

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS AFFECTING FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

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1. INTRODUCTION

An educational interpretation of L₂ teaching needs a model that allows the identification of the factors that influence the L₂ interactive teaching and learning processes at each stage of its development.

After these factors have been determined, we think that it is important for L₂ teachers to study the relationship between them in their L₂ class by means of some research work. If L₂ teachers accept this commitment, reflect on the pedagogical actions that take place in their classroom and analyze them, they become researchers of their own classroom practices (Stenhouse 1987, Elliot 1990). This research attitude implies (Wallace 1991) using their existing *conceptual schemata* (mental construct) about L₂ teaching and learning, their *received knowledge* coming from theoretical disciplines and research results and their *experiential knowledge* from L₂ classes in order to design specific classroom research plans: controlling variables, drawing conclusions and apply them to their classroom teaching situations to improve them.

In this paper, we aim to:

- a) Offer a framework that helps to analyze L₂ teaching and learning, identify the relationship of some internal and external factors involved, and describe some variables related to students and L₂ teachers.
- b) Report about some research studies that have found out relevant conclusions.

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- c) Present some of the most frequent teaching practices in the Andalusian Primary and Secondary L₂ classes and the most motivating behaviour of the teacher.
- d) Propose the action-research paradigm as a useful approach to analyze, study and improve L₂ teaching and update the L₂ teachers' preparation and development through in-service research practices in their schools.

2. A FRAMEWORK FOR L₂ TEACHING ANALYSIS

The model presented in this diagram distinguishes five sets of variables that interact. At the top, are the **learner** and the **teacher**, the two main protagonists in the teaching and learning processes.

If the learner acquires the L₂ in a naturalistic setting, through communication in natural social situations, without the teacher's guide and outside the classroom setting, then he/she develops learning strategies and mental processes that lead to what is called **second language acquisition** (SLA) (Krashen 1981). This sequence only involves the factors included in boxes 1, 4 & 5: *the learner, his/her learning process and his/her results*.

PRESAGE AND CONTEXT VARIABLES

THE LEARNER

- Social context
- Individual charact.:
cognitive, motivation, and
personality

THE TEACHER

- Individual characteristics
- Beliefs, Preparation,

PROCESS VARIABLES

LEARNING PROCESS

ACQUISITION PROCESS

- Mental processes
- Learning strategies

THE CLASSROOM

- Educational treatment:
- . L2 Curriculum
 - . Tasks
 - . Materials

PRODUCT VARIABLES

RESULTS/ATTAINMENT/COMPETENCE/PROFICIENCY

- **Principles, concepts:**
Grammar, Sociolinguistics, Culture, Strategies
- **Procedures, skills:**
Oral and written communication/expression
- **Attitudes and values**

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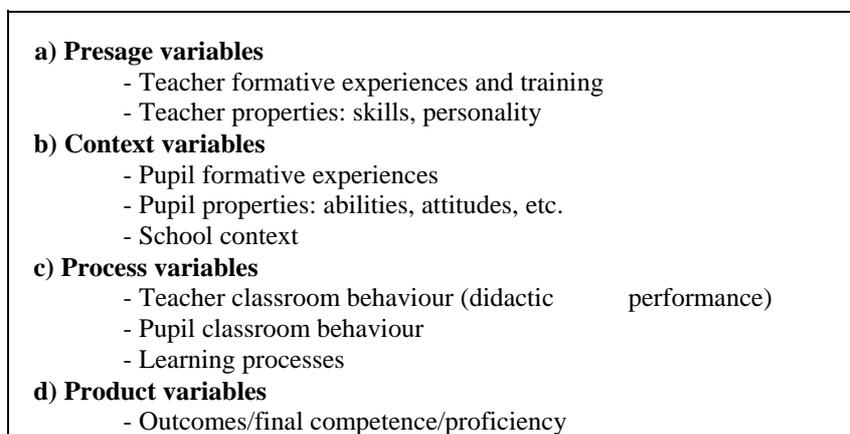
An alternative sequence takes place when the learner becomes a *student* and is guided by a *teacher* in a classroom setting. In this case the L₂ learning takes place through conscious study, with the help of the L₂ teacher and some teaching resources: books, recordings, etc. This educational treatment is likely to develop different strategies and learning processes, and consequently, different outcomes. This sequence, illustrated in boxes 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 is said to produce **second (or foreign) language learning** (SLL) (Krashen 1981).

