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METALINGUISTIC AWARENESS AMONG SECONDARY 3 LEARNERS OF
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CM	Conscience métalinguistique
ESL	English as a Second Language
FFI	Form-focussed instruction
L(A)	Linguistic (Answer)
L2	Second Language
LQ	Linguistic Question
MAT-1(-2; -3)	Metalinguistic Awareness Test 1; 2; 3
MLA	Metalinguistic Awareness/Metalinguistic Answer
MLQ	Metalinguistic Question
PACE	Present, Attention, Co-construction, Extension
PÉI	Programme d'éducation internationale
QEP	Quebec Education Program
SLL	Second language learning
SPM	Progressive Matrices Test

SOMMAIRE

La conscience métalinguistique (CM) est l'habileté de considérer une langue comme un objet de pensée. Cela veut dire qu'une personne qui possède un haut niveau de conscience métalinguistique est capable de regarder une phrase par rapport à sa structure (ex. sa syntaxe, les catégories des mots, etc.) et ensuite d'analyser cette phrase et ses éléments (Bialystok, 2001; Pinto & El Euch, 2015). Par exemple, si je suis capable d'expliquer correctement pourquoi une phrase possède la bonne forme grammaticale, plutôt que me limiter à dire qu'elle est écrite correctement, cela démontre que j'ai une CM. Cette capacité est importante car les études ont montré que la CM est corrélée avec une meilleure réussite dans diverses matières scolaires (Bialystok, 1992; Dreher & Zenge, 1990; MacGregor & Price, 1999). Cependant, elle n'est pas élevée chez les enfants et les adultes (ex. Alderson & Hudson, 2013; Alipour, 2014; Bloor; 1986; El Euch, 2010; Renou, 2001). De plus, jusqu'à présent, aucune étude n'a été réalisée en lien avec les adolescents au Québec. Cet essai tente de combler cette lacune.

En premier lieu, cet essai présente des études (El Euch, 2010; Herrate, 1998; Pinto, Iliceto & Melogno, 2012) qui portent sur la CM et qui utilisent le même instrument, soit le *Metalinguistic Awareness Test* (MAT) (Pinto, Titone & Trusso, 1999). Celui-ci est considéré comme un des tests les plus fiables pour mesurer la CM (Jessner, 2006). De plus, cet essai se situe dans le cadre théorique des différences individuelles, des contextes d'apprentissage et de l'enseignement explicite dans le domaine de l'apprentissage d'une langue seconde.

Un des objectifs de cet essai est de proposer des stratégies et des activités qui favorisaient un niveau de CM élevé chez les élèves du secondaire. Afin de bien identifier ces activités, il fallait d'abord connaître le niveau de développement de la CM de ces élèves. C'était le premier objectif de mon étude.

L'étude qui fait l'objet de cet essai a eu lieu lors d'un stage d'enseignement, dans le cadre de ma maîtrise en enseignement au secondaire à l'UQTR. Les élèves qui ont participé étaient tous en secondaire 3 dans le Programme d'éducation internationale (PÉI). Le test utilisé est le *Metalinguistic Awareness Test* no. 2 (le MAT-2) (Pinto *et al.*, 1999), qui comporte six épreuves : *Comprehension, Synonymy, Acceptability, Ambiguity, Grammatical Function,* et *Phonemic Segmentation*. Ces épreuves mesurent, respectivement, la capacité des participants de comprendre les relations sémantiques et grammaticales, de saisir la différence entre deux phrases semblables selon le contexte, d'identifier les phrases acceptables et celles qui ne le sont pas, de comprendre le sens d'une phrase selon les ambiguïtés présentes, de comprendre la fonction grammaticale du sujet, objet et prédicat, et finalement de vérifier si les participants sont capables de comprendre les phonèmes, les syllabes et les morphèmes.

Étant donné mon intérêt pour l'enseignement de l'anglais langue seconde, j'ai administré le MAT-2 en anglais, la langue seconde des élèves. Les élèves ont complété une épreuve par jour. Chaque épreuve commençait par une explication de la tâche que les élèves devraient réaliser. Une fois le test complété, les épreuves ont été codées, conformément au protocole de codage de Pinto et al. (1999). Ensuite, les résultats du

codage ont été convertis en pourcentages, avant d'être ramenés aux scores T du test validé (Pinto, Titone & Gonzalez, 2000), afin de voir le niveau de développement de la CM de mes participants par rapport à d'autres participants du même âge.

Les résultats montrent que pour les six épreuves, les réponses linguistiques (L) des élèves sont meilleures que leurs réponses métalinguistiques (ML). En d'autres termes, les élèves possèdent des connaissances implicites de la langue anglaise plus élevées que leurs connaissances explicites. C'est-à-dire que leur compréhension de la langue est meilleure que leurs habiletés à expliquer cette compréhension. Cette habileté relève de la CM. Pour chaque épreuve, les résultats sont les suivants, pour les connaissances L et ML, respectivement : *Comprehension*, 94% et 48%; *Synonymy*, 85% et 42%; *Acceptability,* 77% et 37%; *Ambiguity,* 62% et 14%; *Grammatical Function*, 97% et 33%; et *Phonemic Segmentation*, 66% et 54%. Ce résultat est normal s'il est mis en contexte de la recherche sur la CM, qui trouve que les connaissances linguistiques implicites sont souvent plus élevées que la CM. Par ailleurs, si l'on regarde les résultats en termes de scores T, il ressort que le niveau de développement de la CM est en général moyen. À noter que plus le chiffre du score T est élevé, meilleur est le résultat. Ces scores fonctionnent un peu comme les centiles. Les scores T, encore une fois pour les connaissances L et ML, respectivement, sont : *Comprehension*, 42 et 53; *Synonymy*, 40 et 55; *Acceptability,* 15 et 53; *Ambiguity,* 26 et 34; *Grammatical Function*, 54 et 45; et *Phonemic Segmentation*, 36 et 65.

Les trois épreuves les moins bien réussies par les élèves sont celles d'Acceptabilité, d'Ambiguïté, et de Fonction Grammaticale. L'épreuve d'Ambiguïté s'est

avérée l'épreuve la plus difficile. L'explication pour ce résultat peut être la suivante : l'enseignement de l'anglais langue seconde au Québec est fait par compétences avec un accent mis sur la communication (MELS, 2007). Le résultat de cette approche, dans la plupart des cas, est un manque d'enseignement explicite, ou *form-focussed instruction* (Simard, French & Fortier, 2007). Cependant, il semble y avoir un consensus que l'enseignement explicite donne des meilleurs résultats quand il est utilisé dans le cadre de l'approche communicative (Brown, 2007; Lightbown & Spada, 2013), qui est celui que l'on retrouve au Québec. Alors, nous pouvons en déduire que cet enseignement explicite, qui a un effet positif sur le développement du niveau de CM (Myhill, Jones, Lines & Watson, 2012; Toth, Wagner & Moranski, 2013), est particulièrement manquant par rapport aux épreuves les moins bien réussies par les participants, soit l'Acceptabilité, l'Ambiguïté et la Fonction Grammaticale.

Afin d'améliorer la CM des élèves en ce qui a trait aux habiletés ciblées par les trois épreuves, une variété de stratégies et d'activités sont proposées. Elles font appel aux caractéristiques suivantes : analyse, contextualisation, justification et réinvestissement. Ces caractéristiques sont non seulement essentielles au développement de la CM, mais aussi en conformité avec le Programme de formation de l'école québécoise.

INTRODUCTION

I grew up in a family that always insisted on speaking properly. Unlike so many of my peers, I was raised to speak (and write) in ways that were grammatically correct. I think I was destined to be an English teacher, since when I was about 8 years old, my parents told me I had to stop correcting my friends' grammar. From such a young age, I had already somehow grasped that there was a correct way to express oneself in English.

Fast forward about 25 years and I found myself getting ready to start my training to become an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher in Quebec. Over and over I heard people telling me that grammar was on its way out and that the primary goal of the ESL classroom was to help my students become able to communicate in English. While I did not disagree with this, per se, I was unconvinced that grammar had little or no role to play in my future students' ability to communicate. As such, I started to ask myself the following questions: Should I teach grammar to my students? Is there a place for it in the Quebec Education Program (QEP)? If there is a place for it, what kind of emphasis should it be given? Also, once students begin to develop their communicative abilities, will their grammar automatically improve as well? Finally, it was something someone said that put me on this path. I was told that I speak English very well, so I'll be a good teacher. Does this necessarily follow? What about my students? Thinking particularly of the more advanced students, are they able to explain why what they are saying is correct? This was my internal dialogue leading up to the choice of my research topic, metalinguistic awareness.

This essay is divided into six chapters. Chapter One provides an overview of the issue that I look at, metalinguistic awareness, as well as my research objectives and questions. It is followed by Chapters Two and Three, which look at the conceptual framework and related literature, respectively. Chapter Four describes the methodology I used and Chapter Five explains my results and discusses them. Finally, I bring it all together in my Conclusion and look at how I can move forward, as a Quebec ESL teacher in the coming years.

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

This research project is about metalinguistic awareness (MLA, hereafter). In essence, MLA is the ability to look at language as an object of study. In doing so, one is able to develop a deeper, deliberate understanding of the way the language works (Bialystok, 2001; Pinto & El Euch, 2015), making it possible to step back from the meaning of a sentence, for example, and look at its linguistic and structural aspects (El Euch, 2012). Studies have shown that there is a link between MLA and second language learning (SLL, hereafter) and bilingualism on the one hand (Bialystok, 1987; Bialystok, 2001; El Euch, 2010; Pinto & El Euch, 2015; Simard, French & Fortier, 2007); and MLA and school achievement on the other hand (Dreher & Zenge, 1990; MacGregor & Price, 1999). Those who are bilinguals, as opposed to monolinguals, have a better implicit understanding of language rules as well as better metalinguistic analysis abilities. They are better able to grasp connections between form and meaning. They also have more experience paying attention to changing linguistic features, even if the meaning remains unchanged (Bialystok, 1987), such as choosing between two different forms for the same meaning (e.g. when choosing between two virtual synonyms, such as "tall" instead of "big"). As such, we can say that the development of MLA improves as a result of bilingualism (Bialystok, 2001; El Euch, 2010).

MLA has also been found to help with SLL in a formal context, such as a classroom. According to Simard et al. (2007), "contexts in which learners have the

opportunity to reflect on language and especially negotiate form can promote the intake of linguistic input" (p. 510). This is a form of explicit language learning, which can be very beneficial, despite the widespread use of the communicative approach in the classroom (Alderson & Hudson, 2013; Bloor, 1986).

