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Surveys of Ph.D./Ed.D. Theses

Review of doctoral research in second-language teaching and learning in Australia (2003–2006)

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This article reviews recent doctoral research in Australian universities in the area of language teaching and learning. Doctoral work in three main areas of research concentration is described: language teaching, language learning, and writing. The authors whose studies are reviewed are graduates of the Australian National University, Griffith University, Macquarie University, the University of Technology, Sydney, the University of Sydney, the University of New South Wales, the University of Melbourne, Monash University, La Trobe University, Deakin University and Murdoch University.

1. Introduction

This review highlights recent doctoral research in Australian universities in the area of language teaching and learning. To undertake this review we contacted graduate officers and program coordinators, and also pursued the contacts that each of us had in the various universities. When we had as complete a list as we could obtain we looked for areas of research concentration in language teaching and learning. Three main areas of concentration emerged, which we report on in this article: language teaching, language learning, and writing. For each of these we selected five theses. The theses we chose aimed to show the range of research done in each of the three areas, as well to represent different universities in different states of Australia.[1] We found it much more difficult to get this information than we had anticipated, however. In some cases, we also found it surprisingly hard to get copies of theses

[1] Besides the research we report on here, research was also carried out in the areas of computer assisted language learning, speaking, vocabulary learning, learning strategies, English for Specific Purposes, language planning, language teacher professional development, language testing and bilingualism. We regret having to exclude work in these areas from this article as we needed to keep the article focused – and we had a word limit – as thesis writers do as well.

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we wanted to read. Some were available online through the university library but many were not. Some could not be borrowed and some we had to purchase in order to be able to read them. The message to doctoral graduates is, if you want people to know about your work, you need to publish it. Otherwise, potential readers may not find out about it or if they do, may not be able to access it.

Doctoral research in the area of language teaching and learning is, however, very much alive and well in Australian universities. All are able to award the Ph.D. degree, and in many cases Ed.D. degrees as well. Doctoral work in this area in our own universities goes back, at least, to the formation of the Linguistics Department at the University of Sydney in 1976 where, under the direction of the founding professor of linguistics, Michael Halliday, the first MA degree in applied linguistics was offered in Australia. Terry Quinn established applied linguistics research at the University of Melbourne and, with his arrival in Australia, Christopher Candlin established the applied linguistics program at Macquarie University in Sydney. Halliday's work in systemic functional linguistics and the work on genre theory that followed has been important in language teaching research in Australia. Candlin's work with the Linguistics Department and the National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research (NCELTR) at Macquarie University has also been significant. These are by no means the only universities where important applied linguistics research has been carried out, however, as we hope to show in this review. The authors whose studies we review are graduates of the Australian National University, Griffith University, Macquarie University, the University of Technology, Sydney, the University of Sydney, the University of New South Wales, the University of Melbourne, Monash University, La Trobe University, Deakin University and Murdoch University. We hope readers of this journal enjoy this review and get a sense of the strength of doctoral research in the area of language learning and teaching being carried out in Australian universities.

2. Language teaching

The studies that follow focus on language teaching, mainly examining participants' beliefs, perceptions, views, values, and attitudes as they enact their roles as teachers. Laskowski (2006) focuses on the 'conceptualizations' of three Japanese junior high school teachers of English (JTEs) about their practices, while Price's (2005) study examines the experiences of three Education Assistants (EAs) in the process of becoming teachers. Ellis (2003) researches teachers' professional knowledge and beliefs about the contributions of their own language learning to teaching English as a Second Language (ESL). Using a study of her learners' perceptions of Italian L2 literature as the starting point, Carroli (2005) then explores pedagogical practices to enhance the L2 literature learning experience. Melles' (2004) research is a critical ethnography of his own and other teachers' understandings of how they negotiate curriculum work in ESL. As a 'portfolio' of studies, his thesis reflects a growing trend in Australia of conducting doctoral research located in and focusing on the author's specific workplace and of reporting it through integrated small-scale projects and published works.

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The questions motivating Laskowski's (2006) research were: What are the teaching practices of the three JTEs? What are the beliefs that underpin their teaching practices and in what ways do they impact on their teaching? The study took account of changing educational policies, and new English language teaching approaches incorporating communicatively-based and oral forms of language pedagogy, specifically the Course of Study (*Gakusho Shido Yoryo*) mandated by the (then) Japanese Ministry of Education (*Monbusho*). Consideration of the broader educational context (e.g. Gorsuch 2000) was deemed essential to understanding teachers' behaviours and conceptualizations from an ecological and cultural perspective. Using a naturalistic, ethnographically-oriented approach, Laskowski video-recorded three early (Teacher A), mid (Teacher C) and late career (Teacher B) teachers over eleven months as they each taught 45-minute lessons to 1st–3rd year classes, and interviewed them following the lessons. Data from 45 observations and 34 interviews were transcribed immediately after classroom visits.

Data analysis was achieved through multiple methods, but especially a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss 1967) generating theory from data. The data were first coded into open coding categories – segments or units identifying the key topics covered and represented in the participants' own words, e.g. *I like to talk with students as much as possible* (p. 95). Initial categories were later reduced (following Borg 1998) to an initial list of three main conceptual categories: pedagogical, contextual, and experiential. In a further analytical development, a technique of 'memoing' (see Corbin & Strauss 1990) was later used to link thematic areas so that a domain analysis framework (Spradley 1979) could be constructed. The domain structures consisted of subcategories (e.g. *the early lesson plan*, *expressions and grammar points*) linked by a semantic relationship (i.e. *is a reason*) to major 'core' themes from all three teachers (e.g. *I have to finish the textbook*). The domain analysis was further analysed into the formal themes that influenced instruction – those linked to institutional or educational policies (e.g. *have to prepare students for the* [*mandated*] *test*) – and informal themes that emanated from personal philosophies or orientations (e.g. *would like to do more communicative activities but. . .*). Finally, having constructed a grounded analysis and theoretical framework for the teachers' collective conceptualizations, Laskowski analysed their individual conceptual orientations, using metaphor (e.g. Cameron & Stelma 2004) as a heuristic tool. Following Katz (1996), he designated the teachers' personal teaching orientations as 'friendly confidante' (Teacher A), 'exemplar' (Teacher B) and 'technician' (Teacher C), confirming the reliability of his analyses of the teachers' metaphorical predispositions by referring them to the three research participants for 'member checking' (Denzin & Lincoln 1994). From this research, Laskowski concluded that his findings reconfirm the complexity of teacher cognition shown by previous studies, including its dependence on localized and contextualized cultural, social, and educational factors, and its instability and susceptibility to changing influences through tensions between formal and informal conceptual demands.

Price's (2005) study was located in the District High School of the remote community of Christmas Island and embedded within the context of wider policy initiatives by the Western Australian Department of Education to broaden recruitment and promotion for professionals from non-mainstream backgrounds. The colonial history of Christmas Island and the socio-cultural, political, legal, and economic impact of colonialism on the European and non-European community were significant contextual factors in the research. Using

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a case study approach, she examined the extent to which a traditional Initial Teacher Education (ITE) program from a Higher Education Institute (HEI) coupled with a school initiated Teacher Trainee Program met the needs of three non-mainstream female Education Assistants (EA) (one Singaporean and two Malaysian) who were retraining to become teachers through external studies. Preceding the research, Price had recently gained promotion as the Deputy Principal of the school and was in a position to play a direct role in researching the development of the program. She aimed to identify the forces that impacted on successful course engagement and to make recommendations for maximum accommodation of cultural, personal and educational needs.

Data comprising formal and informal open-ended interviews, participants' narrative journal writing (including the researcher's), observational field notes, and written documents were collected over four years. Other people influencing the participants' experiences (e.g. mentors, cooperating teachers, school administrators) were also interviewed as necessary in response to emerging issues. Methodologically, the study employed approaches from grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967) and socio-cultural discourse analysis (Gee 1999). Field Theory (Lewin 1952) was also used to distil the data and to identify major 'Driving' and 'Restraining' forces. Following the data-driven approaches of grounded theory, the researcher modified initial research 'hunches' in the light of emerging evidence and formulated conceptual categories, which were further modified as new data were collected and analysed. Categorical properties (further abstractions of the category) were also developed to validate established categories. The researcher sought relationships among the categories that would contribute to theory development. Progressively, individual case records for each participant were developed, and a cross-case analysis was also conducted to identify factors impacting all three EAs. To further refine broad categories emerging from grounded theory, Field Theory was used to break categories into 'elements of construction' capable of identifying positive or negative impacts on success and 'Relative Impact Matrices' were developed for each participant. Both researcher and participant generated categories were used and the trustworthiness was increased by referring to the participants for verification.

Following Gee (1999) and using the notion of 'situated meaning', Price also explored the underlying values and worldviews of the participants as members of a particular 'Discourse' community with contextually motivated ways of talking, thinking and acting. Discourse analysis drew out factors that revealed how the participants were adapting to their emerging roles as teachers. Price used the terms 'chela' (a Buddhist term for a novice), 'ansar' (an Islamic term meaning both convert and helper) and 'acolyte' (Greek for assistant or beginner) to highlight the inter-cultural and neo-colonial dimensions of the participants' 'life spaces' (Lewin 1952). At the end of the program, two participants had completed it successfully, while one had withdrawn. The forces shaping their experiences related primarily to the role of the HEI, the school and the researcher, but also to broader factors from the community, the ways they were positioned within that community, and from their families. Price argues that although technical, administrative and resource shifts would be instrumental in positively reshaping experiences, the more important necessary shifts related to attitudinal factors, such as community attitudes to non-native speakers, and the 'Discourse' practices of academe.

The focus of Ellis's (2003) study is on what contribution learning a second language makes to the professional knowledge and beliefs of adult ESL teachers. Ellis notes the

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lack of research on the ESL teacher who teaches English through English, a situation dominant in national adult immigrant programs in Australia, and on the question of whether experiences of learning a language are beneficial in teaching English. This qualitative study drew on research in bilingualism, SLA, teacher cognition, and critical theory. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and detailed language biographies of 31 practising ESL teachers. Through analysis of the data, 8 respondents were categorized as circumstantial bilinguals (non-native English speakers and early bilinguals), 14 as elective bilinguals (native English speakers who could function competently in another language) and 9 as monolinguals (whose exposure to language learning had not led to competence). Three major themes emerged: (i) teachers' beliefs about learning a second language; (ii) the contribution made by teachers' language learning experiences to their reported beliefs and practices; and (iii) teachers' beliefs about the role of first language (L1) in second-language (L2) learning.

In the first thematic area differences were found in teachers' attitudes to learning. Monolingual teachers saw ESL learning as almost impossible and challenging to learners' self-esteem; on the contrary, bilingual teachers saw it as a dynamic and changing process which was challenging but achievable. Common to both groups was reference to their own language learning as a private matter unrelated to their public, professional lives. The second theme, the contributions from language learning, was manifested in two major ways: insights about language and language use; and insights about language learning and teaching. In the first category there were insights about language in general, contrasts between the other language and English, language-using experiences of bilinguals/biculturals, and the potential of the other language as a pedagogical tool. The second category included insights about learning strategies, affective issues in language learning, experiential knowledge of different teaching approaches, and knowledge of different teaching contexts. Teachers with broader and richer language backgrounds evidenced the most sophisticated insights. The third thematic area indicated little difference between monolingual and bilingual teachers; the use of the first language in the ESL classroom was characterized negatively by both groups, though the rationales for exclusion of the L1s the bilingual teachers could speak were articulated weakly by both groups. Ellis ascribes these beliefs to the prevailing monolingualism of the adult ESL profession.

Ellis concludes that both bilingual and monolingual ESL teachers draw primarily on experiential knowledge of any language as a resource in teaching and this knowledge is important in how they shape and inform their conceptions of their practices. Bilingual teachers draw on richer resources from being non-native speakers and from formal and informal language learning. Nevertheless, both groups construct ESL as 'the teaching of English' rather than 'the teaching of a second language' and thus the 'experiental knowledge' (Wallace 1991) of bilinguals is undervalued, while the assumption that a monolingual can teach someone to be bilingual is unquestioned. Ellis goes on to discuss her findings within Bordieu's (1977) notion of 'habitus', or strategic practice structured by social environment, which is the basis for Gogolin's (1994) concept of 'monolingual habitus'. She refers also to the relationship of her findings to Skutnabb-Kangas's (2000) proposition of 'monolingual reductionism' in language teaching and argues that teacher language learning background is an important area for further research.

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The study by Carroli (2005) analyses the perceptions and experiences of students enrolled in an undergraduate Italian program at the Australian National University of the literary texts in their courses. Carroli argues that L2 learners' experiences of L2 literature and methods for studying their perceptions and learning approaches are barely researched. Following from a preliminary mixed-methods investigation using survey data, which found that students generally perceived literature as entertainment and L2 literature as difficult language learning, the thesis then reports two connected cross-sectional studies. Study 1 concerned students' perceptions and approaches to the study of L2 literature, while Study 2 looked at ways of enhancing the literature learning experience while also improving the language and learning and cultural awareness of L2 students studying L2 literature. Study 1 involved primarily qualitative investigation with 12 students, using audio-recorded interviews, student journals, open-ended survey responses, and students' written interpretations of literary texts, as well as the researcher's classroom observation notes. Some quantitative survey data were also collected for curriculum planning purposes. When categorized, the data revealed considerable variation in how students perceived, approached and learned from literary texts. The main categories related to students' perceptions of L2 literature, its role, and their approach to its study. Links were discerned between learning, approach and perception. Students' perceptions of L2 literature as holistic, multifaceted, and favourable led to integrated and more complex language and literature learning. Less inclusive perceptions, anxiety, and atomistic learning approaches revealed a lack of awareness of links between language, literature and culture and led to less satisfactory learning. Study 1 revealed that the majority of the students fell into the latter category.

As a result, Study 2, conducted with 14 students not involved in Study 1, aimed to set in place more inclusive learning experiences. Principles from phenomenography (awareness, reflective variation, and change) and hermeneutics (the class as a learning community) were used to build new pedagogic approaches. Luperini's (1998) concept of the class as a learning community was combined with theories of 'reflective variation' (Marton, Carlsson-Asplund & Halász 1992), and 'awareness' (Marton & Booth 1997). Students were introduced to three related reading texts (Benni 1994), where pedagogical cycles of individual reading and writing were followed by classroom comparison of students' responses, text re-reading and re-writing. The process built on Halász' (1983) repeated reading approach, principles from L2 consciousness-raising, focus on form and stylistics theory, and the notion of narrow reading (Krashen 1981; Carrell 1984) and was further broadened to include stylistic analysis, intra-textual and intertextual awareness, and interactive classroom practices. The purpose was to expose whether these approaches would provide more advanced understandings of the text than those exhibited in Study 1. The findings indicated increased student confidence and competence through strategies that encouraged a sense of community, and language, cultural and literary competence, as well as the ability to reflect, discuss and, if required, to modify learning strategies and processes. Carrolli identifies four critical 'moments': reflection that contributed to development of the class as a hermeneutic community: analysis of the texts (individual and collective); critical awareness of one's reading approach, comparison and mediation (if necessary) of perceptions in class; and the educator's intervention. Taken collectively, she argues, the three studies indicate that L2 literature has an important place in the curriculum and in the perceptions of students, at both language and cultural levels.

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However, learning is enhanced by development of a shared learning environment, inclusive of collective critical reflection and discussion of variation in students' responses to literature, where students can take charge of their learning. The study of literature, using such pedagogical approaches, allows students not only to increase language learning but also to become more competent 'intercultural travellers' (p. 114).

Melles' (2004) Ed.D. thesis comprises a 'portfolio' of workplace-based research undertaken in the Department of Community and Continuing Education in a Polytechnic Institute in New Zealand over a four year period. The elective part of the thesis, Section 1, is composed of journal articles (Melles 1998, 1999), conference papers, articles then under review (Melles 2000) and a book chapter (Melles 2001). The central focus is an ecological analysis of the negotiations that practitioners in this workplace need to manage their work, specifically: (i) negotiating their position as teacher researchers; (ii) negotiating team teaching; (iii) negotiating the limitations of current constructions of action research. Section 2 is a dissertation complementing and continuing the elective; in this review, we focus on the dissertation research.

The dissertation examines managers', practitioners' and students' discourses in enacting ESL curriculum work using perspectives of critical ethnography, where the researcher foregrounds autobiography and community practices and declares his own values, biases and interests within the research process. As in critical discourse studies (Fairclough 1995), critical ethnography also foregrounds social influences and injustices pertaining, for example, to the role of culture and gender in shaping knowledge and experience. Melles employed multiple data collection tools including five practitioner and seven student interviews, team meeting recordings, student journal writing, focus group meetings with students, documentary analysis, and images that could be scheduled within and be complementary to his weekly teaching responsibilities. The account of the workplace he constructs explores ESL curriculum work as the product of discourses within communities of practice, which simultaneously create limitations and possibilities.

In this community, curriculum is divided into 'new' and 'old' worlds by competency-based discourse and standards frameworks; new practices are taken up with varying degrees of commitment by practitioners and managers and ESL practitioners tend to resist discourses of accountability in comparison with mainstream colleagues. Through prevailing discourses of learner need, ESL work is situated discoursally on the periphery of mainstream institutional processes, as practitioners struggle to retain autonomy over the kind of curriculum they believe should be directed at immigrant learners. Nevertheless, autonomy does not necessarily lead to the most productive outcomes, as it can disguise ideological distortions, revealed in this situation in conflicting responses to a group of Korean students. Melles also points to power differentials exploited among teachers in negotiating 'eclectic' approaches to curriculum work which can lead to lack of coherence and quality. These differentials also emerged in students' levels of openness to curriculum negotiation and in the nature of the identities that teachers thus attributed to students. Melles found that teachers rationalized the behaviours of students in accordance with their curriculum and pedagogic ideologies, but that teacher ideologies never fully interpreted the students' accounts of their curriculum experiences and needs. Learner needs consistently exceeded teacher notions of these needs and were challenged by teachers' constructions of themselves as facilitators rather than authorities. The author

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concludes that ESL marginalization and isolation is partly created by practitioners' own discourses and that the culture of action research developed within the ESL unit is an important way for teachers to develop closer links between their research and practice.

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3. Language learning

The theses which focused on L2 learning exhibited great variability in terms of theoretical approach, data collection techniques and data analysis, often using both quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide insight into the research questions posed. We begin with Takahashi's (2006) Ph.D., which investigated the ways in which young Japanese women's desire to learn English developed and how this desire impacted on the choices they made about learning English in Australia and Japan. Two Doctor of Education theses follow, moving into the classroom context. The focus of Dashwood's (2005) dissertation is on the 'third turn'[2] in the communicative language classroom and the potential role of the third turn in teaching exchanges for facilitating language learning. The thesis by Tung-Leung (2005) examines the role of the first language in L2 learning for adult learners through an analysis of classroom discourse in which the controversial role of the first language in the L2 classroom is explored. The Ph.D. by Kazemi (2006) examines self-repairs in L2 classroom presentations and investigates the potential relationships between self-repairs and a range of other variables, including proficiency. Zhang's (2003) Ph.D. uses linguistic typology and universals as the theoretical underpinning of his approach to learners' errors, seeking to determine the extent to which learner errors can be predicted from this theoretical base.

Gender plays a central role in Takahashi's (2006) study of Japanese women's learning of English in Australia. Takahashi explores the factors which contribute to the reasons Japanese women come to Australia to learn English, focusing on the ways in which the *akogare* ('desire, longing') of these women for romantic liaison with (English-speaking) men, the West and learning English impact on their learning. The research adopted a critical ethnographic approach in which it is recognized that such research cannot be unbiased and objective but reflects an 'interpreted' reality (Strine 1991). In this sense, the researcher and the participants together construct and interpret the emerging meanings (Madison 2005). The data consisted of participant observations and interviews (micro-domain data) as well as data collected from a variety of other sources such as magazines, websites, textbooks and advertisements (macro-domain data). Takahashi's primary participants were five Japanese women between the ages of 20 and 39 who were learning English and were living in Sydney for at least three

[2] The 'third turn' is the third part of an initiation-response-evaluation exchange; for example, the teacher asks a question (first turn), a student responds (second turn) and the teacher responds to the student (third turn).

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months. In addition, twenty secondary participants contributed data which were used to supplement those of the primary participants. Twenty-three informal interviews, which were fully recorded and transcribed, were conducted with the participants over varying periods. Takahashi also made extensive observations of the participants in the contexts in which they lived and studied, including attending a variety of social activities to which she was increasingly invited as her relationships with her participants developed.

The data were analysed using content analysis, taking an ethnographic approach (Wolcott 1994; Agar 1996; Madison 2005) in which categories were not initially predetermined. Emerging themes were identified and then organized into categories guided by poststructuralist SLA theories in which notions of power, identity and language play a central role (e.g. Norton 2000; Blackledge 2001; Piller 2001; Pavlenko 2002; Piller & Takahashi 2006). Critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1992, 2001) was used to analyse the macro domain data.

Takahashi argues that for the young Japanese women in her study language *akogare* developed through their contact with Western music and film in their teenage years, and through their idolization of the associated male Western celebrities, and in some cases through meeting Western men during these years. In this way, the learning of English became romanticized – and this was promoted in the available media discourses which identified association with Western men as contributors to the successful learning of English, and Western men as desirable as teachers of English.

For these young Japanese women, going overseas to study English was seen as a means of changing their lives, providing them with opportunities to reinvent their identities as well as to attain their goal of learning English. This, in turn, would enhance their career opportunities. Australia was seen as an attractive destination, largely selected for the lifestyle it promoted, and for these young women, the desire to learn English meant that they capitalized on the availability of male native speakers. While as boyfriends these men were seen as conducive to learning English, they were carefully selected to be 'desirable male interlocutors' (p. 273), as such contributing to the Japanese women's construction of themselves as 'worthy single women' (p. 274). Home situations and the availability of work also impacted on their English learning experiences, resulting in a complex series of interactions which were co-constructed and negotiated by the participants in relation to the desires and needs. A final finding of the study is that although all participants fully intended returning to Japan at the outset of their sojourn in Australia, each approached their return at the end of the study with some ambivalence.

The next thesis moves into the secondary LOTE (Languages other than English) classroom. Dashwood's (2005) Ph.D. research is an investigation of teacher talk, addressing two overarching research questions which relate to the third turn in teacher-student interactions, examining firstly the effect of the third turn on talk, and secondly its potential for productive pedagogy. This study takes as its starting point the fact that teachers in Australia are trained to use the three-part Initiation–Response–Evaluation/Follow up (IRE/F) exchange, and that while this structure has proved useful in the classroom for controlling classroom talk, it has also been criticized for limiting the ability of students to express their ideas and for limiting the ways in which students are able to interact in the classroom. More recent approaches, however, have highlighted the potential value of well-managed teacher–student exchanges

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of this kind, and this study explores the significance and potential teaching role of the third turn in the IRE/F exchange in the context of the communicative LOTE classroom.

The study adopted a case study design, with three lessons recorded from each of two teachers, one male native speaker and one female non-native speaker, taking year 10 Japanese classes in Australian high schools. Prior to participating in the project, both teachers expressed their personal commitment to communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches. Video-recordings focusing on the teachers were made of six lessons, each of which was 35–40 minutes long, and the talk was then transcribed and translated. The data were then coded for interaction types following Westgate, Batey, Brownlee & Butler (1985) to allow identification of all IRE/F exchanges. Follow up moves were coded as either evaluation, minimal extension, repair, repetition, recitation, elaboration, extended elaboration or praise. The data were also coded for communicative competence and productive pedagogies.[3] The data were also coded for language use (Japanese, English, or mixed language). The third part of the exchange, as the focus of the study, was coded for effectiveness, together with a range of other strategies designed to identify the communicative language ability the teacher was attempting to help the students develop as well as the potential for productive pedagogy.

The results of the study, focusing on the third part of the exchange, found that this turn allowed teachers and students to engage with each other in a way that enabled the teacher to work cooperatively with the students to develop their communicative language ability at an appropriate level – in the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky 1978). Dashwood identifies several different types of effective teacher moves at the third turn and suggests that awareness of these might be used to enhance teachers' awareness of the impact of their input. These include providing feedback to the student which acknowledges the quality of their response, providing an alteration to a student response, typically with respect to pronunciation, syntax or vocabulary, allowing students to adjust their utterance, and engaging the student in talk subsequent to providing feedback. These kinds of responses were conducive to language development and provided a guide to the students in their thinking about language. Less effective moves at the third turn were those where the teacher controlled the talk, such as allowing another student to speak, or where feedback was provided without any explanation as to the problem. The study concludes that the third part of the IRE/F is a rich source for use of the target language which students can employ productively for their learning.

Vygotskian views of learning also underpin Tung-Leung's (2005) exploration of the role of the first language in the L2 classroom. The use of the first language in the classroom has been eschewed and discouraged for a very long time with the prevalence of English-only policies in the classroom both in second and foreign language contexts. However, since the first language is inevitably going to be used in learning the second, investigation of its role in the classroom is necessary. A socio-cultural approach, based on the work of Vygotsky, and using the concepts of the zone of proximal development, scaffolded learning and private speech were used to elucidate the data and develop an enhanced understanding of L2 learning.

The study was classroom based and the teacher was also the researcher. The research methodology was loosely based in the ethnographic tradition, adopting qualitative techniques

[3] Dashwood (2005: 11) notes that the potential for productive pedagogies can be located across four domains: intellectual quality, connectedness, supportive classroom environment, and recognition of difference.

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such as interviews, observations and description and interpretation of the phenomena under investigation. The participants in the study were two groups of Chinese-background adult learners of widely varied ages, most of whom were literate in their L1. Four lessons from each group were tape-recorded to explore their L1 use in the classroom, and these were supplemented with in-depth group and individual interviews conducted in the participants' L1 about their use of L1 in relation to their L2 learning. One group was level one beginners, with four lessons recorded in their first month of classes; for group two, the pre-intermediate group or level two, four lessons were recorded in the last three months of the year in which they were learning. Thus the data were naturalistically-occurring classroom discourse. All data were transcribed. The data were inductively analysed to identify the functions and purposes for which the L1 was used.

The analysis of the interview data revealed that the Chinese learners used their L1 for four overarching purposes – understanding the L2, thinking, rapid identification of meaning, and for memorizing pronunciation. Thus the learners were using their first language to facilitate their L2 learning. The major analysis of the data, however, was on the naturalistically occurring classroom data. Tung-Leung focused on the ways in which the L1 was used to create shared understandings through active construction of their L2 knowledge, mediated through their L1. The findings suggest that the L1 has a useful role to play in L2 development, and demonstrates how the L1 can be used as a tool, allowing learners to function at a higher cognitive level to discuss concepts and meanings than they would be able to using their limited L2 knowledge. This was found to be particularly helpful in relation to word meaning. The L1 was also used socially to mediate support and encouragement in a variety of ways. L1 was used to scaffold learning by obtaining support from more capable learners, as well as to reduce anxiety and frustration, to encourage each other and to demonstrate appreciation of others. Thus the role of the L1 goes beyond the translation of L2, and the L1 plays an important and complex role in L2 learning.

Self-repairs, where speakers interrupt the flow of their speech to repair or repeat the previous part of their utterance, are the focus of Kazemi's (2006) study, which also takes place in the classroom context. The participants in the study were upper intermediate students enrolled in an English for Academic Purposes class. Age, gender, language background and proficiency level of each student was recorded. The data were naturalistic and consisted of oral presentations the students were presenting as part of their formal assessment. The first 15 minutes of each student's recording was transcribed. Conversation analysts argue that analysis should precede categorization (Schegloff 1993; Hutchby & Wooffitt 1998; Silverman 1998) and so subsequent to the categorization of the repairs, they were analysed in context. This provided the basis for the categorization of the repairs into five main categories – phonological; morphological/lexical; syntactic; context oriented and information structuring repairs. Each of these categories is discussed in detail, with examples from the data, and the way in which the repair type is used is discussed.

The detailed analysis of the repairs allowed the identification of regularities in the ways in which these L2 speakers used the various different types of repair, with a general tendency to interrupt speech as early as possible after the trouble source. For each category, place of interruption was examined, which revealed that 96% of interruptions occurred within two words of the trouble point. Further analysis of the pause length between cut off (i.e. noticing

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the problem) and the onset of the repair revealed phonological repairs had a significantly shorter pause length than all other categories except context-oriented repairs. The analysis also revealed that while editing expressions (such as the use of 'sorry', 'no', 'I mean') targeted single words and occurred largely in the morphological/lexical repairs, hesitation markers (e.g. 'um', 'er', etc.) were more prevalent where the processing load required to manage the repair was greater. Finally, the degree to which the different repair types were retraced was examined (i.e. one or more words are repeated in the repair) revealing a different pattern for phonological and information structuring repairs with less retracing than with the other types of repair. A further aspect of this analysis was the way in which prosodic marking was used, with more frequent prosodic marking in phonological repairs, and the least in syntactic and information-structuring repairs.

The final section of this thesis examines the effects of a number of social variables on self repairs, including previously studied variables such as age (Verhoeven 1989; Van Hest 1996), gender (Bortfeld et al. 2001) and language background. Proficiency level was also included, since the group was homogeneous, compared with previous studies which had shown different level learners making both qualitatively and quantitatively different self repairs (Lennon 1990; Van Hest 1996; Kormos 2000). For this part of the analysis correlations were calculated on the social variables and the number of self-repairs, revealing no significant differences, and then on the sub-categories. This revealed only a significant, but negative, association between age and syntactic self-repairs. Similarly, the correlations between proficiency (based on term scores for the students) and self-repairs were not significant either at the overall level or at the level of individual categories although there did tend to be decrease in phonological self-repairs with increasing proficiency.

The syntactic errors that learners make in their interlanguage, and their relationship to typological universals are examined in Zhang's (2003) thesis. A typological theoretical approach in general, and that of Hawkins (1999) in particular, underpin the study, which examines a variety of structures, including question formation, relative clauses, and filler-gap dependencies in various structure, in the interlanguage of ESL learners. The study addresses three research questions. Firstly, how does the syntax of adult learners develop? Secondly, do the syntactic features in the interlanguage of the ESL learners reflect the typological universals that have been reported? And finally, do these features violate the constraints of typological universals?

The participants in this study were 58 volunteer ESL students studying in a variety of English language courses in a university based language school. They came from a range of different language backgrounds, and the majority had an Asian language as their L1. The participants were at three different levels of proficiency – intermediate, upper intermediate and advanced. To collect the data, a variety of different data collection techniques were used. These included a conversational exchange, a set of tasks designed specifically to test a series of typologically based hypotheses, and a free essay-writing task. This was included to ensure the availability of a comprehensive database of the participants' interlanguage. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the data were conducted. The conversation-based role-play elicited spontaneous speech to test the implicational hierarchy which states that in question formation, *wh*-fronting occurs before *wh*-inversion which appears before Yes/No inversion. The results of the study supported this hypothesis.

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Two tasks, an elicited repetition task and a sentence combining task were designed to test the Accessibility Hierarchy for relative clauses (Keenan & Comrie 1977). A grammaticality judgment task tested the comprehension of relative clauses. Data from the conversation and writing task were also included. The Accessibility Hierarchy proposes that relative clauses higher in higher positions will be easier to understand than those in lower positions:

Subject	>	Direct Object	>	Indirect Object	>	Oblique Object	>	Genitive (poss) NP	>	Object of comparison

Thus, participants would be expected to have a greater instance of correct subject position relative clause repetitions than those in direct object position, which in turn would be greater than those in indirect object positions, etc. The analysis of the results revealed that support for the hierarchy was very strong across all types of data collected, and although the degree to which this was the case varied to some extent across tasks, it was supported across all proficiency levels, and regardless of L1. The grammaticality judgment task was also used to test six implicational hierarchies/hypotheses (Hawkins 1999) and these were mostly supported by the data collected from the students. These findings suggest that these processing-motivated implicational universals are valid as predictors of the interlanguage of L2 learners irrespective of L1, level of language proficiency or the type of data collected.

In concluding, Zhang argues the importance of investigating typological universals in relation to L2 learning for the insights this can provide into processing constraints which should apply similarly in second languages as they do in first languages.

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4. Writing

Research in the area of writing mostly focused on aspects of academic writing. Noble (2006), for example, examined argument in novice L2 English academic writing while Zhang (2003) compared first year academic writing in Chinese and English. Bambang's (2005) and Thompson's (2006) theses both looked at the issue of plagiarism in academic writing although in rather different ways. Bambang looked at Australian and Indonesian students' attitudes towards plagiarism while Thompson carried out a critically oriented ethnography to look at the issues of politics, identity and textual ownership in students' academic writing. Gumock (2006), by contrast, looked at writing in French, in this case the writing that students of French did as they created web pages in their L2 and ways in which this writing fostered their language learning.

For her study of argument in L2 academic writing, Noble (2006) looked at high and low scoring essays written by both international and local L2 writers in their first year of study at an Australian university. She was especially interested in the ways in which the students' texts reveal choices about how they argue their case in their writing. Her study is based on a corpus of 80 essays of roughly 120,000 words written by first year L2 students at the university and a corpus of roughly 15,000 words of the journal articles given to the students as set reading for their essay. The journal article corpus was used to compare examples of expert writing on

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the same general topic. The study also used a reference corpus of about 200,000 words from the area of applied science, the same general area as the essay topic that formed the corpus of student texts. The main aim of the study was to compare rhetorical strategies used by high and low scoring students writers in their essays. The student or 'novice' corpus was, thus, the main focus of the study. The other two corpora, the 'expert corpus' and the 'reference corpus', were used to inform the study in areas such as citation practices as well as more general rhetorical strategies in expert academic writing in the area.

All students wrote a 1500 word essay on the topic 'Critically discuss the evidence relating to the effects of television violence on children'. Background readings for the essay consisted of three articles from the area of psychology representing different points of view on the topic. Students came from a range of language backgrounds including Mandarin, Cantonese and Korean. They were required to have an IELTS score of 5 to gain entry to the program. Drawing on the work of Mauranen (1993) and others, the essays were analysed in terms of main point, macrostructure, theme and rheme, metadiscourse, stance, and cohesion. The main point analysis showed that high scoring essays contained a main point that was clearly expressed in one compact unit or sentence and also that the main point was placed in a prominent position. Low scoring essays often did not contain a main point or it was vague in expression, non-committal and/or spread over several sentences. The presence and placement of the main point, thus, was important in high scoring students' texts. The theme–rheme analysis showed that, in the low scoring texts, errors in clausal organization lead to a failure to progress ideas. The analysis, thus, showed the importance of clear argument structure in the students' academic writing. The analysis of text organizing markers, stance markers, and cohesive devices indicated that, when students showed they were able to signal attitudes and link ideas through use of these devices, their essays received higher grades. Noble concludes her thesis by making recommendations for how non-language specialist academic staff can incorporate the kinds of analysis she has carried out into their subject area classes.

Zhang's (2003) thesis looked at the first year academic writing of three groups of students: Chinese native speakers writing in English, native speakers of English writing in English, and Chinese native speakers writing in Chinese. Her study examined the relationship between the writer as an individual and as a member of a culture by examining the texts that the writers created. The focal group of the study was the Chinese native speakers writing in English as a foreign language, at a Chinese university. All of these students had English as their major and had passed an entrance examination equivalent to TOEFL 460. The comparison group of Chinese native speakers writing in Chinese was chosen in order to see if there was any relation between how this group wrote in Chinese and the Chinese group wrote in English. The English native speaker group aimed to compare the writing of the first two groups with English native speaker academic writing. There were twenty students in each group with an equal number of male and female students in each group. All of the writers wrote three essays each, of 300–350 words, in response to set topics. The topics were designed to elicit either hortatory or analytical (Martin 1989) responses from the writers; that is, texts which either 'persuade to' (hortatory expositions) or texts which 'persuade that' (analytical expositions) (Martin 1989: 17). The essay topics were 'Gambling should be prohibited', 'Foreign companies are good for the economic development of the

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country' and 'The advantages of the legalization of drugs'. These topics were chosen because the status quo view on each of these topics may perhaps be different in the two different cultural contexts and thereby elicit different sets of views from the writers. To analyse her data, Zhang carried out a thematic analysis (Halliday 1994) as well as a multidimensional analysis (Biber 1988) of the students' texts.

Zhang found considerable variation in text features across essay topics and across the two cultural contexts. The topic, stance and positioning of the writers all had a significant effect on the texts that were produced. Zhang concludes that there are multiple factors which shape students' writing whether in English or Chinese. Each of these factors, however, are not separate but are interrelated. These include the writer themselves, their differences and their preferences. These differences and preferences are, in part, a result of the social and cultural context in which they are writing. Topic is also a key factor which influences student writing, especially as it both socially and culturally embedded. Writers in different contexts (as she found) may respond to the same topic either differently, or similarly. She found that students writing on the first topic (Gambling should be prohibited) and the third topic (The advantages of the legalization of drugs) wrote quite different kinds of texts whereas students writing on the second topic (Foreign companies are good for the economic development of the country) wrote similar kinds of texts. She found the Chinese writers of English were different from the other two groups in that they used both English and Chinese patterns of writing in their texts. The Chinese writers of English were not that same as Chinese writing in Chinese nor were they the same as native English writing in English. The socio-cultural context of the writing, she argues, shapes the writer's ideology, their sense of self, and in turn, what and how they write as well as what text types they use in their writing. The texts the Chinese writers of English produced, particularly, were much more complex than some contrastive rhetoric research might suggest. It is not as simple as saying, she argues, that Chinese write in a circular way and English speakers in a linear way.

Zhang concludes that it is not only language or linguistic factors which shape students' texts. The shape of their texts depends on multiple factors including the writer's freedom to choose what they write, as well as the stance and positioning they adopt in their text, all of which are socially and culturally located. EFL writing teaching, she argues, needs to focus on much more than the language of students' texts. It also needs to include a focus on how the values of both the first and second culture relate to one another so that learners can 'discover how to position themselves both within and between the two cultures with which they are engaging' (Zhang 2003: 379).

Bambang's (2005) thesis compares Australian and Indonesian university students' attitudes toward plagiarism, their understanding of plagiarism, and their understanding of university policy on plagiarism. His study involved 120 Australian students at an Australian university and 120 students at a university in Indonesia. All of the students completed questionnaires which focussed on their attitudes toward, and understanding of, plagiarism. Thirty-two Australian and 34 Indonesian students also attended focus group interviews where they discussed hypothetical scenarios and answered questions which explored their understandings of the notion of plagiarism. Bambang's thesis includes a wide discussion of issues in plagiarism research, cross-cultural perspectives on plagiarism, and the ownership of ideas. There is also an extensive discussion of the two different cultural contexts investigated and views on issues

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such as morality and academic ethics in each of these settings. The thesis also includes a review of Australian university policies on plagiarism in the 'Group of Eight' universities: the University of Sydney, the University of Melbourne, the University of Queensland, the University of Tasmania, the University of Adelaide, the University of New South Wales, the Australian National University and the University of Western Australia. The theoretical framework drawn on for the study is Ajzen & Fishbein's (1980) theory of reasoned action. Bambang uses this theory as a way of exploring the study participants' attitudes, subjective norms, intentions and behaviours in relation to plagiarism.

Bambang's study showed that, in general, the Australian students had a better understanding, and were less tolerant, of plagiarism. They were also more aware of university policy on plagiarism. The Australian students felt more strongly than the Indonesian students that plagiarism was wrong and were less likely to plagiarize. The Indonesian students, by contrast, were unsure about whether or not their university had rules about plagiarism. The Australian students were familiar with the notion of plagiarism prior to commencing their university studies. Very few of the Indonesian students, however, had heard of plagiarism or had had it explained to them prior to going to university. Bambang attributes the difference between the different attitudes toward plagiarism to differences in the cultural and academic contexts of study. The notion of authorship in academic work is not widely understood in the Indonesian academic community he argues and, as a result, is not been treated explicitly in most Indonesian universities. While the university policies and practices he examined in the Australian universities were all somewhat similar, this was not the case, he found, with Indonesian universities, where the issue of plagiarism had not been addressed as a specific issue.

Thompson's (2006) doctoral thesis also examines the issue of plagiarism, or what in some institutions is referred to as 'academic honesty'. Her particular interest was in the ways in which students use the words and ideas of others in their written work. She also explored the reactions of academic staff to the students' written work. Thompson was interested in what theories of knowledge, language and identity might help understand issues of plagiarism, intertextuality and textual ownership in the writing practices of the students involved in her study. For her study she draws on Bakhtin's (1981) notion of dialogism, Howard's (1995) concept of patchwriting and the view of knowledge as being co-constructed, partial, gendered and interested (Pennycook 1989). In the discussion of her research methodology she draws on Levi-Strauss's (1966) concept of *bricoleur* to explain the role she plays in the research in that there is always something of the researcher in what she (and any researcher) does and whatever a researcher does is mediated by the values that they hold. Working with an interpretive-explanatory framework (Watson-Gegeo 1988), Thompson works through ten sets of case studies of students and academic staff from matching disciplinary fields.

The students and staff described their understandings of intertextual knowledge in terms of tensions 'concerning commonality and difference, originality, authority and paraphrasing' (Thompson 2006: 258). For some of the study participants, finding a way through these tensions seemed 'impossibly difficult to achieve' (ibid.). It is only by understanding the dialogic and evolving nature of the processes of textual and knowledge construction, subjectivity and emerging students-as-authors, she argues, that we can start to make sense of the tensions involved in learning to write in the academy. The lecturers she spoke to themselves had

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difficulty in knowing how to establish what was common knowledge in their field and would require no attribution, saying that this may evolve over time and is 'just one of those things you learn to feel' (p. 263). Commonality on these matters, she argues, cannot be taken for granted yet it is crucial for student writers to know this so they can know what kinds of writing practices are 'transgressive or not' (p. 264). The notion of originality, she found, was similarly complicated, as were the issues of writer authority and legitimacy. The students did not know, for example, that one way in which they were expected to show legitimacy in their field was by paraphrasing the texts of source authors as a way of showing what they had understood in their reading. As a result of the understandings she gained in her study, Thompson argues for a writing pedagogy that goes beyond 'quick-fix' solutions and the view that students' textual transgressions can be dealt with by the use of plagiarism detection software and the mechanical teaching of academic citation systems. She concludes her thesis by making suggestions for what this sort of pedagogy might look like and what it might contain. At the heart of this she argues, should be an understanding of the processes of knowledge construction in academic writing, writer identity and textual ownership.

The thesis written by Gumock (2006) was an investigation of students of French creating web pages in a classroom setting as part of their academic studies in the language. Data included classroom observations, recordings of students' group-based oral interactions, individual interviews, email conversations, questionnaires, written drafts, and the students' final web pages. Other data included information from the class website and class notes. Two groups of students, with five students in each group, took part in the study. The thesis took a socio-cultural view of learning (Lantolf 2000, 2002) and activity theory (Wertsch 1981, 1985) as its theoretical base. Grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin 1998) was used in the approach to the processing and coding of the data. The data analysis program Nud*ist <http://www.qsrinternational.com/products.aspx> (accessed 28/11/2007) was used in the processing of the data.

Analysis of the students' web-page-writing processes showed that the activity had provided students with opportunities for language learning. This was fostered through the naturally occurring oral interactions they engaged in as well as the activity of web-page writing. The quality and quantity of this learning, however, largely depended on the collaborative relationships between the students, which were in turn affected by the students' participation, motivation, and orientation to the activity. Learning opportunities also took place when students reflected, negotiated, and produced private speech as they tried to resolve problems in the web-page construction. The relationship between the students and their imagined audience was especially interesting. The students who focused on Internet users as their primary audience had difficulty with their web-page writing whereas the students who regarded Internet users as secondary to a more specific and personally oriented audience were more successful in their writing. The study concludes by making suggestions for guiding students in Internet based writing activities for a specific rather than a general Internet user audience to help them to become more effective in their L2 web-based communications. It also highlights the importance of the nature of student groupings in group-based language teaching, an observation that follows on from Storch's (2001) observations of the importance of the nature of pairs in language-oriented pair-work activities. Gumock's thesis, as with the work of Storch, also shows the value of employing constructivist theories of learning in aiming

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to understand collaborative approaches to language learning and teaching and ways in which they can be made to work more fruitfully in language learning classrooms.

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