Though, in many situations, it is difficult (or impossible) to know if SLA or SLL takes place, this distinction is useful, especially when we want to differentiate the type of context or setting in which L₂ learning takes place.

In this paper no distinction is made between the term L₂ (which is used generally when the language plays an institutional and social role in the community because it is used as a means of communication) and **foreign language (FL)** (when the language is not used as a means of communication in the community but learnt as a school subject). In the Andalusian context, in most areas, the L₂ is a FL and is taught as a school subject, for this reason in this paper, which relates mostly to our regional context, L₂ equals FL.

The model presented in the diagram was first proposed by Dunkin and Biddle and adapted later by Stern (1983:338 and 500). Dunkin and Biddle used four terms for the set of variables we have identified (1975:38):

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In this paper, only some of the internal and external factors belonging to the *presage, context and process* variables have been described.

3. THE STUDENT

Several research studies have given evidence that the learners' individual characteristics can help to explain his/her individual outcomes. The roles played by male and female students, their social contexts, beliefs and experiences, age, aptitude and cognitive characteristics, their affective states and personal characteristics help to understand their learning processes and the final results they obtain.

3.1. Gender

This variable has biological connotations but considered as **gender** it is often referred to the roles assumed and performed by male and female students, the attitudes and behaviours that they show in the English class.

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Based on sociolinguistic research (Labov 1991:206-7) we may accept the hypotheses that considers female students better at L₂ learning than male students and more open to new linguistic forms (Ellis 1994:202). Several studies have given evidence of this fact. In Burstall's longitudinal research (1975) female students did better than male students (she based her conclusions on 6000 children beginning L₂ French at 8 in English primary schools). She reports that girls scored significantly higher than boys on all tests. Other studies have obtained similar conclusions (Boyle 1987, Nyikos 1990). There are also studies that have not found substantial differences. So it would be interesting that each teacher explores what happens in his/her L₂ class.

Burstall also noticed that females had a more positive attitude to learning an L₂ than males. She found out that many more low-achieving boys tended to drop the L₂ class. Nevertheless, the girls with low outcomes did not. Gardner and Lambert (1972) also found that female students were more motivated for the learning of L₂ and had more favourable attitudes than male students. Similar results were obtained by Spolsky (1989).

A questionnaire like the one presented in Madrid et al. (1994) may be enough to explore the situation in our class. Once we have our results, some pedagogical implications become obvious:

If girls overcome boys in positive attitudes and motivation, their subconscious effect in group work tasks as male-students motivators may be more important than teachers think. In many cases girls' leadership and coordination in team work, project work and cooperative learning activities may be necessary.

3.2 Social context

Our students' social context is determined by a set of social factors associated with their social class, cultural level, home language, environmental language, ethnic and religious context, etc.

Some studies have proved the relationship between **social class** and L₁ development (Berstein 1971) or social class and L₂ learning (Preston 1989, Burstall 1975, 1979). If we accept the impact of the student's social class on L₁ development and the linguistic interdependence hypothesis (Cummins 1983) that establishes a close relationship between L₁ development and L₂ learning, we have to accept the relationship between social class, L₁ and L₂. According to Cummins' hypothesis the competency a child attains in a L₂ learned in a school context depends

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on the competencies developed in L₁. He draws a distinction between CALP (Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency) related to academic skills: reading, writing, etc. and BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills), that is the capacity all children have to communicate in informal contexts and natural situations. That capacity is universal with L₁.

The conclusions on social class and L₂ learning seem to suggest that (Ellis 1994:206):

Middle class children develop a higher level of L₂ proficiency and motivation than working class children in a formal classroom setting. However, when the learning process takes place in a natural setting or in a informal setting with little emphasis on academic tasks and more emphasis on communicative skills, the student's social class does not seem to be so relevant.

As Ellis (1994) points out, it is not the student's social class *per se* what is determinant but its effect on the student's previous experiences, stimuli, attitudes and motivation.

There are some studies that show a strong influence of **ethnic, religious and cultural** factors on L₂ learning:

- For example, those that examine the relationship between **cultural distance** and L₂ achievement (Svanes 1988), between social distance and psychological distance (Shumann 1978a, 1978b, 1978c). These conclusions suggest that students from an ethnic group similar culturally to the L₂ community are often more successful than those who feel more distant.

- The wish to be a valued member of the L₂ community and integrate with its members also enhances motivation for L₂ learning and good results (Gardner and Lambert 1959).

The students' learning differences (proficiency and attitudes) may also be affected by the kind of language they hear and are exposed to at home and in the immediate environment. The L₂ teaching to students coming from the following backgrounds and the results we may obtain with them may differ a lot:

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- Students living in bilingual families
- Students influenced by a supportive environment (Torremolinos, Benidorn)
- Natural settings where L₂ is used for communication either as an official language or as a community language.
- Educational settings where L₂ is used as a means of instruction in the classroom.

The community social context is reflected in the school and in its social atmosphere. But in addition to this, other "cultures" exist side by side: *the formal school culture* provided by the Educational Administration, *the students' informal culture*, often opposed to or different from the formal culture and *the teacher's informal culture* (Fermoso 1990). The student's informal culture, highly influenced by the family background, determines part of the school social context and has a strong influence on academic expectations, general attitudes towards L₂, intellectual habits, etc. Different types and levels of L₂ proficiency are associated with different school contexts.

3.3. The student's beliefs and experiences

Students -based on their experience as L₂ learners, on the hypothesis that they have been forming and on their results in L₂- have a variety of beliefs or "mini-theories" on L₂ learning that may affect the way they behave in class and the interest shown in certain academic tasks. It has been proved that young and adult students have specific beliefs concerning different aspects of L₂ learning (Wenden 1986, 1987, Horwitz 1987, Abraham and Vann 1987). Consequently, their reaction to certain classroom tasks may differ a lot according to the relevance and usefulness given to them. Little has been researched about the effect of all these internal factors in the students results with L₂.

3.4. Affective factors

Language learning involves emotional reactions that often determine positive or very negative results. Students react to their teacher's performance in class in a variety of affective ways. Sometimes they become really enthusiastic about the L₂ class, but often they reject the teaching situation and switch off. A careful study of our students' emotional states is fundamental if we want to understand what is going on in the L₂ class. Learner's beliefs about L₂, after some

years of instruction seem to be very stable, but their affective states may vary according to the teacher's personality traits, type of tasks performed in the classroom and the results they obtained.

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3.5. Motivation

Motivation is a key factor to understanding the student's affective state. A common problem associated with motivation has been its conceptualization. There have been different approaches and definitions of this construct, so it is difficult to compare results. We have conceptualized the student's motivation for learning an L₂ as an state of the individual which is characterized operationally by (Madrid et al. 1993a, 1993b, 1994):

- a) An **interest** and **desire** to learn L₂, that implies having positive **attitudes** towards L₂ learning.
- b) An **effort** to learn L₂ by means of a regular study.
- c) **Satisfaction** while experiencing L₂ learning, enjoying it and experiencing certain happiness and pleasure.

It is important to take note of the fact that sometimes our students show partial aspects of motivation depending on the teaching and learning situations. For example:

- They may express an specific interest for a type of exercise.
- They may desire to practice speaking and neglect writing
- They may enjoy singing a song or playing certain games.
- They may concentrate on the study of certain linguistic aspects and reject others.

We consider that the student is motivated when (s)he shows any these partial aspects of motivation, in some degree not necessarily a), b) and c) at the same time.

Motivation has been considered and studied from different points of view giving place to different paradigms:

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Intrinsic motivation

This paradigm considers that motivation derives from an **inherent** interest in the learning tasks without external control or intervention. Within this paradigm, the student's perception of him/herself, his/her self-esteem is fundamental. Useful techniques to increase the L₂ student's internal motivation are:

- Learners autonomy tasks
- Open L₂ syllabuses, for the student to choose and negotiate what (s)he likes to do
- Encouraging the student's self-esteem emphasizing his/her capacities for L₂ learning
- Favouring self-control opportunities and self-regulation of L₂ learning
- Helping the student to perceive his/her personal cognitive competence.

Extrinsic motivation

This paradigm is based on the studies that have considered motivation as a result of external factors. In this case the locus that causes motivation is external and, consequently, there is an external regulation: the degree of motivation will increase or decrease depending on the intensity of external factors.

Another approach would be to consider motivation as the result of a continuous success with L₂ or as the cause of it. The former is called **resultative** motivation and the latter **causative** motivation.

Gardner (1985) also introduces the concept of student's **orientation** to explain the reasons that students have to learn L₂. He distinguished **integrative orientation** (often called integrative motivation), when learners study an L₂ because they have interest in the people who speak it and in their culture and **instrumental orientation**, when they feel motivated by the L₂ practical value as an instrument of communication in today's society and for the advantages it may have (e.g. to find a job). Other authors have defined these constructs differently. Jacobovitz, for example, equates integrative orientation with intrinsic interest in L₂ and instrumental motivation with extrinsic interest. Other authors have argued that students find it impossible to separate the two kinds of motivation (Muchnick and Wolfe 1982). As a result of this variety of interpretations and definitions, the conclusions obtained are also difficult to compare.

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Our studies on the sources of motivation that influence most Andalusian students (Madrid et al. 1993a, 1993b, 1994) show that the most powerful motives are:

1. The **instrumental value** of foreign languages in today society:
 - a) to have better options in the job market,
 - b) to communicate with foreign people.
2. The nature and characteristics of **English, as a subject**, in comparison with the other curricular subjects: Maths, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Music, etc.
3. To live and **integrate** in the L₂ country. That implies a wish to know the foreign culture and become a member of the foreign country in the long run.
4. Classroom **activities** and exercises: acting out dialogues, communicating with other students, working in pairs and in teams, singing songs, etc.
5. The L₂ **teacher**, his/her classroom methodology and personal qualities.
6. **Parental influences**

Considering the ten following environmental and social factors, the students admit being influenced by them in this order:

1. Pop music	6. Television
2. School and teachers	7. Friends
3. Parents	8. Press
4. Films	9. Neighbours
5. Known natives	10. Church

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So, it seems clear that our students motivation (or orientation) with L₂ is instrumental, the main reasons being:

- Finding a good job
- Travelling around the world (and communicating with people)
- Communicating with foreigners
- Having a better education

Though there is some degree of integral orientation in our students, its influence is weaker and much less powerful than the instrumental motives.

Today's social pressure on young and adult L₂ students seems to act as an extrinsic motive that generates a powerful initial motivation, a willingness and predisposition that creates some intrinsic motivation that favours L₂ teaching and learning. But after two or three years those students who do not improve and obtain low grades become highly demotivated. In these cases the resultative hypothesis seems to be very active. As Ellis concludes (1994:515):

It is likely that the relationship between motivation and achievement is an interactive one. A high level of motivation does stimulate learning... conversely, a vicious circle of low motivation = low achievement = lower motivation can develop.

3.6. The student's personality

Classroom observation may lead to the conclusion that some students showing certain personality traits obtain good results systematically, whereas other behaviours impede effective learning. These intuitions have been difficult to prove. The research studies focused on the effect of certain personality traits on the student's L₂ achievement have often reached contradictory conclusions and sometimes no relationship at all (see Naiman, Frölich and Stern 1978, Tucker et al. 1976, Hamayan et al. 1977, Pritchard 1952, Dunkel 1947, Smart et al. 1970, Busch 1981, Scovel 1978, Taylor et al. 1971, Guiora et al. 1975, Strong 1983, Chapelle and Roberts 1986).

Our study (Madrid et al. 1994) -which was presented in the GRETA's *IX Jornadas Pedagógicas*- with Andalusian students has shown that there is no significant correlation between the student's L₂ academic results and their self-perception and self-esteem concerning the twelve

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personality features we explored. These were: shyness, extroversion, authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, machiavellianism, anomie, persistence, participation, empathy, cultural permeability, cultural tolerance and anxiety. Nevertheless there was some relationship between L₂ achievement and the students' perception of their:

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Persistence- Low anxiety state- Participation and extroversion- Authoritarianism |
|---|

3.7. Age

Young learners grow and, at different stages, develop a set of cognitive, emotional, physical and social characteristics that are essential in order to orient the L₂ teaching and understand their learning.

The popular belief that children learn an L₂ in the early years with ease has been maintained for many years. Montaigne wrote (Stern 1983:388):

In my infancy, I learnt to speak as pure Latin as my master without art, book, grammar...whipping or a single tear.

In the 60's, the idea of an early start with foreign languages became very popular and FLES programmes proliferated in America and Europe. This initiative gave place to the primary French Pilot Scheme in Britain and was widely discussed in two international conferences held in Hamburg in April 1962 and May 1966 (see Stern 1967 and 1969).

The belief that young learners are better at learning languages than adults is supported by the **critical period hypothesis** (Penfield and Roberts 1959, Andersson 1960, Lenneberg 1967). This hypothesis states that the early years before puberty offer the most favourable stage for L₂ learning to take place naturally and with ease. After this span of years this capacity decreases.

For Penfield and Roberts (1959) the optimum stage for children to learn L₂ falls within the first ten years of age, at that time the child's brain is plastic with an unusual capacity for

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learning language. For Lenneberg (1967), the years before puberty are also considered a biologically active period of language development. This ability deteriorates after puberty when the brain's left and right hemispheres have developed specialized functions.

Later works have proved that lateralization and the ability to acquire a second language completely are not related, questioning thus the neurological basis of the critical period hypothesis (see Whitakes, Bub and Leventer 1981, Krashen 1982).

The research focusing on the age issue has come to some fundamental conclusions:

- Adults learn faster than children and outperform them in Grammar in the short term (Olsen and Samuels 1973, Krashen, Long and Scarcella 1982), though with the learning of pronunciation children seem to be superior (Burstall 1975).

- With an early start children are likely to develop a native accent in informal learning contexts. There is no consensus on the optimum age for beginning L₂, most authors coincide in recommending as the optimum period the span of years before puberty.

- The process of acquiring an L₂ grammar does not seem to be so linked to any age span, but the acquisition of native-like pronunciation is.

There are also a number of potential advantages associated with young learners (Madrid 1980):

- They usually have an excellent capacity for reproducing and imitating the pronunciation of the language presented.
- They have great adaptability and seem to assimilate L₂ with relative ease.
- They show more spontaneity and fewer inhibitions than in the adolescent period and adulthood -which is important for communicating with few linguistic resources.

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- They accept natural communicative situations and prefabricated/block language without asking for an analytical and formal exploitation. This favours natural learning.
- They have time to become competent with L₂ and follow immersion programmes using L₂ as the language of instruction for other school curricular subjects. This produces, without any doubt, the most durable and efficient learning (See Swain and Lapkin 1982).

Nevertheless, an early start does not guarantee success if the teaching and learning processes are not adequate. As Gleeson and Stevenson have pointed out (1994), "beginning at 8 years of age does not seem to hold the perfect solution per se nor necessarily result in more proficiency or in speedier learning" if the teaching process is poor, unsuitable and inappropriate. Their research work proves that the proficiency level of some students that had studied English for 13 years was similar to others' with 6 months intensive tuition and a month holiday in England! (1994:194).

So it is clear that the starting age is important, but the type of tuition, the environment, opportunities to interact with natives and other external factors are also fundamental. The poor conditions that accompany the introduction of English in the Spanish Primary Education from Grade 3 may lead to similar poor results if the teaching quality remains as the present one:

- Two-hour weekly sessions or less
- Non-qualified teachers: many of them are not real English teachers, but school teachers with some in-service tuition/courses.
- Large groups of students: in urban areas around 40 students or more per class.
- Poor teaching resources: scanty materials and little space
- Inexistent contact with native speakers, etc.

3.7. Aptitude

There seems to be evidence that some students have innate abilities for L₂ learning (Neufel 1978) and others have not. So it would be interesting to know if the students with special qualities (aptitude) also obtain the highest proficiency level; if not, we must find out the cause of their low achievement.

Genese (1976) also found some correlation between intelligence, verbal reasoning and fluency with L₁ and some aspects of L₂. If the teacher wants to measure the students aptitude for L₂ learning, the Carroll and Sapon's (1967) test battery or Pimsleur's (1966) can be very useful. Nevertheless, these tests were standardized at the time that the audiolingual method was predominant and their approach may be exclusively linguistic lacking validity to evaluate the student's communicative abilities. A revision of these tests and an introduction of a component that can be used to predict the student's communicative abilities may be necessary.

3.8. Cognitive styles

Students perceive, process and organize their learning in different ways. These particular ways in which they try to learn are called **cognitive styles**, *learning styles or cognitive strategies* (see Brown 1980, García Ramos 1989). The cognitive styles that have received most attention by research are field-dependence and field-independence, that can be measured with Witkin et al. (1977) *Embedded Figures Test* (EFT). These students seem to learn in opposite ways:

Field independent students	Field dependent students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analytical perception - Perceive (and prefer) discrete elements - They are independent, individualistic - They show little empathy - Good classroom learners (prefer formal situations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Global perception - Prefer integral approaches - They are more sociable - More empathy - Prefer natural situations, informal contexts

Other learner styles include these dichotomies (Garcia Ramos 1989): reflexive/impulsive students, focalizers/selective, totalizer/partialist, tolerant/intolerant, etc.

4. TEACHERS

Teachers also bring individual characteristics to the L₂ classroom that may have an influence on the students performance and in their final results. The teacher formative experiences, his/her training experiences and personal characteristics are called **presage variables**, whereas his/her performance in the L₂ classroom, teaching style and methodology are part of the **process variables** (Dunkin and Biddle 1974:38).

Teachers, like learners, have personal characteristics and individual differences that influence their performance in the L₂ class and, consequently, their effect on the students outcomes.

For example, male and female teachers may transmit certain values and create attitudes that may have some effect on the student's academic behaviour and on his/her final results.

The teacher's **age** may also be an important factor. It is usually associated with teaching experience, which in turn may help to explain the teacher's

- efficiency in the L₂ class,
- activity, energy and movement in the classroom,
- openness to innovations and new methodological approaches,
- enthusiasm and degree of hopefulness, which may decrease with age,
- willingness to strive and improve teaching and learning conditions, etc.

Other aspects related to age, though interesting and controversial, remain quite unknown:

- What provides better results: the experience of old teachers or the energy of young ones? What is preferable in L₂ classes: experience or youth? What teaching styles are more efficient?
- What are the routines and characteristic teaching styles of old, middle-aged and young teachers? What are their common features and practices?

The teacher's **social class**, ideology and beliefs derived from his/her background may also influence his/her behaviour and performance in class and the type of attitudes and beliefs (s)he transmits, supports and develops in his/her students. Sometimes the teacher's ideology may be related to his/her compromise and commitment with the type of instruction and education (s)he provides. For example, some progressive teachers identify themselves with certain practices which are associated with the progressive teaching movement. Other teachers maintain more traditional beliefs and teaching styles or combine the progressive and traditional practices opting for different positions in this continuum (Bennet 1976):

Progressive teachers	Traditional teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrate subjects and contents (globalization, cross-curricular activities) - Act as facilitator of learning experiences. - Learners are active agents of their learning. - Students negotiate curriculum. - Encourage students to learn through discovering techniques. - Promote intrinsic motivation. - Do not give much importance to grades and academic standards. - Administer few regular exams. - Give emphasis to team work. Do not promote competitiveness. - Their teaching goes beyond the classroom setting. - Orient their exercises towards creativity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Treat subjects more independently. - Act as instructors. They are the main source of knowledge. - Learners play a more passive role. - Determine and set the L₂ curriculum. - Encourage students to learn through study, repetition and practice. - Use extrinsic motivation techniques: rewards, "carrot and stick techniques". - Give great importance to academic standards. - Administer regular exams. - Put emphasis on individual emulation and competitiveness - Teaching takes place in the classroom models.

The teacher **training experiences**, his/her theoretical and practice preparation and the "hidden curriculum" (s)he was exposed to at college are likely to influence his/her future teaching performance in the classroom, too. The L₂ classroom analyses we have made in

Eastern Andalusian schools show that in our L₂ Primary School classes, teachers spend most of the time with these activities (Molina 1989:209):

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Explaining to the whole class the use and usage of the L₂ syllabus in L₁.2. Doing grammar exercises on the blackboard (L₂)3. Trying to maintain discipline.4. Pupils doing individual grammar exercise in their workbook (L₂)5. Doing listening comprehension exercises: giving oral answers (L₂).6. Reading sentences or texts with emphasis on pronunciation.7. Telling individual children what to do in L₁.8. Playing games in L₁ using the known L₂9. Answering students questions in L₁.10. Doing communicative activities. |
|--|

In Secondary Education, the results we have obtained in eight Andalusian schools show that teachers give priorities to certain linguistic aspects and skills and spend more time teaching and/or developing them. The aspects that receive more attention from the teacher in the L₂ class and the type of activities that the students are engaged in are the following:

The teacher explaining/exploiting	The student working with
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Grammar2. Vocabulary3. Integration of Gramat. & vocab.4. Pronunciation5. Culture6. Sociolinguistic elements	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Grammar exercises2. Integrating gramat. & vocab.3. Vocabulary4. Pronunciation5. Socioling. elements6. Culture

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The skills that received more attention in the L₂ class according to our observations and analysis in the eight schools were:

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Listening to the L₂ (includes the teacher using L₂)2. Reading and writing exercises.3. Listening to the teacher (and/or classmate) and speaking4. Reading only5. Listening and reading simultaneously6. Listening and writing |
|---|

All the teachers and students observed worked with **sentences** much more than with texts.

It would be interesting to explore the relationship between the kind of training that L₂ teachers have received, their ideas and beliefs on language teaching and learning, their classroom methodology and the results they obtain in class.

4.1. The teacher's personality qualities

Other factors that influence the students attitudes and motivation in the L₂ class are the teacher's personality traits and his/her behaviour in class (see Madrid et al. 1993b). When we asked students what aspects of their L₂ teachers they liked best, their answers included lots of statements relating to affective and personal factors:

- Show an interest in the students
- Be friendly and funny
- Being on close terms with the students
- Have a good sense of humour
- Treat students well
- Be patient
- Teach in a pleasant and graceful way
- Be kind

The qualities and characteristics that define a good L₂ teacher, from the student's point of view include:

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- Having a good command of L₂
- Explaining clearly
- Being responsible, fair and tolerant
- Being fluent in English and have a good pronunciation
- Being a good friend for the student
- Having a rapport with the students

In a closed questionnaire, where we asked for the most relevant qualities and personality traits in the L₂ class, we obtained very similar results. The students again highlighted the importance of being:

- helpful
- fair
- tolerant and flexible
- friendly and funny

The most relevant teaching qualities were:

- Being fluent
- Having a good pronunciation
- Explaining clearly
- Having a good didactic preparation

All these variables are highly appreciated by students, consequently any effort on the part of the teacher to teach and behave in this direction is likely to have positive effects on the students performance.

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