MLA has also been correlated with achievement in several school subjects. For example, MacGregor and Price (1999) found a correlation between MLA and maths. This is related to selective attention, a key aspect of MLA (Bialystok, 1992), which is the ability to determine which attributes need to be paid attention to in order to complete a task. Similarly, there is a significant correlation between MLA and learning to read and write (Dreher & Zenge, 1990; El Euch, 2010), in both L1 and L2 (El Euch, 2012). At the elementary school level, it could be argued that reading is learned for its own sake. However, once students enter later grades, reading is used to gather information across all subjects, and we can subsequently extend the link from MLA to reading to academic achievement in other subjects (Dreher & Zenge, 1990). From these, MLA appears to have a positive impact on school achievement in multiple subjects.

Despite the benefits of advanced MLA, there remain issues on two levels: a specific contextual level and a more general research level. The first level is related to the Quebec context, where the ESL program is based on the communicative approach and aims at developing three competencies: interacting orally in English, reinvesting understanding of texts, and writing and producing texts (Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS), 2007). As such, the program is not based on the explicit

teaching of language or on reflecting on language use, which is the essence of MLA. Learners do not see language as an object of thought. The focus is rather on the development of these three competencies defined in the Quebec Education Program (QEP), even if studies (Alhussain, 2009; Bloor, 1986; Simard et al., 2007; Terrell, 1991) have shown that teaching form or grammar in a communicative context, when done properly, can have a beneficial impact on accuracy. The communicative approach is not exclusive to the Quebec program. It is a rather widespread phenomenon, where any focus on form is usually considered an obstacle to communication (Simard et al., 2007). This raises the question whether students in ESL classrooms based on the communicative approach, as is the case in Quebec, are receiving sufficient form-focussed instruction (FFI) to enhance their MLA to the point that it allows them to perform at a higher level in multiple school subjects.

On a second and more general level, there have already been studies on MLA among adults (e.g. Alderson & Hudson, 2013; Alipour, 2014; Bloor; 1986; El Euch, 2010; Renou, 2001). Bloor (1986) conducted a study on university-age students and found low levels of MLA, despite the fact that the participants in the study seemed to value grammatical knowledge. In her study on undergraduate students, El Euch (2010) confirmed Bloor's findings as to the low levels of MLA in bilingual and trilingual adult learners and found that linguistic ability, motivation, and attitudes do not have an effect on MLA. Similarly, Alderson and Hudson (2013) conducted a study on U.K. university students and found that levels of grammatical knowledge have decreased in the past 25 years, even when these students receive university-level grammar instruction. Renou

(2001) examined MLA with French second language learners and concluded that increasing MLA should be one of the goals of second-language teachers. Alipour (2014) suggested that teachers should help their students make connections between grammatical form and language production, a recommendation based on her finding that MLA development makes language learning easier.

In addition, there have been many studies on MLA in children (e.g. Bouffard & Sarkar, 2008; Serrano, 2011; Simard et al., 2007). Simard et al. (2007) conducted a study on children and found that a more traditional classroom (vs. one solely based on the communicative approach) would be helpful in increasing the learners' MLA. They concluded that there is a need for more research to understand the correlation between MLA and SLL. Bouffard and Sarkar (2008) found that 8-year olds were able to increase their MLA more easily through group interactions. Serrano (2011) used a control group and an experimental group to look at whether or not metalinguistic instruction helps increase the students' knowledge of a grammatical item, possessive determiners in this case. Although she did find a positive correlation between ML instruction and the students' knowledge, it turned out to be statistically insignificant. However, her further analysis revealed that MLA can have a positive effect on students' productions.

While a fairly good number of studies looked at MLA in adults and in children, only one (Herrate, 1998) to our knowledge looked at MLA in adolescents. It was not in the Quebec context, however. This gap in research is worth filling. In addition, given that the MLA levels were low among bilingual and trilingual adult Quebecers (El Euch, 2010),

it stands to reason that it is important to assess adolescents' MLA levels to see if they are even lower, and therefore may explain MLA levels among adults, since they should develop over time. By studying the MLA levels among secondary school students in Quebec, where there is a focus on the communicative approach, we should be able to determine how we can intervene in target areas where the youth are weaker in MLA and subsequently develop or optimize their MLA abilities.

1.1 Research Objectives

To fill the gap in research on MLA in adolescents, the objectives of this research project were:

1. To measure the level of MLA in Secondary 3 ESL learners.

2. To suggest activities that will promote or optimize the students' MLA levels within the Quebec ESL program framework and with respect to the communicative approach.

3. To suggest strategies that will promote or optimize the students' MLA levels within the Quebec ESL program framework and with respect to the communicative approach.

1.2 Research Questions

To fulfill the above research objectives, this essay answers the following research questions:

1. What is the development level of MLA in Quebec ESL students in Secondary 3?

2. What activities can be used with Secondary 3 students to help improve or optimize their MLA?

3. What strategies can be used with Secondary 3 students to help improve or optimize their MLA?

CHAPTER II

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The problem addressed in this study and the research questions that stemmed from it led to a conceptual framework that encompasses MLA, second language learning (SLL) and form-focussed instruction (FFI). Understanding these concepts will inform this study and serve as a guide. Therefore, this section will begin by defining each of the concepts in turn before looking at the relationships among all three.

2.1 Metalinguistic Awareness (MLA)

First and foremost, let us consider what MLA is. In order to do so, MLA must be broken down into its three main components: "meta," "linguistic," and "awareness." To begin with the last word, "awareness" goes beyond simple knowledge. Rather, it refers to explicit consciousness of one's knowledge. "Meta" comes from the Greek prefix *meta*, which means "beyond." This is connected to the second half of the word, "linguistic," referring to language itself. When combined, MLA is explicit knowledge of language that goes beyond simply being able to speak a language, even fluently. In fact, the language ceases to be solely for communication, but becomes the object of study. Once this happens, there are three defining characteristics of MLA: First of all, it is contemplative. This means that one is able to step back from the meaning of a sentence, for example, and observe the language and its workings (El Euch, 2010; Pinto & El Euch, 2015). One can speak a language fluently, but still not possess this ability. Even a native speaker, who is

presumably completely fluent, could have a very low level of MLA of her[1] mother tongue. The objectification of the language is the second defining characteristic of MLA. Simply put, this refers to language becoming an object of thought. All of this is done by the ability to control which aspects of the language one pays attention to (Bialystok, 1992; El Euch, 2010; Simard et al., 2007).

There are potentially many ways to define and measure MLA, but the Metalinguistic Awareness Test (MAT) (Pinto, Titone & Trusso, 1999) is considered to be the most comprehensive test of metalinguistic abilities (Jessner, 2006). It is designed for three age groups. The MAT-1 is for children, the MAT-2 is for adolescents, and the MAT-3 is for older adolescents and adults (Pinto et al., 1999). Owing to the comprehensive nature of the MAT, this research project was carried out within the theoretical framework of Pinto and her collaborators (Pinto, Candilera & Iliceto, 2003; Pinto & El Euch, 2015; Pinto & Iliceto, 2007; Pinto, Iliceto & Melogno, 2012; Pinto & Titone, 1995; Pinto, Titone & Gonzalez, 2000; Pinto et al., 1999).

MLA is important for many reasons. First of all, as previously mentioned, it can contribute to reading abilities (Dreher & Zenge, 1990) in both L1 and L2 (El Euch, 2012). Secondly, studies have found that it can help in overall school success (Dreher & Zenge, 1990; MacGregor & Price, 1990). Bialystok (1992) found that the selective attention of bilingual children, which is a result of their increased MLA, has a positive impact on all school subjects. MLA is also beneficial in the field of second language acquisition and

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[1] Solely for purposes of clarity and brevity, we have chosen to use "her" throughout the text.

bilingualism, and there are many studies which have shown this link (e.g. Bialystok, 1987; Bialystok, 2001; El Euch, 2010; Pinto & El Euch, 2015; Simard et al., 2007).

2.2 Second Language Learning (SLL)

SLL is affected by a multitude of factors, which can be divided into three categories: individual differences among students, the learning context, and teaching methods.

2.2.1 Individual differences. Individual differences can refer to a wide range of traits, including age, intelligence, language-learning aptitude, learning style, personality, motivation, identity and learner beliefs about SLL (see Lightbown & Spada, 2013 for an overview). It is generally believed that inherent individual differences can be predictors for success in SLL (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). One such example could be language-learning aptitude. Some studies (e.g. Skehan, 1989 in Lightbown & Spada, 2013) have found support for the hypothesis that those with high levels of language-learning aptitude are able to infer language rules based solely on input, without necessarily having to produce any output of their own (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). This is merely one example, but each of the above-listed differences could be broken down and examined in terms of its impact on SLL. What is important to remember is that no two students are alike. It would be impossible for a teacher to cater her teaching to each and every difference present in the classroom. The best alternative is for the teacher to use a variety of teaching methods and for her not to assume that all students will learn the same way. The ways in which each student differs can have an impact on how he learns, and teachers need to learn

how to turn these differences into an advantage (Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012).

2.2.2 The learning context. SLL is also affected by learning contexts. There are two types of learning contexts: natural vs. instructional settings. These are best illustrated through examples. An immigrant in a country whose language differs from her own might learn that language in a natural setting. There is no teaching of the language. Rather, she will acquire this second language through her daily interactions at the grocery store, the doctor's office, with her neighbours, etc. On the other end of the spectrum, there are those who learn their second language solely in instructional settings, with very little exposure to the target language outside the classroom. The instructional setting (in school or with a private teacher) can involve form-focussed instruction, where the language is explicitly taught, or the communicative approach, where the focus is on interaction, or a combination of the two (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). There are other forms of second language instruction (see Brown, 2007 and Lightbown & Spada, 2013 for a complete overview), but these are the two that this study focusses on. This is because the communicative approach is what is prevalent in Quebec and because of the connections between form-focussed instruction and MLA, the latter of which will be addressed later.

2.2.3. Teaching methods. Teaching methods is another factor that influences SLL. As mentioned above, an instructional setting can involve form-focussed instruction and/or the communicative approach. However, what happens in the classroom is more nuanced than that. At one end of the spectrum, there is solely form-focussed instruction, where the

students focus on grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. There are other classrooms where the focus is providing input to the learners in the target language and it is assumed that this will be sufficient for the student to learn the language. There are also immersion contexts, where other subjects (e.g. maths) are taught in the target language. Finally, there is the primarily communicative approach, but where corrective feedback is given as needed. The idea here is that there are some language items that are better to be taught via form-focussed instruction, and that therefore it must occasionally be incorporated into communicative learning environments (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Individual differences, learning contexts and teaching methods are important factors to consider by anyone looking to understand how SLL occurs. They have an impact on any learning environment, even if they are not deliberately taken into consideration by the teacher. For example, whether or not the teacher makes any effort to understand her students' learning styles, those styles will affect how learning takes place. Similarly, if a teacher decides to focus only on communication and ignore form completely, even if this decision is made intuitively without any conscious effort on her part, there will be an impact on learning.

2.3 Form-focussed Instruction (FFI)

FFI is any type of instruction that draws the learner's attention to the form and structure of the language, and it can be either explicit or implicit, either planned or spontaneous. This means that a teacher can plan to do FFI because she feels the subject-matter requires it, or it can come up during teaching, perhaps as a follow-up to a student's

query. There are three types of form-focussed instruction: corrective feedback, giving metalinguistic information, and simply drawing attention to the form or structure in question. Corrective feedback is when the teacher tells her student that her use of the target language is incorrect. Providing metalinguistic information is taking this one step further by explaining why it is incorrect. For example, if she tells her student that he used simple past when he should have used past perfect, she would then explain why the past perfect is correct and the simple past is not. The teacher could also choose to draw attention to incorrect target language use, for example via directed questions (e.g. "Look at the verb in that sentence again") or perhaps by underlining the section containing the error if it is written work (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). From these examples it is possible to see what FFI looks like in the classroom and also that there are many ways for teachers to incorporate it (Brown, 2007; Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

There has been some debate about what kinds of language items are best taught through form-focussed instruction. A meta-analysis by Spada and Tomita (2010) found that FFI can be effective for both complex and simple forms, but they also stated that it depends on how one defines a simple language item and a complex language item (Spada & Tomita, 2010). One consensus that does seem apparent however, is that FFI is most effective when it is incorporated into a classroom that uses the communicative approach (Brown, 2007; Lightbown & Spada, 2013). In addition to these benefits of FFI, there are studies that have shown that FFI, when used among a variety of other teaching techniques, can have a positive impact on students' MLA (Myhill, Jones, Lines & Watson, 2012; Toth, Wagner & Moranski, 2013).

There is a place for FFI in the classroom, even one that primarily uses the communicative approach. First of all, attention to form is associated with an increased level of speaking proficiency (Spada & Tomita, 2010). It is therefore necessary to provide guidance, or FFI, at the novice and intermediate levels (Golonka, 2006). It is also important to make language learners aware of the benefits of focussing on form when necessary so that they can become autonomous learners.

In conclusion, MLA, SLL, and FFI are interconnected. Studies have shown a strong correlation between MLA and SLL, though it can be hard to determine if the direction of the causality goes always from SLL to MLA (Renou, 2001). It is clear, however, that learning a second language improves MLA (El Euch, 2012; Renou, 2001; Simard et al., 2007). MLA is also closely linked to FFI through the characteristic of explicitness in both concepts; this link was demonstrated in Myhill et al. (2012) and Toth et al. (2013). Similarly, FFI is closely related to SLL. Acquiring explicit knowledge will enable learners to think critically about their L2 language learning and to notice the gap between their own output and the input they receive, which in turn will help with increased L2 proficiency and accuracy (Renou, 2001).

CHAPTER III

RELATED LITERATURE

In the field of SLA, there has been research done on the MLA level in children (e.g. Bouffard & Sarkar, 2008; Herrate, 1998; Serrano, 2011) and in adults (e.g. Alderson & Hudson, 2013; Alipour, 2014; Bloor; 1986; El Euch, 2010; Pinto et al., 2012; Renou, 2001; Shintani & Ellis, 2013), but very few studies have measured MLA among adolescents. Since it is not possible to look at studies that have examined MLA within our target population, i.e. Quebec secondary-level students learning ESL, we will look at MLA studies that involved a younger population (Herrate, 1998) and adult populations (El Euch, 2010; Pinto et al., 2012), and that used metalinguistic awareness tests (MAT) that fit within the same theoretical framework as the one underlying our study, i.e. Pinto's MLA framework (Pinto et al., 1999, Pinto & El Euch, 2015).

To our knowledge, no studies have reported the use of the MAT-1 (Pinto et al., 1999). However, the MAT-2 (Pinto et al., 1995) was used by Herrate (1998) and the MAT-3 (Pinto et al., 1999) was used by El Euch (2010) and Pinto et al. (2012). These three studies (El Euch, 2010; Herrate, 1998; Pinto et al., 2012) will be described in this chapter to help deepen our understanding of MLA tested in concrete examples on the one hand, and draw a general picture of MLA development during the teenage and adult years, on the other hand.

3.1 Metalinguistic awareness among adolescents

Herrate (1998) is the only study to have concretely measured MLA among adolescents. Frustrated with the ambiguities of previous studies (e.g. Baker, 1997; Bild & Swain, 1989; Cenoz & Valencia, 1994; Cummins, 1993), his goal was to use a MAT to determine whether or not MLA among bilinguals contributed to their learning of a third language. His hypotheses were that students who were virtually bilingual would have the highest levels of MLA and that there would be a significant relationship between MLA and proficiency in English, the students' third language (L3).

Herrate conducted his study on 252 students (10-14 year olds, Grade 5 and Grade 8), each of whom was situated along a spectrum of monolingual (either Spanish or Basque) to virtually balanced bilingual in Spanish and Basque, with English being the L3 for all students. To test his hypotheses, he looked at intelligence (using Raven's Progressive Matrices Test) (Raven, 1982), background information (e.g. gender, exposure to English outside the classroom, socioeconomic status), MLA, and English proficiency, measured by combining results from vocabulary, speaking, grammar, writing, and reading tests. Intelligence and background information were looked at to ensure similarities on these fronts among the students, since both have been considered to have an influence on MLA and English learning. In other words, by matching his students according to intelligence and background information, i.e. by controlling these variables, he made sure that the comparison of MLA levels would be due to language proficiency.

Herrate considered students who had scores among the five highest possible as having high MLA levels (20.6% of the Grade 8 students[2]), the next 5 possible scores were middle of the road (45.2% of the Grade 8 students), and the rest of the group fell into the lowest category (34.1% of the students). As he had hypothesized, those students belonging to the bilingual group had the highest MLA scores. As well, he used Chi-square analysis to show a strong correlation between their L3 (i.e. English) proficiency and MLA scores. Herrate concluded that bilinguals are better at learning an L3, and that this is quite possibly because of increased MLA levels.

3.2 Metalinguistic awareness among adults

Wanting to understand the cognitive and affective factors in multiple language learning and MLA, El Euch's (2010) research questions were two-fold: 1) Is MLA more developed among those who are trilingual than those who are bilingual? 2) Do motivational and attitudinal factors towards English and Spanish affect MLA, and if they do, is it the same with those who are bilingual and those who are trilingual?

The participants in El Euch's study were francophone university students with an average age of 27. They were either bilingual (French and English) or trilingual (French, English, and Spanish). There were 30 participants, 17 of whom were bilingual and 13 of whom were trilingual. They were administered a questionnaire to measure sociodemographic factors such as age and level of education, as well as to obtain

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[2] Herrate (1998) looked at the results of the Grade 5 and the Grade 8 students. The latter are closer to our target population, and therefore this essay will discuss the results concerning these students.

information on the participants' language use (languages known, etc.), their competency in these languages (self-evaluation of their speaking, reading, writing, and oral comprehension), and their language use habits. In addition, this questionnaire provided information on the participants' parents (e.g. their education level, their attitudes towards languages, etc.). The participants' MLA was measured using the English (Pinto et al., 1999) and the Spanish (Pinto et al., 2000) versions of the MAT-3, designed for older adolescents and adults. El Euch administered Lafontaine's adaptation (2001) of the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (Gardner & Lambert, 1972) to determine the participants' attitudes and motivation towards French, English, and Spanish use.

In answer to her first research question on the differences in MLA levels between the bilingual and trilingual participants, El Euch did not find a statistically significant difference between the bilinguals' and the trilinguals' MLA levels. In response to her second research question concerning the effect of attitudes and motivation on MLA, she found that these affective factors have no effect. The exception was for the trilingual participants, for whom motivational intensity significantly correlated with their MLA levels. El Euch called for further research to substantiate this finding and concluded that although the development of MLA has a positive effect on the learning of additional languages, it seems that once MLA develops to a certain level, the learning of additional languages no longer has an effect. It is a ceiling effect. As for the effects of attitudes and motivation on MLA, she calls for further research involving larger samples.

Pinto et al. (2012) used the TAM-3 (Pinto & Iliceto, 2007), the Italian version of the MAT-3, to better understand the reasoning behind responses in an abstract non-verbal intelligence test, Raven's SPM (Raven, 1982). Participants in the study were 353 university students, all of whom were enrolled in public universities in Italy.

The study looked at the following points: the non-verbal cognitive level (measured by the Raven's SPM38); the level of MLA (measured by the TAM-3); how these two factors vary according to gender and to type of academic curriculum; and the correlations between nonverbal cognitive, metacognitive, and metalinguistic abilities measures.

Results showed that male students outperformed females on intelligence (as measured by the SPM38), regardless of their field of study. Also, students in the sciences did better on the SPM38 than those in the humanities. Interestingly, these results were reversed for the argumentative aspect of the test: females and humanities students were able to justify their answers at a statistically more significant level, both with a p value of .000. As for MLA, females, regardless of their field of study, again were better able to explain their answers, at a highly statistically significant level, particularly for the complex metalinguistic forms. Pinto et al. (2012) also looked at the correlations between the two tests and found that nonverbal abilities were significantly correlated with explicit metalinguistic abilities, that is, the combined L and ML scores of the TAM-3. They concluded that participants' argumentative abilities were even more strongly correlated with the scores from the TAM-3, showing that the better one did on the TAM-3, the better her argumentative ability was.

All three of these studies (El Euch, 2010; Herrate, 1998; Pinto et al., 2012) used different linguistic versions of the MAT to measure the participants' MLA level. Herrate (1998) found that, by and large, his sample of Grade 8 students had average MLA levels. He also found that more students had lower MLA levels than higher MLA levels. El Euch (2010) found that her participants (both bilingual and trilingual) had average MLA levels. Finally, Pinto et al. (2012) found that males had average MLA levels and that females were on the threshold of average high levels. It would be interesting to examine the MLA levels of Quebec secondary-level ESL students to see how their scores compare to the participants' of the above-mentioned studies.

3.3 Methods to Improve Metalinguistic Awareness

While research objectively measuring secondary-level students' MLA levels is virtually absent from the literature, this is not the case with studies done to look at various methods that could be used to improve MLA.

The first such study to be presented here was done by Myhill et al. (2012), which had the following two-fold research question: What is the impact of contextualised grammar teaching on students' writing and metalinguistic abilities?

Myhill et al. (2012) used a control group and an experimental group, made up of a total of 744 students (11-18 year olds), which were divided evenly according to students' current abilities, using national standardized tests of English, as well as teachers' linguistic knowledge to ensure uniformity between the two groups.

The interventions used were teaching plans where the teachers would make meaningful connections between the grammar points and writing – e.g. that when you change from 1st person to 3rd person narration, it alters the perspective. These plans were developed according to the following seven principles: 1) the use of metalinguistic language, but explained through examples; 2) links are made between the grammar point and how it could be used to improve writing; 3) the modelling of correct usage; 4) the use of activities that included talking about language and its effects; 5) the use by teachers of authentic examples from authentic texts; 6) the use of activities that engage students in their learning; and 7) the use of language play, experimentation, and games when possible. The teachers of the control group, while they had the same learning goals, did not adhere to the above-mentioned seven principles. They used the regular teaching methods they had already been using.

To evaluate writing, the participants did a pre- and post-writing task, in which they had to write a first-person narrative. The experimental group showed significant improvements, especially for able writers. In other words, students who were struggling with writing did not improve as much as those who already found it easier. In terms of MLA, this was measured using qualitative semi-structured interviews in which students were asked to explain their metalinguistic understanding of writing samples similar to the ones they had written. They found that lesson plans had a positive effect on MLA improvement, but that it was mitigated by the teachers' value of MLA: students whose teachers did not value MLA were less likely to improve on this front, and vice-versa.

Another study on methods for improving explicit language knowledge was done by Toth et al. (2013), who wanted to understand the impact of co-constructing grammatical knowledge on the Spanish pronominal clitic *se*. Their research questions were: 1) During co-construction of knowledge, how much time do students spend on L2 analytical talk? 2) How are the analytical processes divided among participants? 3) What analytical processes and linguistic terminology emerge?

Toth et al. (2013) looked at 17 American secondary-level students who were learning Spanish as a second language. They used PACE instruction, an acronym of the following four steps: 1) **Present** target structure within a short narrative; 2) draw the students' **Attention** to these forms; 3) **Co-construct** grammar rules with the students, based on the observed patterns; and 4) **Extension** tasks, where the target form is needed for communication.

Toth et al.'s study (2013) took place over three consecutive 90-minute lessons, each one comprising a complete PACE sequence. They gathered data using audio and video recordings of the sequences, during which there were both small-group work and work done with the entire class.

Toth et al. (2013) found that small groups did not analyze the material as deeply as the entire class and quickly moved on to other topics once an initial analysis had been done. They also observed that there was sufficient instructional support for learners' linguistic reasoning. The students would explain new phenomena using terminology and concepts that they were already familiar with.

Overall, they found that PACE guided instruction was a success and that co-construction had a positive effect on MLA and raising the students' consciousness level. Their caveat is that the teacher needs to make sure that the information they give to their students is not too far above their actual level, or else it will not be meaningful for them. Similarly, when co-constructing this knowledge, it is essential that common ground be found among all the students, again so that the analysis and subsequent established rules have meaning for all.

Both of these studies (Myhill et al., 2012; Toth et al., 2013), while they looked at different research questions, used similar techniques when attempting to, and arguably succeeding in, increasing the students' levels of MLA. First of all, it is important that the target form be in an authentic context, and not simply in isolation. Secondly, students must be active in their learning – it is not sufficient for the teacher to merely lecture on the target form and expect it to be acquired by the students. Next, it is important that once the form is acquired, the students are given opportunities to use it in new, communicative situations. Finally, it is of the utmost important that some form of analysis is done regarding the target form. These four concepts (authentic context, active learning, communicative situations and analysing form) will be used in our study as well when presenting strategies to improve the students' MLA, based on their results from the MAT-2 (Pinto et al., 1999).

CHAPTER IV

METHOD

We chose to carry out a quantitative action research study, because there will be action taken as a result of the data collection (Fortin, 2006). More specifically, in the second part of this project, we will suggest strategies and activities for the students based on their MLA development level.

4.1 Participants

The participants in this study were three groups of PEI[3] Secondary 3 students. They were chosen because they were the groups taught while this study was taking place. The total number of participants was 86. However, owing to the nature of the study (i.e. it took place over 5 days), students (n=19) who missed one or more of the days were eliminated from the study. As well, since this study's research questions were concerned with native French-speaking secondary-level students, students whose first language was not French and who did not speak French at home (n=4) were also eliminated from the study. The final total number of participants was 63, with a mean age of 14. There were 45 females and 18 males.

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[3] Le programme d'éducation internationale, which can lead to obtaining the BI (Baccalaureat international)

4.2 Instrument

Before administering the MAT-2 (Pinto et al., 1999) to the participants, it was important to collect sociodemographic data to better understand the results. This questionnaire (see Appendix A) was intended to collect data on: age, first language, parents' first language, and languages spoken at home.

The instrument used to measure the development level of MLA in the participants is the MAT-2 (Pinto et al., 1999). This test, designed for adolescents, is made up of six subtests: comprehension, synonymy, acceptability, ambiguity, grammatical function, and phonemic segmentation (see Appendix B).

Comprehension. The comprehension subtest is composed of six sentence pairs. In each pair, the first sentence has a syntactic relation that is repeated in the second sentence, but with some variation. For example, both are declarative sentences, but one is in the passive voice and the other is in the active voice. Participants are asked questions that determine whether or not they understand the sentences, and the differences between them. This section measures understanding of semantic and grammatical relations.

Example (Pinto et al., 1999, p. 56):

Item 1.A: "The queen kissed the frog."

LQ[4]: "Who was kissed?"

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[4] LQ: Linguistic Question

MLQ[5]: "What makes you sure it's the…?"

Item 1.B: "The queen was kissed by the frog."

LQ: "Who was kissed?"

MLQ: "What makes you sure it's the…?"

Item 1.C: "I'm going to repeat sentences A and B [sentences are repeated]. According to you, do they mean the same thing or not?

MLQ: "What did you look at to understand that they mean/don't mean the same thing?"

Synonymy. The synonymy subtest is made up of five sentence pairs, each of which is syntactically different. Four of these pairs are synonymous. The fifth pair appears to also be synonymous, but in fact the sentences differ in meaning. This subtest measures the participants' ability to differentiate between two similar sentences based on context.

Example (Pinto et al., 1999, p. 56):

Item 4.A: "The woman is facing the child."

Item 4.B: "The child is across from the woman."

LQ: "Do these sentences mean the same thing or not?"

MLQ: "What makes you sure that they mean/don't mean the same thing?"

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[5] MLQ: Metalinguistic Question

Acceptability. The acceptability subtest includes various types of anomalous sentences. The participants must be able to identify sentences that are acceptable and sentences that are not acceptable. The first five items are sentence pairs, one part of which is acceptable and the other part is unacceptable. The remaining six items have just one sentence, which, if the participants identify as unacceptable, they are then asked to correct it.

Example (Pinto et al., 1999, p. 57):

Item 3.B.a: "The teacher was reading a story."

LQ: "Can you say this?"

Item 3.B.b: "The teacher was reading a chicken."

LQ: "Can you say this?"

MLQ: "Why can't you say this sentence and you can say the one before?"

Ambiguity. The ambiguity subtest is divided into two parts. The first one includes a group of sentences that have semantic ambiguities. Participants are asked to give meanings to the polysemic term provided, and then the subsequent meaning of the sentence for each meaning given. For example, if there are two possible meanings for the word "tables," the participant must then explain how the meaning of the entire sentence changes as a result.

Example (Pinto et al., 1999, pp. 57-58):

Item 4.1.B: "The tables were made of stone."

LQ: What – and how many – meaning do you see in the word "tables"?

MLQ: "Therefore, for the first meaning you gave of 'tables', what does 'The tables were made of stone' mean?"

"And for the second meaning of 'tables'? (An MLQ can be formulated for each meaning of the polysemic word the participant is capable of giving.)

The second part has sentences with structural ambiguities. The participants need to interpret ambiguous sentences based on the context provided.

Example (Pinto et al., 1999, p. 58):

Item 4.2.A) Grandmother is painting. Grandmother's portrait is finished now.

LQ: What does "Grandmother's portrait" mean? Is it a picture of grandmother or is it painted by grandmother?

MLQ: What makes you sure of that?

Grammatical function. The grammatical function subtest has six items, the first three of which test understanding of the grammatical functions of the subject, object, and predicate. The other three items test understanding of some adverbial phrases and subordinate clauses.

Example (Pinto et al., 1999, p. 58):

Item 2.A: "James broke the glass."

LQ: "What was broken?"

MLQ: "What makes you sure it's…?"

Phonemic segmentation. The final subtest, phonemic segmentation, which has 21 items, tests the participants' understanding of phonemes, syllables, and free lexemes. As such, the questions are not bound by sentence constraints, making it possible to look at these individual items. It measures the participants' ability to isolate similar and dissimilar phonemes, as well as connect them to related morphemes.

Example (Pinto et al., 1999, p. 59):

Item: "Sound-Round"

LQ: "How are they similar and how are they different?"

MLQ: "What do these words mean?"

4.3 Administration Procedure

Before administering the test to the students, the test was presented as follows:

"This is a test designed to measure the way you think about and understand English. The test will predict how able you are to perform at school, and based on the results your teacher and I will be able to design activities that will help you improve. Don't worry, how you do on these questionnaires will not have an impact on your report card."

Next, the students completed the sociodemographic questionnaire in French (see Appendix A). This was presented to them as follows:

"Before we can begin, you have to answer these questions about yourself. Knowing this information will help me understand the results of the test."

Finally, the MAT-2 was administered to the students, following the protocol (see Appendix B) described by Pinto et al. (1999).

Due to the length of the subtests, it was necessary to spread them out, and we made the choice to do one section per class, as opposed to starting the next section as soon as the previous one was complete. In this way, it was possible to avoid some students getting much further ahead than others, and we ensured that all the students were ready for the training items at the same time. In addition, it helped students avoid fatigue when answering the questions. Since the students were able to complete the questionnaires well below the maximum time allowed, we made the choice for them to do the Ambiguity and Grammatical Function sections on the same day. In total, the study took up 5 periods of class time.

Each subtest began with oral training items (see Appendix B) to ensure students understood what was expected of them. Participants were encouraged to ask any questions they had so that there could be no confusion as to what they were supposed to do. Following the training items, the students completed each subtest. The maximum time allotted to each subtest is as follows: Comprehension, Acceptability, Ambiguity, and Phonemic Segmentation each last 50 minutes; Synonymy and Grammatical Function each

last 30 minutes. These times do not include the amount of time needed for the training items, which varies depending on how quickly the students grasp the concept (Pinto et al., 1999).

4.4 Scoring Procedure

The MAT-2 involves two levels of knowledge, linguistic and metalinguistic. Linguistic knowledge refers to the participants' implicit knowledge of English, whereas metalinguistic knowledge refers to the participants' ability to express MLA. Each question therefore calls for two answers: a linguistic answer (L) and a metalinguistic answer (ML). L answers are scored in a dichotomous way: they are either right (1 point) or wrong (0 points), and are usually "yes" or "no." On the other hand, ML answers reflect three qualitative levels of metalinguistic development. These levels correspond to three possible scores that show: exhaustive and pertinent analysis (2-point answers), pertinent but insufficient analysis (1-point answers), and a pre-analytical level (0-point answers). Answers worth two points had to necessarily include all the pertinent semantic and grammatical indices. This means that the answers can be considered independently from the linguistic content of the question. Pertinent but insufficient answers, worth 1 point, provide some analysis, but crucial elements are missing and the participants are not fully able to deconstruct the problem. Finally, answers corresponding to the pre-analytical level would include such answers as "Just because" or "That's how it works," or perhaps the participants are unable to give any answer at all.

Example (Pinto et al., 1999, p. 83), corresponding to the Comprehension question, "The queen kissed the frog":

ML0: "I don't know."

ML1: Isolation of only one pertinent clue, such as "kissed."

ML2: "Because the queen does the action and the frog undergoes it."

Each subtest was scored following the procedures described in Pinto et al. (1999). The L and ML raw scores were then calculated in percentages with the use of the total scores specified in Pinto et al. (1999) (see Table 1).

Table 1

Total possible scores on the MAT-2 and its subtests

MAT-2 subtests	Max L score	Max ML score	Total max score
Comprehension	15	32	47
Synonymy	5	10	15
Acceptability	30	26	56
Ambiguity	7	14	21
Grammatical Function	6	24	30
Phonemic Segmentation	33	28	61
Total MAT-2 score	96	134	= 230

Results in percentages aimed at describing how well a student performed in the six subtests. Once this was done, it was also necessary to situate the results on a broader scale, i.e. to look at how our secondary-level students ranked compared to other students of approximately the same age. In order to do so, we used the T scores obtained by Pinto et al. (2003, p. 39), where the Italian version of the MAT-2 (i.e. TAM-2) was validated. The T scores have been shown to be an accurate measure of the participants' MLA, as compared to others of the same age. These scores work similar to percentiles. As such, if a student has a high T score, he or she did much better than others of the same age. Table 2 shows the range of T scores for each subtest.

Table 2

Range of T scores per subtest for the MAT-2

Subtest	L Scores		ML Scores	
	Lowest T	Highest T	Lowest T	Highest T
Comprehension	1	56	23	86
Synonymy	4	58	37	82
Acceptability	1	58	25	81
Ambiguity	4	61	23	81
Grammatical Function	1	54	23	90

Phonemic Segmentation	1	59	2	106

Once we had coded the participants' answers for each subtest, it was time to look at the total scores. In order to do this, we once again used percentages, and then T scores. First, we looked at the total combined L score (i.e. the addition of the L scores from all 6 subtests), and then converted it into a percentage and subsequently a T score. The same thing was done with the total ML score. Finally, the total L was added to the total ML to give us the MAT-2 score, which was once again converted into a percentage and a T score. Table 3 shows the range of T scores for each of these three categories (L, ML, and MAT-2).

Table 3

Range of T scores for L, ML, and MAT-2

Category	Lowest possible T score	Highest possible T score
L	1	63
ML	16	96
MAT-2	2	94

Finally, we looked at the MLA levels as a whole, based on the MAT-2 T scores (Pinto et al, 2003, p. 38). Table 4 shows which MAT-2 T scores correspond to which level.

Table 4

Development levels of MLA based on T scores

MAT-2 T scores	Development level
T < 30	Low
30 < T <40	Low Medium
40 < T < 60	Medium
60 < T < 70	High Medium
70 < T	High

CHAPTER V

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was two-fold: to determine the secondary-level students' MLA development levels and to propose activities and strategies to help increase these levels. In this chapter, the participants' results will be described in detail before suggesting activities and strategies that would be pertinent for the different MLA levels.

5.1 The MLA development level of Secondary 3 ESL students

The scoring procedure adopted by Pinto et al. (1999; 2003) yielded raw scores that we converted into percentages in order to describe the MLA level of development of Secondary 3 ESL students. Results showed that L is better than ML for all six subtests of the MAT-2 (see Figure 1).
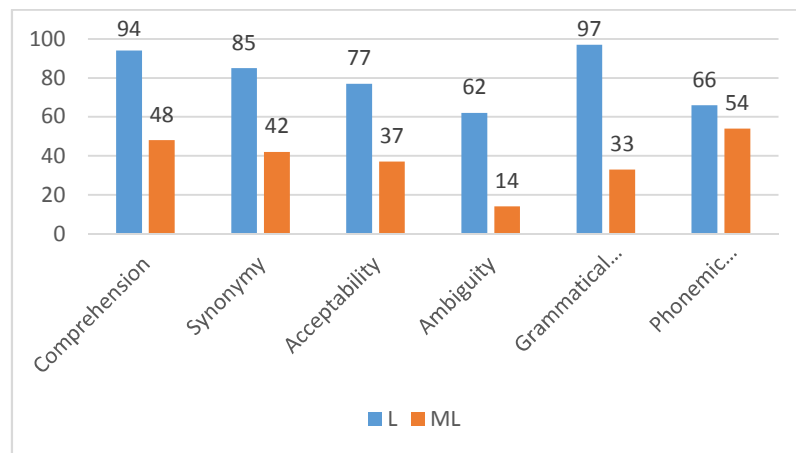

Figure 1. L and ML results levels, in percentages.

In other words, the students scored higher on the questions that tested their implicit understanding of English than on those that tested their explicit understanding of the language. Essentially, they are not always able to explain how they know what they know. The most striking subtest in this regard is Grammatical Function, with an average L result of 97% but only 33% for ML.

Once we knew how the students did on the test, it was time to consider how they compared to other participants of approximately the same age, as was explained in Section 4.4. The T scores for each subtest are shown in Figure 2. As well, the maximum T score is indicated. It demonstrates that for some of the subtests, most notably for the L T scores, the maximum is not higher than 60, indicating that the majority of participants do well on the implicit knowledge of language. To fully grasp this concept, each subtest will be examined in detail.

As shown in Figure 2, in the Comprehension subtest, the maximum T score is 56, meaning that a participant who gets all the L questions correct still only does better than 56% of participants of a similar age. For ML, on the other hand, the maximum T score is 86, meaning that students who answer all those questions correctly do better than 86% of participants. In the Synonymy subtest, we see a similar trend as the maximum T scores for L and ML, respectively, are 58 and 82. These T scores are virtually identical to those for the Acceptability subtest, which are 58 and 81, for L and ML, respectively, and the Ambiguity subtest, whose T scores are 61 and 81, for L and ML, respectively. The gap widens, however, in the Grammatical Function subtest, whose T scores are 54 and 90, for

L and ML, respectively. Finally, for Phonemic Segmentation, the T scores are 59 and 106, again for L and ML, respectively.
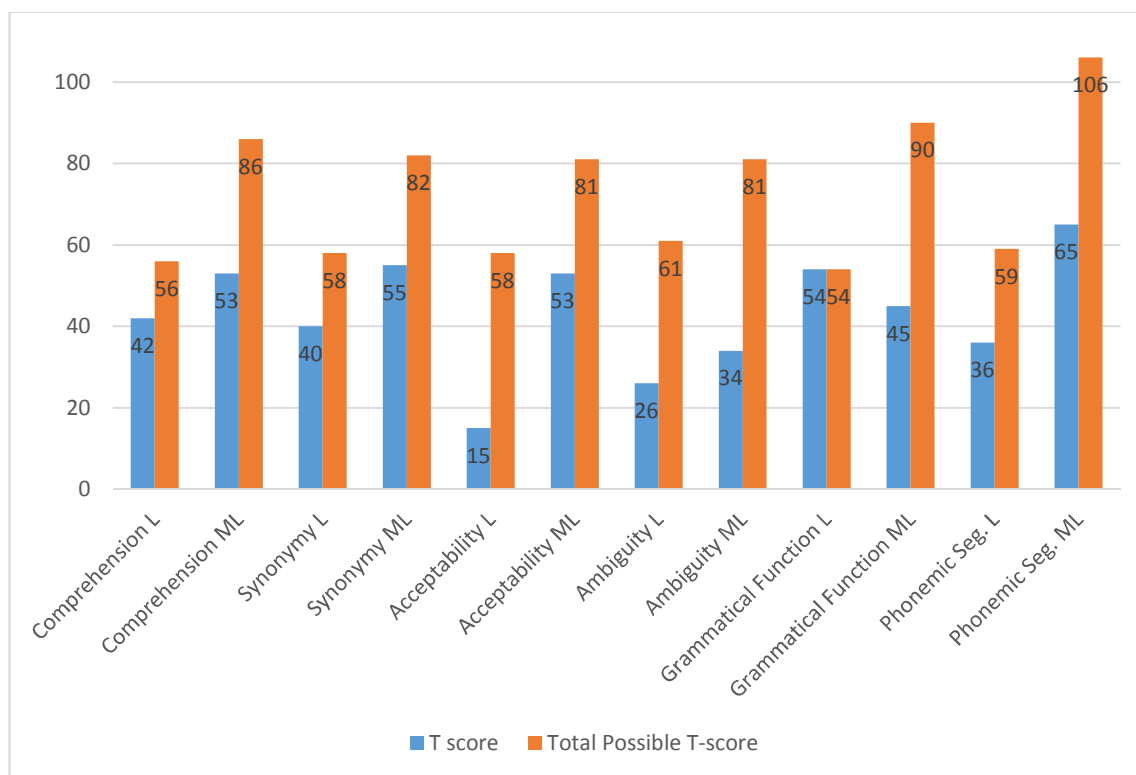

Figure 2. L and ML levels (T scores).

The most striking feature of this figure is that we see a reversal from the results based on percentages. More precisely, the T scores for ML are higher than those for L: Comprehension L is 42 and ML is 53; Synonymy L is 40 and ML is 55; Acceptability L is 15 and ML is 53; Ambiguity L is 26 and ML is 34; Grammatical Function L is 54 and ML is 45; and Phonemic Segmentation is 36 and ML is 65. This indicates that when compared to other participants of the same age, despite their low ML percentages, our secondary 3 PEI students rank comparably, falling within the average range, which as

indicated in Table 4 (above) is between 40 and 60. Another interesting result in Figure 1 is the Acceptability and Ambiguity L results, both of which are extremely low. This shows that Secondary 3 PEI students rank very low in terms of what they know implicitly about acceptable (or not) and ambiguous sentences. They are not able to pick up on the subtleties of sentences that make them unacceptable or that change their meaning.

The final data analysis looked at the total scores of the test, both in terms of percentages and T scores, as can be seen in Figures 3 and 4, respectively.
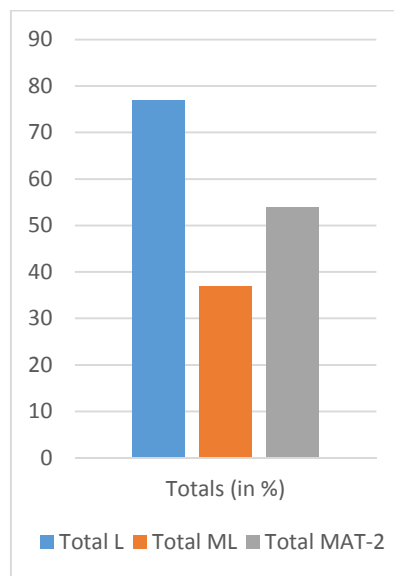

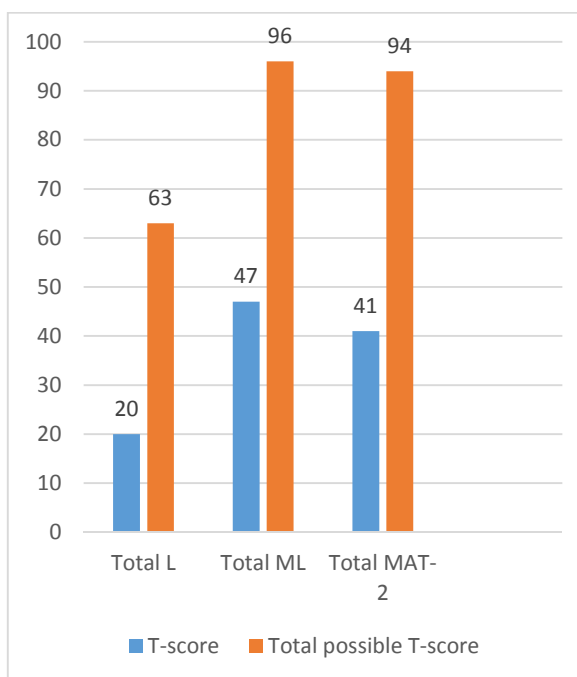Figure 3. Participants' combined scores for MAT-2 (in %).

Figure 4. Participants' total T scores, for all of the subtests combined.

What we see in Figures 3 and 4 corresponds to what we saw in Figures 1 and 2. For percentages, we can see that the average L score is 77%, which is comparable to results we see in school evaluations. However, when we look at the ML score, it drops down to 37%. If we look at the MAT-2 result, we are somewhere in the middle, at 54%. Again, if we look at the T scores of these same items, we see the opposite. Their total T score for L is very low, at 20. Their ML T score falls again into the average range, with a score of 47. Finally, their total MAT-2 result, barely makes it into the average range, with a score of 41.

Before interpreting the results, Table 5 provides a snapshot of where the students' ML results are situated, both in terms of percentages and T scores. It shows that as far as Comprehension and Synonymy are concerned, when looking at ML percentages and T

scores, the students had average results. As for Ambiguity, it is possible to see that students had extremely low ML scores, both when looking at percentages and T scores. Grammatical Function ML scores are low medium, again for both percentages and T scores. On the other hand, we see a different pattern for the other two sections (i.e. Acceptability and Phonemic Segmentation) and the Total ML results. For Acceptability, despite the fact that their ML percentage falls into the low medium range, their T scores are medium. Phonemic Segmentation, we see medium percentages, but with a higher T score of high medium. Finally, the Total ML results show that while the overall ML score is low medium, it is actually medium when compared to students of the same age.

Table 5

Ranking of students' MLA results (% and T scores)

MLA	Comp.		Synoymy		Accept.		Ambig.		Gr. Fn.		Pho. Seg.		Total	
	%	T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%	T
High														
High Medium												✦		
Medium	✦	✦	✦	✦		✦					✦			✦
Low Medium					✦				✦	✦			✦	
Low							✦	✦						

5.2 Discussion

It is now time to examine why these results are important. Generally speaking, the focus on explicit instruction has been almost completely removed from the classroom, and this shows in the participants' inability to justify their answers. This practice is clearly to the detriment of the students. As was described above, there are a multitude of benefits of having an increased MLA, such as improvement in a variety of school subjects (Bialystok, 1992; Dreher & Zenge, 1990; MacGregor & Price, 1999), help with learning an L2 (Simard et al., 2007), improved reading and writing (Dreher & Zenge, 1990; El Euch, 2010) in both L1 and L2 (El Euch, 2012), and increased accuracy (Alhussain, 2009; Bloor, 1986; Simard et al., 2007; Terrell, 1991). In other words, when students have developed the capacity to think critically about language, the benefits can be seen in a multitude of ways. In order to look at this more closely, we will examine each subtest and explain the results in terms of context.

5.2.1 Understanding the MLA level of Secondary 3 students as far as Comprehension is concerned. As shown in Table 5, in terms of both percentages and T scores, the students involved in this study ranked "Medium" for the Comprehension subtest. On average, then, the students were able to justify their understanding of written English, and they did so comparably to their peers, but there is room for improvement. The results indicate that these students have clearly had some instruction that did something to improve their MLA in Comprehension. We would posit that in a communicative context, there is a focus on understanding what is being said as well as

expressing oneself to be understood. This could explain why the students did relatively well on this section, as well as why their peers did, given that the communicative approach is used widely in ESL classrooms (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). However, ESL teachers should continue to seize any opportunity to increase their students' MLA through the use of Comprehension activities. The challenge is doing so in a competency-based communicative (MELS, 2007) ESL classroom. The key is for these activities to be contextualized and analytical, with the students being active in the activity and not passive.

5.2.2 Understanding the MLA level of Secondary 3 students as far as Synonymy is concerned. The students' MLA results for the Synonymy subtest were comparable to those of the previous subtest. This means that once again we can say that the students were generally able to explain why two sentences do or do not mean the same thing, and were able to do so at about the same level as their peers. We would argue that, as with the Comprehension MLA, there is something about teaching in the communicative context that facilitates this type of MLA. There is still room for improvement, however, and ESL teachers should then try to look for ways to improve their students' capacity to do so, all the while using activities in which the students are active learners, with the activity itself being contextualized and analytical.

5.2.3 Understanding the MLA level of Secondary 3 students as far as Acceptability is concerned. This was one of the lowest-scoring subtests for the students involved in this study. Although they managed to achieve a "Medium" T-score, their

percentage on the ML questions was "Low Medium." Therefore, they could generally explain if a sentence was acceptable or not, but their overall ability to do so is limited. Their peers out-performed them, and it would be interesting to pursue a line of inquiry to discover why this is. What is it about the Quebec Education Program (QEP) that does not promote the development of Acceptability MLA? This topic is beyond the scope of this essay, but it is worth considering if there is a lack of instruction for Acceptability MLA because of the competency-based QEP, or is there some other reason? This could be an avenue of future research. As such, there is work to be done on improving the students' Acceptability abilities. A detailed activity that could help do this is described in Section 5.4.2. This activity has once again the three necessary components to improve MLA: analysis, context, and active students (Myhill et al., 2012; Toth et al., 2013).

5.2.4 Understanding the MLA level of Secondary 3 students as far as Ambiguity is concerned. Ambiguity is the subtest in which the students performed the lowest, both in terms of percentages and of T scores. This means that the students are essentially unable to explain ambiguities in English sentences, including when compared with their peers. This is an important difference with some of the other subtests, where their peers also performed very poorly. For this subtest, participants that were part of the validation study (Pinto et al., 2003) did consistently better than those involved in this study. In this case, although it is impossible to know what happens in each ESL classroom, there is clearly something lacking in our Secondary 3 students' English learning that has not allowed them to develop their ability to analyse ambiguities. Once again, we would point to the communicative approach, which has decreased the FFI in the classroom. As

with the Acceptability subtest, given the extremely poor results, a detailed activity to improve MLA concerning ambiguity is outlined below in Section 5.4.1.

5.2.5 Understanding the MLA level of Secondary 3 students as far as Grammatical Function in Concerned. In the Grammatical Function subtest, we once again find relatively low scores. For both percentages and T scores, the students ranked Low Medium. This means that they performed below average on the subtest, as well when compared to their peers. They were not unable to explicitly consider grammatical function, but nor were they able to do it well. Similarly, their peers were able to do so at a slightly higher rate. In a context like the QEP, there clearly needs to be an increase in the students' learning about grammatical function. The students need to improve their ability to look at the grammatical function of each of the words in a sentence, and to consider what the grammatical function of each one contributes to the sentence. In order to so, as with the previous two sections, an activity is proposed in Section 5.4.3. This activity should not only improve the students' abilities in this regard, but it also fits within the QEP.

5.2.6 Understanding the MLA level of Secondary 3 students as far as Phonemic Segmentation is Concerned. The Phonemic Segmentation is the subtest in which the participants performed the best. For percentages, they ranked Medium, meaning that their scores were average. However, when compared to their peers using the T score, we see a High Medium result. This means that they out-performed their peers in this subtest. Although teachers are not supposed to grade pronunciation (MELS, 2007), we could argue that this is one area that, if not helped, is at the very least not hindered by the

communicative approach. In this approach, the goal is for L2 students to be able to understand and be understood by other English speakers. This involves the ability to differentiate among similar-sounding phonemes as well as being able to produce these phonemes correctly. Although there is always room for improvement, this is the area that requires it the least out of all six sections.

5.2.7 Understanding the average MLA level of Secondary 3 students. Finally, it is important to understand the difference between the average scores in percentages and T scores. In terms of percentage, the average was only 37%. For the T score, however, the result is 47, which places these Secondary 3 students in the average alongside their peers. From this result, we can see that although in the class they may have trouble explaining their knowledge of English, they are within the norm compared to their peers. This might explain the discrepancy between their low percentage rates, at the same time as Quebec secondary students are able to succeed very well when compared to other students (OECD, 2016). That being said, given the poor results in several of the sections (most notably Acceptability, Ambiguity, and Grammatical Function), there is still much work to be done to improve students' MLA. This will be discussed in Section 5.3, below.

5.3 General strategies to improve MLA

The following suggestions are based on the studies that aimed to improve MLA (Myhill et al., 2012; Toth et al., 2013) and geared towards the three sections in which the students performed the least well: Acceptability, Ambiguity, and Grammatical Function. It is also important to remember that these recommendations must fall within the

framework of the competency-based QEP (MELS, 2007). First of all, any activities to improve MLA must involve analysis and control of the desired target. For example, if we take Ambiguity, the students need to analyse ambiguous sentences, using techniques such as monologing, using relationship markers and textual organisers, summarizing, paraphrasing, and predicting. As well, they will have to practice some sort of control over the form, perhaps in the restructuring of the ambiguous sentences, for example (El Euch, 2016). The same would apply to activities related to Acceptability and Grammatical Function.

Secondly, these analysis activities must be in context (Myhill et al., 2012; Toth et al., 2013). Grammar drills are a thing of the past, and students must be able to see the context in which they will need these skills. For example, if the students are looking at the grammatical function of the various parts of a sentence, these sentences cannot be given in isolation, but rather within the context of a topic that would interest them. This would also meet the fulfillments of the communicative approach set forth in the QEP (MELS, 2007).

Thirdly, the learners must be active during these activities, not merely listening to a lecture by the teacher (Myhill et al., 2012; Toth et al., 2013), something that is also espoused by the QEP (MELS, 2007). If we take Acceptability, the teacher needs to elicit participation from the students while they are working on the analysis of why a sentence is acceptable (or not). Projects and small group discussions are other ways in which the teacher could ensure that the students are actively taking part in the development of their

MLA. This approach coincides with the fourth principle, which states that the students need to be given a large variety of opportunities in which to practice the target item. This does not mean that they have a lot of opportunities to practice, though that would obviously also help, but rather that there is a variety in terms of the types of practice.

It is important to remember that Myhill et al. (2012) found that these strategies improve MLA so long as the teachers recognize the importance of MLA in the development of their students' L2 abilities. Toth et al. (2013) emphasized that teachers need to present new language skills that are only slightly above their students' current levels, otherwise the students will not be able to process the new information. Students will then use the terminology they already know to talk about and describe the newly-learned grammatical form, for example.

In summary, in order to improve their students' MLA in terms of Acceptability, Ambiguity, and Grammatical Function, teachers need to use activities that include analysis, that are contextualized, in which the learners are active, and that present a variety of practice opportunities. The goal is that the teachers will use FFI alongside the communicative approach so that their learners will improve their MLA.

5.4 Proposed activities

To demonstrate these principles, and to fulfill the second research objective of this essay, three activities will be described, one for each of the low-scoring subtests (i.e. Ambiguity, Acceptability, and Grammatical Function), in order of lowest-scoring subtest to highest.

5.4.1 Ambiguity Activity

In this activity, students look at pairs of sentences, where context given in one of the sentences determines the meaning of the pair. The activity is outlined in Table 6.

Table 6

Ambiguity Activity

Step 1	Students are given sentence pairs to analyse.
	1a. "I can't wait for the pool party on Saturday. This weekend is going to be cool."
	1b. "I heard it might snow on Sunday. This weekend is going to be cool."
	2a. "I saw the man with the binoculars. He was really far away."
	2b. "I saw the man with the binoculars. I wonder what he was looking at."
	3a. "My parents are preparing supper. They are baking potatoes."
	3b. "I'm going to buy these ones. They are baking potatoes."
	4a. "Visiting relatives can be challenging. They always get in the way."
	4b. "Visiting relatives can be challenging. By the end of the trip, you want to go home."
	5a. "I have never tasted a cake like that before! I could barely eat it."
	5b. "I have never tasted a cake like that before! I had three pieces."

	For each pair, each student must individually highlight the clues that help her understand the ambiguous aspect of the sentence. e.g. "I <mark>can't wait</mark> for the <mark>pool party</mark> on <mark>Saturday</mark>. This <mark>weekend</mark> is going to be <mark>cool</mark>." "I heard it might <mark>snow</mark> on <mark>Sunday</mark>. This <mark>weekend</mark> is going to be <mark>cool</mark>."
Step 2	In groups of 2 or 3, the students must each explain their choices, why the highlighted words are clues and their significance. As they explain, the others in their group need to provide any clues the student might have missed. It is of utmost importance that the students do not simply give the answers, but explain their answers.
Step 3	The teacher writes each pair of sentences on the board and asks students to come up and highlight the relevant words. After they do so, they must then explain why they chose the words and their significance, as they had to do in the small groups.
Step 4	As a reinvestment task, the students will write a short dialogue that uses each of the sentence pairs. This will be evaluated as a C2 task (Reinvestment of understanding of texts) (MELS, 2007), because the students will be graded on their ability to integrate the ambiguous sentences. If they did not understand the ambiguity, then the dialogue they create will be confusing. If she desired, a teacher could also evaluate the dialogue as a C3 task (Writing texts) (MELS, 2007).

In this activity, it is possible to see the four necessary strategies to improve MLA. First of all, the students are analyzing the different pairs of sentences and then controlling the form in Step 4, when they need to insert them into new dialogues they create. They are also given opportunities to use the strategies discussed above, including monologuing (reading out loud to their classmates), paraphrasing, using textual markers, summarizing, paraphrasing, etc. (El Euch, 2016). The context is also provided in Step 4, when the students need to build up the context around the ambiguous sentences. The variety of practice opportunities is present throughout the activity in its entirety. At each stage of the exercise, the students are given a different way to interact with the target form. Finally, the students are engaged with the material since it is always the students who must find and explain the ambiguities. The teacher does not lecture to them about the ambiguous sentences, but rather accompanies and guides them as they learn.

In this activity, it is also possible to see that it adheres to the QEP. Part of the teacher's job would be to ensure that the discussions happening among the students are being done in English. As well, there is a connection with the second ESL competency, Reinvesting Understanding of Texts (MELS, 2007).

5.4.2 Acceptability Activity

In this next activity, the students must look at unacceptable sentences and analyse them. The activity is outlined in Table 7.

Table 7

Acceptability Activity

Step 1	In groups of 2 or 3, the students analyse unacceptable sentences. More specifically, they need to look at what makes them unacceptable and why. They also need to consider how they could change the sentence so that it becomes acceptable. The students should take notes on each of the sentences, rather than simply thinking to themselves. 1. The table watched the cat. 2. The car flew through the skies. 3. I went to the banana for lunch. 4. The cup took a walk after supper. 5. My cat asked if I had slept well. 6. The paper ordered a coffee. 7. The tree spoke my name. 8. He brushed his teeth with his fish. 9. She used a spoon to wash her car. 10. I jumped to the top of a 10-storey building.
Step 2	As a group, the teacher looks at the sentences with the class. She calls on students and asks them to analyse the sentence. When asking for explanations, the teacher makes sure that the students look beyond the words in the sentence to the underlying structure.

	e.g. "A table cannot watch the cat, because it is inanimate and objects that are not alive cannot do an action such as watching."
	"In order to fly, an object needs to have wings and a strong enough engine, neither of which a car has."
Step 3	As a C3 (Write texts) evaluation (MELS, 2007), the students need to write a short fairy tale (about a paragraph) for the unacceptable sentences. In each story, they must provide enough fantastical context for the unacceptable sentences to become acceptable. For example, the students could create a story in which cars can fly because they are all put under a magical spell. By looking at the ways in which the sentence could become acceptable, they need to consider the reasons for which it is unacceptable.

As with the Ambiguity activity, here we can see all four of the desired components. First of all, the activity starts with the students analyzing some unacceptable sentences, followed by the students having to correct them. In doing so, they make use of the necessary strategies: monologuing (via note-taking in their notebooks), paraphrasing, analyzing ambiguities, etc. (El Euch, 2016). The students are able to see the context of the sentences when they consider what kinds of stories they could write that would make the sentences acceptable. Once again, we see variety in that each step is a different type of activity. As well, the students are actively engaged in their learning because they are the ones responsible for explaining why the sentences are unacceptable along with how they could be fixed.

The connections are again clear with the QEP. Given the students' active participation, there is a focus on communication. As well, there is the opportunity for an evaluation for the third ESL competency (Writing Texts) (MELS, 2007).

5.4.3 Grammatical Function Activity

In this final activity, the students have to analyse sentences taken from authentic texts and then present their analyses to their classmates. The complete activity is outlined in Table 8.

Table 8

Grammatical Function Activity

Step 1	The teacher models the upcoming activity. Using a sentence from an authentic text, she divides the sentence into its various components and explains what each contributes to the sentence, ending with what information the sentence gives about the subject and a justification.
Step 2	Students look at an authentic text (e.g. *Harry Potter*, *Hunger Games*, etc.) and pull out five sentences of their choice to analyse. The teacher must approve sentences.
Step 3	The students divide each sentence into its grammatical components (i.e. subject, verb and tense, object, complement, adjective, adverb, pronoun, etc.). In their notebooks, they write out the sentences and explain what each

	grammatical item brings to the sentence. They also explain what is being said about the subject in each sentence and how they know that.
Step 4	In groups of 3 or 4, each student presents his or her five sentences. As a group, they also choose 3-4 sentences (i.e. one per group member) to present to the class. During this time, the teacher conducts a C1 evaluation (Oral interaction) (MELS, 2007) using an observation grid.
Step 5	Each group presents their sentences to the rest of the class and receives feedback from their classmates and the teacher. The teacher ensures that the students are highlighting the grammatical function of the various parts of the sentence and not simply the meanings of the individual words.

All four activity criteria are once again present. The students do a detailed analysis of the chosen sentences, which includes strategies such as monologuing, paraphrasing, summarizing, etc. (El Euch, 2016). The control factor comes into play while they are dividing the sentences into their various grammatical parts. The students look at each of these different functions and considers each one's impact on the sentence as a whole, and therefore better understand the each sentence's inner workings. The context criteria is present in Step 2, in which the students pull out sentences from authentic texts. In choosing the texts themselves, the students will clearly be able to see the context in which these sentences could exist. As with the other two activities, each step represents a different type of exercise for the students. In this case, we can see the students working individually, in groups, and together as a class. There are also both oral and written components of the

lesson. Lastly, the students are actively engaged, as evidenced by the lack of lecturing done by the teacher. Instead, the teacher's job is to guide the students in their sentence selection and then to ensure that the students have correctly identified the various grammatical functions present in the sentence.

Similar to the other two activities, we can again see the connections to the QEP. There are discussions and conversations taking place in English, and it falls to the teacher to ensure that these are respecting the first ESL competency (Interacting Orally in English). As well, in this activity, the teacher can use it as a C1 evaluation opportunity (MELS, 2007). Once again, this is an activity that will improve MLA while fitting in the framework of the QEP.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

There are a few limitations of this study. First of all, it was not possible to include all the Secondary 3 students in the school. Logistically, within the framework of the teaching practicum, it would not have been possible. That being said, it would be interesting to see how the results would have been different. This is especially true given that the students in the study were all PEI students, and therefore not a representative sample of Quebec Secondary 3 students. Secondly, along the same lines, some of the students were eliminated from our study because either they were absent during at least one of the MAT-2 subtests or they were bilingual (regardless of what the two languages were). It was unfortunate to lose so many students because of absences, but this could not be avoided given the context. It would also be interesting to do a comparative study

between those who spoke a second language at home and those whose only exposure to an L2 was in a classroom context, but it was not feasible within the constraints of the teaching practicum. This could be an avenue for future research.

Finally, we used the valid T scores for the Italian version of the MAT-2, which may explain the difference in the development level between percentages and the T score. Indeed, while in terms of percentages, the students had higher L than ML, in terms of T scores, ML results were better than L results. If and when the English version is validated, it would be interesting to compare the T scores and see if anything has changed. Again, this is a possible path for future research.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this study was two-fold: to measure Quebec Secondary 3 PEI students' MLA levels and to, subsequently, suggest activities and strategies to improve their MLA. There are many benefits of having an increased MLA level, as seen above, such as improvement in a variety of school subjects (Bialystok, 1992; Dreher & Zenge, 1990; MacGregor & Price, 1999), help with learning an L2 (Simard et al., 2007), improving reading and writing (Dreher & Zenge, 1990; El Euch, 2010) in both L1 and L2 (El Euch, 2012), and increased accuracy (Alhussain, 2009; Bloor, 1986; Simard et al., 2007; Terrell, 1991).

This essay looked at the MLA levels of 63 Secondary 3 students and showed that they have more implicit (L results) than explicit knowledge (ML results) of English, which confirmed results from other studies (El Euch, 2010; Pinto et al., 2012). It also showed that, while this is the case in the classroom, when compared with other participants via T scores, they scored higher on explicit knowledge (ML) than on implicit knowledge (L). In addition, some areas, particularly Acceptability, Ambiguity, and Grammatical Function, where the students had difficulties the most. . Finally, this essay suggested some strategies for improving the students' MLA in these three areas.

We interpreted the low performance on the explicit level of the MAT-2 as a consequence of the communicative approach in the classroom along with the competency-based QEP (MELS, 2007), which is often to the point of neglecting explicit instruction of form. While students are often able to give correct answers (implicit level of knowledge),

they lack the grammatical foundation necessary to explain their answers, i.e. to demonstrate their MLA. In other words, they do not understand why they know what they know. This is to their detriment, not just in the ESL classroom, but across a variety of school subjects.

There is an apparent contrast in the results. Although the students performed poorly on the MAT-2, they outperformed their Italian peers. It is not possible to fully understand the reason for this, but it is clear that low levels of MLA exist across the board, and not only among Quebec secondary-level students.

More specifically, here are the results of each subtest. In Comprehension, the average was 94% and 48%, for L and ML, respectively. Their T scores (that compare them to their peers) were 42 and 53, for L and ML, respectively. This means that the students' levels were Medium across the board for this subtest, so they compared favorably with their Italian peers, but there is still room for improvement.

For Synonymy, the average was 85% and 42%, for L and ML, respectively. Their T scores were 40 and 55, for L and ML, respectively. These are similar results as for the Comprehension subtest, meaning they ranked at about the same level as their peers, but they need to improve as well.

For Acceptability, the average was 77% and 37%, for L and ML, respectively. Their T scores were 15 and 53, for L and ML, respectively. This means that although they ranked comparably to their peers, their ML scores on the subtest itself were low. This

means that their Italian peers also performed poorly on this subtest. For a reason we do not know, this is a subtest that has poor results across the board.

For Ambiguity, the average was 62% and 14%, for L and ML, respectively. Their T scores were 26 and 34, for L and ML, respectively. These are their lowest scores of any subtest. The students essentially lack the ability to determine if a sentences is ambiguous or not as well as to explain why a sentence is acceptable (or not). They do so even less than their peers.

For Grammatical Function, the average was 97% and 33%, for L and ML, respectively. Their T scores were 54 and 45, for L and ML, respectively. These are Low Medium scores on both fronts. As with the Ambiguity subtest, they rank below their peers and do not have the ability to correctly identify and explain the grammatical function of various parts of a sentence.

Finally, for Phonemic Segmentation, the average was 66% and 54%, for L and ML, respectively. Their T scores were 36 and 65, for L and ML, respectively. This was the students' best-scoring subtest. They scored Medium on the percentages front, but their T scores were High Medium, indicating their levels were higher than their peers.

This essay concluded with recommendations for teachers on how they can work to improve their students' MLA. Although the focus was on the three target categories (Acceptability, Ambiguity, and Grammatical Function), the strategy recommendations made would be helpful for improving MLA in general as well. Teachers need to provide a variety of opportunities for analysis and justification, where the content is taught in

context and the learners are active in their learning. In this way, the students' MLA levels will increase, all while conforming to the communicative approach and competency-based QEP (MELS, 2007).

This essay was a very fruitful experience. Despite the many advances in the educational system, ESL teachers should not neglect explicit teaching, and this essay has confirmed that conclusion. There is a definite lack of MLA among Quebec secondary students, but if ESL teachers work towards improving it, then the benefits would be far-reaching. As a new ESL teacher, I am looking forward to applying these strategies and activities to my future teaching. I will do my utmost to make sure that I will not neglect my students' MLA.

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APPENDIX A

Socio-demographic questionnaire

Nom: _____

1. Quel âge as-tu? _____

2. Quelle est ta langue maternelle? _____

3. Quelle est la langue maternelle de ta mère? _____

4. Quelle est la langue maternelle de ton père? _____

5. Quelle(s) langue(s) parlez-vous à la maison? _____

APPENDIX B

The MAT-2 test protocol, from Pinto et al. (1999)

1) Comprehension

Oral presentation: "Now we're going to look at some sentences about which you will be asked some questions."

1.0) The boy ate the fish.
LQ: "Who was eaten?"
LA: (Answer is given together with examiner)
MLQ: "What makes you sure about who was eaten?"
MLA: (Answer is given with examiner)
"Now you're going to answer on your own."

***

1.1.A) The queen kissed the frog.

LQ: Who was kissed?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

1.1.B) The queen was kissed by the frog.

LQ: Who was kissed?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that:
MLA: _____

1.1.C) I'm going to repeat the last sentences:
The queen kissed the frog. The queen was kissed by the frog.
LQ: Do they mean the same thing?
LA: _____
MLQ: What did you look at to be sure of that?
MLA: _____

1.2.A) After the girl had finished eating, she began to read a comic.

LQ: What did the girl do first?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

1.2.B) The girl began to read after she had finished eating.

LQ: What did she do afterwards?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

1.2.C) I'm going to repeat the previous sentences:
After the girl had finished eating, she began to read a comic. The girl began to read after she had finished eating.
LQ: Do they mean the same thing or not?
LA: _____
MLQ: What did you look at to be sure of that?
MLA: _____

1.3.A) The car crashed into a truck.
LQ: What did the car crash into?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

1.3.B) The truck crashed into the car.
LQ: What crashed into the car?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

1.3.C) I'm going to repeat the previous sentences:
The car crashed into a truck. The truck crashed into the car.
LQ: Do they mean the same thing or not?
LA: _____
MLQ: What did you look at to be sure of that?
MLA: _____

1.4.A) The house was destroyed by the earthquake.
LQ: What destroyed the house?

LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

1.4.B) The earthquake didn't destroy the house.
LQ: What happened to the house?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

1.4.C) I'm going to repeat the previous sentences.
The house was destroyed by the earthquake. The earthquake didn't destroy the house.
LQ: Do they mean the same thing?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

1.5.A) "Such weather!" Your brother didn't leave the house.
LQ: Why didn't your brother leave the house?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

1.5.B) "Take your umbrella!" you advised your brother.
LQ: Why did you advise your brother to take his umbrella?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of your answer?
MLA: _____

1.6.A) "It took me an hour to drive two miles!"
LQ: Why did it take so long?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

1.6.B) It takes less time to drive the same distance when there's no traffic.
MLQ: Why?
MLA: _____

2) Synonymy

Oral presentation: "Now we're going to look at other sentences, and you're going to tell me if they mean the same thing or not."

2.0.A) The jacket was cut by the tailor.
2.0.B) It's the tailor that cut the jacket.
LQ: Do they mean the same thing?
LA: (Answer given with examiner)
MLQ: What makes you sure that they mean the same thing?
MLA: (Answer given with examiner)
"Now you're going to answer on your own."

***

2.1.A) The nurse was called by the doctor.
2.1.B) It's the nurse that the doctor called.
LQ: Do they mean the same thing?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

2.2.A) There's an apple in the basket.
2.2.B) The basket contains an apple.
LQ: Do they mean the same thing?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

2.3.A) The boy fed the dog before he watched TV.
2.3.B) The boy watched TV after he had fed the dog.
LQ: Do they mean the same thing?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

2.4.A) The woman is facing the boy.
2.4.B) The boy is across from the woman.
LQ: Do they mean the same thing?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

2.5.A) There is more cake than ice cream.

2.5.B) There is less ice cream than cake.
LQ: Do they mean the same thing?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

3) Acceptability

Oral presentation: "Now you're going to tell me if the following sentences can be used or not."

3.0.A) Paul was photographing the monument.
LQ: Can this be said?
LA: (Answer given with examiner)

3.0.B) The monument was photographing Paul.
LQ: Can this be said?
LA: (Answer given with examiner)
MLQ: Why can't you say "The monument was photographing Paul" but you can say "Paul was photographing the monument"?
MLA: (Answer given with examiner)

"Now you're going to answer on your own"

<div align="center">***</div>

3.1.A) The cat was playing with the string.
LQ: Can this be said?
LA: _____

3.1.B) The string was playing with the cat.
LQ: Can this be said?
LA: _____
MLQ: Why did you give these answers?
MLA: _____

3.2A) The girl was patting the dog.
LQ: Can this be said?
LA: _____

3.2.B) The girl was patting.

LQ: Can this be said?
LA: _____
MLQ: Why did you give these answers?
MLA: _____

3.3.A) The teacher was coughing.
LQ: Can this be said?
LA: _____

3.3A) The teacher was coughing the car.
LQ: Can this be said?
LA: _____
MLQ: Why did you give these answers?
MLA: _____

3.4.A) The woman was going to the market.
LQ: Can this be said?
LA: _____

3.4.B) The sidewalk was going to the market.
LQ: Can this be said?
LA: _____
MLQ: Why did you give these answers?
MLA: _____

3.5.A) The teacher was reading a story.
LQ: Can this be said?
LA: _____

3.5.B) The teacher was reading a hen.
LQ: Can this be said?
LA: _____
MLQ: Why did you give these answers?
MLA: _____

3.6.A) The boulder was in the middle of the road.
LQ: Can this be said?
LA: _____

3.6.B) The sleeping boulder was in the middle of the road.
LQ: Can this be said?
LA: _____
MLQ: Why did you give these answers?

MLA: _____

3.7.A) The cat fell on its paws.
LQ: Can this be said?
LA: _____

3.7.B) The cat fell on the doctor's paws.
LQ: Can this be said?
LA: _____
MLQ: Why did you give these answers?
MLA: _____

3.8.A) The shark was swimming on the sand.
LQ: Can this be said?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

3.9.A) The cat were purring.
LQ: a) Is this right or wrong?
LA: _____
LQ: b) If it's wrong, where's the mistake?
LA: _____
LQ: c) If you think it's wrong, how should it be fixed?
LA: _____
MLQ: Why should it be like that?
MLA: _____

3.10.A) The child doesn't wash the face.
LQ: a) Is this right or wrong?
LA: _____
LQ: b) If it's wrong, where's the mistake?
LA: _____
LQ: c) If you think it's wrong, how should it be fixed?
LA: _____
MLQ: Why should it be like that?
MLA: _____

3.11.A) The soups is bad today.
LQ: a) Is this right or wrong?
LA: _____
LQ: b) If it's wrong, where's the mistake?
LA: _____

LQ: c) If you think it's wrong, how should it be fixed?
LA: _____
MLQ: Why should it be like that?
MLA: _____

3.12.A) The relatives had a party at home.
LQ: a) Is this right or wrong?
LA: _____
LQ: b) If it's wrong, where's the mistake?
LA: _____
LQ: c) If you think it's wrong, how should it be fixed?
LA: _____
MLQ: Why should it be like that?
MLA: _____

3.13.A) A nightingales sing happily.
LQ: a) Is this right or wrong?
LA: _____
LQ: b) If it's wrong, where's the mistake?
LA: _____
LQ: c) If you think it's wrong, how should it be fixed?
LA: _____
MLQ: Why should it be like that?
MLA: _____

4) