who are deemed good language learners often display the following traits and characteristics:

- They learn from their own mistakes
- They make guesses willingly and accurately
- They engage in TL practice frequently
- They have a strong desire to communicate in the TL
- They attend to both form and meaning
- They monitor their own speech and that of others (Rubin, 1975).

Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, and Todesco (1978) found that addressing the affective demands of language learning as well as learning to think in the TL are qualities of good language learners due to their increased self-awareness and autonomy. When language learners take responsibility for their own learning, they also seek more opportunities to apply language skills outside of the formal classroom. Hence, good language learners build upon classroom language experience in informal settings while communicating in the TL.

Good language learners also engage in strategy use, which has been shown to correlate with improved performance in several different aspects of language learning, such as reading speaking, listening, and writing (Bialystok, 1981; Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford, Park-Oh, Ito, & Sumrall, 1993; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Thompson & Rubin, 1993). Several studies have found a positive correlation between frequent strategy use and language learning achievement (Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). Furthermore, the appropriate use of strategies has been shown to have a positive effect on learning specific skills, such as vocabulary (Atay & Ozbulgan, 2007; Rasekh & Ranjbar, 2003), reading (Carrell, 1985; Chamot, 2005; Cohen, 1998; Macaro & Erler, 2007; McDonough 1999; Oxford 1996; Zhang, 2008), listening (Graham & Macaro, 2008; Vandergift & Tafaghodtari, 2010), and oral communication (Nakatani, 2005; Naughton, 2006). Moreover, Cohen (1998) and Griffiths (2013) asserted that it is the application of efficient strategies, their extent of use, and the appropriateness of strategy selection—and not the quantity of the strategies used—that distinguish a good language learner from a bad one.

Oxford's Strategy System

While several scholars have set forth different taxonomies for categorizing language learning strategies (Bialystok, 1978; Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1978; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Rubin, 1987), Oxford's (1990) model of language learning strategies is the most current and comprehensive strategy classification system. Oxford (1990) identified the following six language learning strategies:

- *memory strategies* (relating to how students remember language),
- *cognitive strategies* (relating to how students think about their learning),
- *compensation strategies* (helping students to make up for limited knowledge),
- *metacognitive strategies* (relating to how students manage their own learning),
- *affective strategies* (relating to students' feelings and emotions)
- *social strategies* (involving learning by interaction with others).

Memory Strategies

Memory-related strategies are the most useful for novice-level language learners because they primarily focus on vocabulary acquisition, while intermediate- and advanced-level learners rely less heavily on memorization because their vocabularies are richer in the TL (Oxford & Ehrman, 1995). Memory strategies help learners link new information to concepts and/or terms that already exist in their working memories. Some examples of memory strategies include making associations, using body movements and acronyms, and drawing pictures.

Cognitive Strategies

Language learners rely on cognitive strategies to attend to and process new information and to attribute deeper meaning to it. Analyzing, synthesizing, reasoning, finding similarities between the L1 and the L2, and reorganizing information are examples of cognitive strategies. Using the TL in naturalistic settings, such as watching television or listening to music, are also considered to be cognitive strategies because they prompt learners to process language more deeply. Several scholars have asserted that cognitive strategies have a positive effect on learners' proficiency levels (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995).

Compensation Strategies

Compensation strategies are used to make up for any information that is missing when learners read, write, listen, or speak in the TL. Using the analogy of a missing puzzle piece, learners use paralinguistic cues such as gestures and body language, pausing, rephrasing, guessing, and asking for clarification to understand messages in the TL. While making guesses based on context clues can be attributed to both compensation and cognitive strategies, Oxford asserted that these types of actions are compensatory in nature because they allow learners to fill in gaps in their TL knowledge. Positive correlations have been found between performance in a WL and the use of compensation strategies (Cohen, 1998; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995).

Metacognitive Strategies

These are the strategies that empower students to organize and plan their language learning. Metacognitive strategies help learners become more self-regulated and autonomous in their learning. Some examples of metacognitive strategies include identifying students' learning styles, needs, and preferences, as well as planning and organizing for learning—including monitoring progress, analyzing mistakes, adjusting goals and tasks, and evaluating learning. Metacognitive strategies have been shown to be strong predictors of successful language learning (Dreyer & Oxford, 1996; Oxford, 1990; Purpura, 1997). For the present study, metacognitive strategies play the most significant role because they allow students to reflect on their learning and to evaluate the efficacy of the strategies used. For example, bilingual L3 learners may analyze the effectiveness of language transfer from the L1 or the L2 to the L3 and WL teachers can help facilitate this process by explicitly teaching metacognitive strategies.

Affective Strategies

These strategies refer to students' emotions, attitudes, and feelings about the TL and the language learning process. Language anxiety also exerts an influence on students' affect; strategies such as relaxation techniques, rewards, positive self-talk, taking deep breaths, and self-encouragement may help alleviate learners' anxiety and increase their positive feelings about the TL. However, Mullins (1992) claimed that affective strategies play a more important role at the beginning stages of language learning because students with higher levels of proficiency no longer need or use these types of strategies.

Social Strategies

Learners rely on social strategies when they interact with others while learning the TL and culture. Some examples of social strategies include the following: talking with native speakers, asking for language advice and suggestions for improvement, asking clarification questions, and exploring social and cultural norms. The use

of social strategies has been found to correlate positively with successful language learning (Dreyer & Oxford, 1996; Oxford, 1990; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995).

Strategies for Teaching Spanish-Speaking Students

There is no one-size-fits-all approach for teaching language. Teachers, school administrators, researchers, and policy makers have struggled for decades to find the most optimal way to teach language to children, adolescents, and adults. Educators are required to differentiate their instruction in order to meet the needs of all of their students and to teach diverse groups of students effectively. Unfortunately, not all instructors receive sufficient training in how to do so in their teacher preparation programs. Moreover, teacher preparation programs may also lack specific training on how to instruct bilingual students in an L3; therefore, many language educators attempt to discover their own strategies for instructing this specific population of learners.

Teaching French language students whose primary home language is Spanish is a challenging task that requires WL teachers to have an understanding of the principles of both L2 and L3 theories as well as knowledge of approaches for teaching bilingual and Heritage speakers. Research findings have revealed two major strengths of multilingual students that WL teachers may tap into: (1) cross-linguistic knowledge (Cenoz, 2000) and (2) metalinguistic awareness (Jessner, 1999; Thomas, 1988). These factors may distinguish speakers of multiple languages from monolingual learners. De la Fuente and Lacroix (2015) asserted several practical suggestions for WL teachers that can be summarized as follows:

- Encourage multilingual students to look for similarities between languages and reactivate their prior linguistic knowledge.
- Use contrastive analysis to address differences between languages and avoid negative transfer, especially in languages from the same language group.
- Allow multilingual students act as “languages experts,” explaining and illustrating similarities and differences between languages to their classmates to promote motivation and improve self-image.
- Advise students to reflect upon their previous language learning experience and reapply strategies they used in the past to new learning situations (De la Fuente & Lacroix, 2015, p. 52).

Given the research findings cited above, it appears that that the best practices for teaching an L3 are a combination of cultural responsiveness (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Villegas & Lucas, 2002), linguistic sensitivity (Villegas & Lucas, 2002), strategy training (Oxford, 1990; Richards & Rogers, 1986), and activation of metalinguistic awareness (De Angelis, 2011; Jessner, 2008; Thomas, 1988). It is presently unknown how well secondary teachers of French who teach Hispanic students are trained on these research-based practices.

The present study attempts to fill this gap in the current body of knowledge by investigating the following research question: What type of training do French language teachers report receiving during their teacher preparation programs or as in-service teachers on strategy instruction and language learning strategy use for teaching Spanish-speaking students a third language?

Methods

Context and Participants

In order to gain a thorough perspective on the different types of training that French teachers may have received on strategy instruction and use for the instruction of French as an L3 to Spanish-speaking students, the initial context of this study consisted of all high school WL teachers in the state of Georgia, where one of the researchers is currently employed as an in-service teacher.

Current data from the Georgia Department of Education states that there are 181 school districts with approximately 2,200 schools in the state (GA Department of Education, 2017). WL instruction is required for a variety of different degrees and programs; given this, there exist a large number of WL programs in the state at the high school level. The largest school districts are located in the urban and suburban areas surrounding the capital city of Atlanta; however, the state varies greatly in geographic and economic characteristics across each region. Therefore, possible participants varied in their locations, educational and cultural backgrounds, levels of education, cultural and linguistic experience, and years of teaching experience.

The majority of students in the state choose to study Spanish, as this is the language most commonly offered at the secondary level and the second most spoken language in the U.S. Subsequently, most schools are able to offer Spanish, with French being the second most studied language, as demonstrated in Table 1.

Table 1

World Language Courses offered in High Schools in Georgia in 2016-2017

Language Course	High School Enrollment
Spanish	288,133
French	62,138
Latin	14,814
German	11,821
Chinese	3,169
Japanese	1,190
American Sign Language	1,271
Arabic	264
Portuguese	166
Russian	168
Italian	37
Greek	42
Total	383,213

While the number of students enrolled in Spanish courses are greater than those in French or in other Romance language courses, French is offered in 111 out of the 159 counties in the state, more than the other Romance languages combined—Portuguese is offered in 10 counties, and Italian is offered in 14 counties (Georgia

Department of Education, 2016). According to Cenoz (2000), students who are native or heritage speakers of Spanish have the benefit of access to two similar language systems when studying another Romance language. Bérubé and Marinova-Todd (2012) support this, indicating that languages with similar grammar and writing systems can enhance one another in the learning process. In addition, as Gay (2010) and Potowski and Carreira (2004) have demonstrated, teachers must connect with bilingual students by understanding their unique needs and challenges, as well as how to demonstrate respect for their home languages and cultures. Thus, training in strategy instruction and use for those teaching French as an L3 to native or heritage speakers of Spanish could be an important element in classrooms with significant numbers of students who identify in these categories. Through the process of data collection using surveys and interviews as described below, the context of this study was subsequently narrowed to focus on French teachers working in communities with a significant number of native or heritage Spanish language speakers, with face-to-face classes of at least 10 students.

Data Collection

This study employed a non-experimental qualitative grounded theory research method with an inductive approach and emphasis on specific people and/or situations (Maxwell, 2013) in order to collect and interpret rich data embedded in instructional contexts. Given the limited research on the pedagogical strategies used by instructors when teaching an L3 to students who are native or Heritage speakers of Spanish, this provided for investigation and analysis of the training for this unique pedagogical context that these educators reported as part of their teacher preparation programs in an attempt to add to the understanding of how this preparation may affect their instructional strategies. Following Maxwell (2013) and Glaser and Strauss (1967), the study did not seek to obtain representative opinions on preparation for L3 instruction to generalize to a larger population, but rather used systematic comparative analysis of data to connect research and theory and to develop a rich, thorough understanding of teacher perspectives, exploring how pedagogical strategies are used within this group.

To address the specific focus of this study—French language teacher strategy training for instruction of French to Spanish-speaking students—data was gathered on secondary French teachers across the state. Data reports from the Georgia Department of Education for the academic year 2016-2017, obtained by online request, detailed the names of 440 French teachers. As the next step, the websites of all high schools listed in the report were researched and e-mails were obtained for 266 participants. The researcher contacted all 266 participants by e-mail, inviting them to participate in the study; of those, 119 high school teachers agreed to participate and signed a consent form prior to completing the survey. One hundred of those 119 participants completed the survey, and from those, the researcher selected ten interview participants.

Instruments and Measures

For this phase of the study, two different measures were used to investigate the perspectives of teachers as related to their pre-service training: the Teacher Professional Development Questionnaire (see Appendix A) and open-ended interviews

(see Appendix B). The Teacher Professional Development Questionnaire was used to gather responses from all high school French teachers who participated in the study. After gathering data with this instrument, open-ended interviews were conducted with selected teachers to further explore the participants' perspectives.

Follow-Up Interviews

Using theory-based sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), interview participants were identified based on an initial understanding of the general context through the Teacher Professional Development Questionnaire and, as the study progressed, an iterative sampling process led the researcher to focus on the participants with experience teaching French as an L3 to students who are native or Heritage speakers of Spanish. Based on the response rate and the reported number of Spanish-speaking students in French classes, the researcher contacted selected educators with an invitation for follow-up interviews to explore how their teacher education programs and in-service training prepared them for this classroom experience, including strategies that they currently use.

Exploratory interview questions were prepared based on reviews of related research as well as responses from the initial survey. However, in accordance with grounded theory and the sequential nature of the design, these questions served as possible discussion topics given that each participant could introduce new ideas for exploration, therefore proposing new pathways of inquiry to be explored. The participants were asked to reflect on their own language learning experiences and strategy training instruction received in college or as a part of their professional development. These partially-structured interviews allowed for an evolving process that enabled the researcher and the participants to pursue themes that arose during the conversations.

Data Analysis

Initial information regarding teacher backgrounds and training related to teaching bilingual students was gathered through the Teacher Professional Development Questionnaire. Data from this survey were analyzed for relationships between years of teaching and professional development and training for instructing students learning French as an L3.

This first round supported the subsequent analysis of data collected through follow-up interviews, researcher notes on the interviews, and the coding process. Using the constant comparative method, interview data was coded at three levels: open, axial, and selective (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The interview transcripts were read multiple times, and first codes were created to help lower the data volume to manageable chunks. These open codes were used to find major themes among the larger data set. The process of reviewing the transcripts and notes then led to an inductive approach to identify and revise more specific codes such that they could be merged into categories, themes, and subthemes. Later, the codes, categories, and themes were examined for relationships, and this process of axial coding gave a wider perspective to view conceptual connections between themes and categories. Finally, selective coding was used to ascertain themes present in all data elements to identify emerging theories regarding how French teachers reported training or professional development for strategy instruction and use for teaching French as an L3 to bilingual and Heritage speakers of Spanish.

Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

The study employed three different measures to explore teacher perspectives in order to gather data from different points. By using the Teacher Professional Development Questionnaire, follow-up interviews, and peer debriefing, the researcher was able to triangulate the data between each source, using the responses from the questionnaire to identify points of discussion for interview participants as well as possible codes in analysis.

Open-Ended Interviews. By their nature, open-ended interviews can present bias on the part of both the researcher and the participants. In order to avoid reporter bias, the researcher structured each interview in an open-ended manner such that the surveys could provide initial talking points, but the participants were open to share their ideas related to the subject matter in an unrestricted manner. Participants were invited to add to their perspectives without intentional direction or influential questions from the researcher. For example, participants were read the following question from the questionnaire, “Did you receive any training on strategy instruction and language learning strategy use for teaching bilingual students?” They were then invited to discuss their perspectives on this general idea and to explore their personal viewpoints on the subject further. In order to avoid researcher bias, the researcher kept a journal throughout the interview, coding, and analysis process in an effort to identify possible personal biases and address them during each step. Additionally, peer debriefing was used to compare the interpretive results and ensure inter-rater reliability.

Findings

Survey Results

A Teacher Professional Development Questionnaire was created for this study specifically to learn about pre- and in-service educators’ preparation to teach bilingual language learners (see Appendix A). Two items from the survey specifically targeted teacher training and professional development related to L3 instruction. The first question asked participants about the type of training that they received on instructing bilingual students. The results are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Participants’ Training and Professional Development Related to Teaching Bilingual Students

Type of training received	Survey n=100	Interview n=10
Teacher preparation	37.0 %	40.0%
Professional development	43.0%	60.0%

A comparison of the types of training reveals that interview participants (N=10) reported having greater amounts of preparation and training for working with L3 learners than survey participants at large (N=100). Of note, most of the training occurred while they were in-service teachers and not during their teacher preparation programs.

Participants were also queried on the number of professional development hours that they received addressing techniques for instructing bilingual and Heritage speakers. Although the breakdown of hours demonstrates a variety of professional development hours, almost half of the participants claimed that no professional development—including conferences, seminars, workshops, and/or faculty meetings—was received. A summary of the professional development hours received by the study participants is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Participants' Professional Development Related to Teaching Bilingual Students in Hours

Hours of professional development receive in the past two years	Survey n=100	Interview n=10
0	57.0 %	40.0%
1–9	27.0%	50.0%
10–19	8.0%	10.0%
20+	8.0%	0.0%

Qualitative Results

Data from the open-ended interviews were analyzed qualitatively and the results revealed three major themes: (1) English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) training, (2) the absence of preparation for L3 instruction, and (3) teachers' perception of the need for focused training on L3 instruction. The frequency counts of these themes are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Frequency count of the major themes from open-ended interviews

Codes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totals
ESOL training	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	7	1	13
Absence of L3 preparation	1	1	3	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	12
Need for focused L3 training	3	16	2	2	3	0	2	4	1	2	35
Totals	7	18	6	2	4	1	3	6	9	4	60

One theme that emerged from many of the interviews was that participants received some training on strategies for teaching ESOL as a part of their pre-service training and/or as in-service teachers. For example, Participant 9 stated, "After teaching for several years, I got ESOL certification. Though the ESOL coursework was not specifically for Spanish-speaking students." Similarly, Participant 10, a French teacher and a department chair, echoed this by stating, "We don't have an ESOL program at our school, that I'm the ESL contact, so I manage all of the ESOL population that we have, since we don't have a program. All we have for them is accommodations and strategies to help them out, so I manage all of that." These and other

similar comments demonstrate that strategy training and preparation for ESOL were perceived as being relevant to the discussion. However, it is important to note that participants were referring to helping secondary students acquire English as an L2 and not French as an L3. As an illustration, Participant 1 shared, “I do have the ESOL certificate, but that doesn’t really deal with learning a third language. It’s an instruction for Spanish speakers, mostly what we deal with in Georgia with ESOL students, helping them in their English classes, but there is no support for a third language in the mix.” Furthermore, Participant 10 noted that bilingual Spanish-speakers in her French classes were not English language learners. She stated, “They’re all perfectly fluent in English, none of them are ESOL students, so they all either never qualified or have tested out a long time ago.” These participants demonstrate the relevancy of discussing ESOL certification or training when considering the topic of L3 instruction (see Table 4), even though the participants concluded that the Spanish-speaking students “. . . are perfectly fluent in English” and “no third language support” was necessary for them. In addition, when asked about professional development opportunities, the participants once again introduced the topic of ESOL training into the discussion. At first, Participant 1 mentioned “no professional development in regard to L3 instruction.” However, this participant later remembered having “a couple of things with ESOL and our inclusion students, but that doesn’t pertain to me as much.” These comments demonstrate that the participants felt it necessary to discuss training and professional development in ESOL even as they noted little relevance to L3 teaching.

Participants of the present research study shared that their Spanish-speaking students were “perfectly fluent in English” and did not require any of the ESOL accommodations and services. Thus, even if ESOL training was received by the pre-service teachers, it did not satisfy the need for L3 teaching strategies because general ESOL strategies do not meet the needs of bilingual Spanish-speaking students, and such training received by pre- or in-service teachers may not have been sufficient for instructing bilingual L3 learners. This suggests that French language teachers may be in need of different types of training to help their bilingual or Heritage Spanish-speaking students successfully learn French as an L3, both during pre-service training and in their professional development.

Another theme that was present in multiple interviews was the prevalence of L1 and L2 instructional methods and techniques and the absence of training on how to teach an L3 to bilingual students. Participant 1 asserted, “I do have the ESOL certificate, but that doesn’t really deal with learning a third language. Similarly, Participant 3 stated that in both her undergraduate and graduate degrees, there was “nothing specific about an L3, it was always considered a second language, so never a third.” These comments demonstrate the theme of the absence of specific training and preparation that arose in the majority of interviews (see Table 4). Of all of the interview participants, only Participant 4 confirmed that he received instruction on strategies for teaching bilingual students an L3 using Oxford’s (1990) Strategy System. Therefore, with the exception of Participant 4, all the participants interviewed claimed that they received no pre-service training on how to teach French to students who already know two languages, one of which is Latin-based. When Participant 1 cautiously stated, “I don’t know if I am equipped to help such a student,” she

expressed a concern common among other participants in the study; namely, the concern of “not being prepared” and “not knowing what to do for bilingual students.” Or, as Participant 5 phrased it, “I don’t have as much of the capacity or maybe just knowledge of how to do more for those students.” Overall, with the exception of Participant 4, the interviews revealed a recognition that there was an absence of training and development for teaching an L3 to bilingual and Heritage speakers of Spanish, with some acknowledging that this may prevent them from being prepared to fully support these students.

The final theme, teachers’ perception of the need for focused training on L3 instruction, was evident among several participants’ discussions. Specifically, participants suggested that there is a need for focused training on strategies and researched-based practices for teaching French to speakers of multiple languages. For example, Participant 1 stated, “Most of the strategies I give them because I’ve made that connection myself in learning their language.” Participant 2 asserted that she did not receive specific training for working with this unique population of learners; therefore, she and her colleagues are “inventing as we go.” The theme of a need for preparation and training was confirmed by Participant 3, who stated, “I think for new teachers who are coming into the field, they’re probably not being prepared the way they should be being prepared for working with Hispanics and for foreign language teachers specifically, there probably should be some kind of training ideas, series, something given to them to say how to work with students who already have two languages in their brain,” a sentiment that was echoed by many of the interview participants. Just as Participant 5 felt an absence of “capacity or maybe just knowledge of how to do more for these students,” Participant 2 went even further, suggesting “. . . that teachers who are going through teacher education programs must have a minor in Spanish, whether they be language teachers or not.” Thus, the participants did not feel adequately prepared for teaching bilingual Hispanic students and they recognized the need for L3 strategy training only after becoming in-service teachers and facing a real-world classroom. Furthermore, all of the participants expressed a desire to help their Spanish-speaking students more. One of the teachers interviewed for this study, Participant 2, even suggested creating a series of professional development workshops to educate current WL teachers on how to help bilingual Spanish-speaking students learn an L3.

Discussion

WL teachers, facing the challenges and realities of modern classrooms, must possess a broad array of skills and instructional strategies and they must be able to differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners. As WL classrooms become increasingly multicultural, training on how to work with specific populations of learners, such as bilingual students, is urgently needed. Teachers are required to design and implement standards-based lesson plans that are tailored to the needs of diverse student populations. Language educators must also collect, analyze, and utilize data on student achievement and progress while maintaining a safe environment that is conducive to learning. Furthermore, in order to be effective practitioners, teachers must also have a profound knowledge of students’ needs, interests, and challenges in addition to an awareness of and respect for students’ home languages and cultures.

Given the changing nature of the student population in WL classrooms in Georgia, where the present research study was conducted, educators must be prepared to support students with diverse home languages and cultures. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers are equipped with sufficient training and support to meet the needs of every student. Although very little is known about how teacher training programs equip pre-service teachers with the strategies for teaching an L3 to bilingual students, the present study attempted to investigate this topic. In summary, three major themes, evident in the open-ended interviews, emerged from this study: (1) ESOL training, (2) the absence of preparation and training for instructing an L3, and (3) teachers' perception of the need for focused L3 training. While ESOL training is an essential part of every teacher preparation program, it is not highly applicable to teaching French as an L3 to bilingual or Heritage speakers of Spanish. Moreover, French language teachers need different types of training to help their diverse students because general ESOL strategies do not meet the needs of bilingual Spanish speakers who learn French as an L3.

The second theme that emerged from the participant interviews—the absence of training on how to instruct an L3 to bilinguals—is extremely alarming, taking into consideration the current literature on multilingualism, which confirms the advantages of L3 acquisition when students utilize their prior linguistic knowledge to optimize their new language learning (Cenoz & Valencia, 1994; Jessner, 1999; Thomas, 1988). As prior research suggests, WL teachers can help their bilingual and multilingual learners by training students how to use the L1 and L2 language learning experiences to their advantage (Meissner, 2004), using techniques such as activating students' metalinguistic awareness (De Angelis, 2011; Jessner, 1999; Thomas, 1988) and strengthening students' cross-linguistic knowledge (Cenoz, 2000). The absence of training on the abovementioned strategies raises a concern regarding how well current WL educators in Georgia are prepared to teach diverse learners who are not monolingual English speakers learning French as an L2. Of all the teachers interviewed, only one participant reported having received strategy training for instructing L3 learners using Oxford's (1990) strategy system. The findings of the present study indicate that more pre- and in-service training opportunities are needed to help teachers better support this unique population of learners.

Finally, the interview participants expressed a need for specific tools and strategies tailored towards instructing bilingual language learners. The third major theme to emerge from the interview data—teachers' perception of the need for focused L3 training—reinforces the need for more professional development opportunities for language educators. Even though most participants reported that training on L3 instruction was not part of their pre-service training, several participants shared the desire to find effective strategies that work for Spanish speakers on their own such as making connections between two Latin-based languages and creating their own lists of language similarities and differences between the L1 or L2 and the L3. Despite the lack of training and professional development available on strategy instruction and language learning strategy use for teaching bilingual language learners, the secondary French teachers who participated in this study expressed the need for such training, especially training that includes research-based practices.

In general, the participants in this study acknowledged the need for aligning teacher preparation programs with the fast-changing student demographics in Georgia public schools. Even though the training that teachers received was not sufficient to meet the needs of language learners with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, the study participants sought to find strategies that would work for bilingual students on their own through trial and error. The participants clearly communicated their lack of preparation to support linguistically diverse students as well as their desire to better serve these students in the future.

Limitations

This study had several limitations that are common among qualitative studies; namely, participant availability, respondent subjectivity, and researcher influences. Moreover, the various proficiency levels of students who speak Spanish as a Heritage language were not taken into account and these students were grouped with bilingual Spanish speakers in the present study. Given that the Georgia Department of Education does not collect information on Heritage Spanish speakers' proficiency levels in Spanish, it was impossible to distinguish Heritage from bilingual Spanish-speaking students in the present study. It is possible that learners' proficiency levels in Spanish may affect how well they acquire a Latin-based L3.

Participant Availability

The initial sample of 266 high school French language teachers in Georgia was compiled from the data report roster obtained from the Georgia Department of Education. Of that theory-based sample, 119 high school teachers volunteered to participate, and 100 participants completed the questionnaire in full. Furthermore, only 10 interview participants were chosen among the first survey responders, based on their teaching experience with Spanish-speaking students and their willingness to participate in the follow-up interviews. Thus, the present findings cannot be generalizable to the entire population of French teachers of Spanish-speaking students learning an L3 in the U.S. because there was no random selection of participants from high schools across the country.

Reporter Bias

This study involved semi-structured interviews that allowed each participant to share unique personal and professional experiences. These varied experiences were evident in the recoded data; however, the level of subjectivity inherent in qualitative research included participants' diverse educational backgrounds both inside and outside of the U.S., non-traditional teacher certification programs, and professional development experiences in different school districts. Additionally, the validity of this research study depends on the participants' honesty, ability to respond accurately to each question, and individual interpretations of the survey and interview questions.

Researcher Bias

As Maxwell (2013) warned, researchers may feel tempted to select data that fits their preexisting theory and goals. In order to avoid this validity threat, the Teacher Professional Development Questionnaire was used to avoid researcher bias and to

allow the participants to respond to open-ended questions. Though personal and professional experiences were part of the interest in the topic of the study, the researcher tried to evaluate how personal values and expectations affected the conclusions of the study. Furthermore, the researcher approached the data without a preconceived theory in mind.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies could examine this issue at a national level, as the present study only focused on teacher preparation and training for L3 instruction within the context of Georgia. Future studies may also focus on teacher preparation programs to uncover which elements of the curriculum support L3 instruction. In addition, future studies could employ quantitative or mixed method designs. It will be important to examine the instruction and training that educators receive to help them support linguistically diverse students in their classrooms from multiple lenses, which will help uncover how best to instruct an L3 to bilingual and Heritage speakers of Spanish. As the U.S. becomes increasingly diverse and multicultural, there is an urgent need for more studies of this kind.

Conclusion

This study found that there is a lack of professional preparation and training related to teaching Spanish-speaking students an L3. It also uncovered the urgent need for professional development to help teachers meet the fast changing and increasingly diverse student demographics in the state. Given the results of this study, WL secondary teachers may benefit from training and professional development on how to teach bilingual Spanish-speaking students by activating their prior knowledge and building on two language systems (English and Spanish) instead of just one (only English). The results of the present study indicate that such training and preparation was either not received or was insufficient during their teacher preparation coursework. Furthermore, participants also reported inadequate or insufficient professional development opportunities as in-service teachers that specifically address how to help Spanish-speaking students succeed academically. The results of this study suggest that strategy training for instructing bilingual and Heritage Spanish speakers an L3 should be included in teacher preparation programs and should also be the focus of professional development workshops for in-service teachers.

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Appendix A

Teacher Professional Development Questionnaire

This survey is confidential. Valdosta State University and the researcher will keep your information confidential to the extent allowed by law. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to take the survey, to stop responding at any time, or to skip any questions that you do not want to answer. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Your completion of the survey serves as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research project and your certification that you are 18 or older.

Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to Anna Surin at asurin@valdosta.edu. This study has been exempted from Institutional Review Board (IRB) review in accordance with Federal regulations. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB Administrator at (229) 259-5045 or irb@valdosta.edu.

Please choose the best answer to the following questions:

Sex: Male Female Prefer not to answer

Age: a. 21-30 b. 31-40 c. 41-50 d. 51+

Race/Ethnicity: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, Prefer not to answer

Are you Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin? yes/no

What World Language(s) do you currently teach?

- Spanish
- French
- German
- Italian
- Portuguese
- Latin
- Other(s): please specify _____

Circle one option that best describes your educational level.

- Non-degreed
- Associate
- Bachelor's
- Master's
- Specialist
- Doctorate

In which areas do you hold a teaching certificate? (Please circle all that apply)

- French language
- Elementary Education
- Special Education
- ESL
- Other(s): please specify _____

What is your first language?

What language(s) do you speak at home?

List all the languages you know _____

How many years of French language teaching experience do you have?

How many years of overall teaching experience do you have?

Do you currently have Spanish-speaking students in your class?

If you answered "yes", how many Spanish-speaking students are enrolled in your French course this year?

- less than 5%
- 6-20%
- 21-50%
- more than 50%

Did you receive any training on strategy instruction and language learning strategy use for teaching bilingual students? yes/no

Please indicate the number of hours you have spent in professional development (conferences, seminars, workshops and/or faculty meetings), in the past five years, that addressed teaching heritage, bilingual, or Spanish speakers.

- 0
- 1-9
- 10-19
- 20+

Appendix B

Interview Questions

How did you become a World Language teacher?

Please describe your language learning experiences.

What led you to choose this profession?

What is your favorite aspect about teaching French?

Do you currently have Spanish-speaking students in your class? What are your experiences teaching Spanish-speaking students a third language?

Did you receive any training on strategy instruction and language learning strategy use for teaching Spanish-speaking students during your teacher preparation coursework?

What strategies do you use with Spanish-speaking students?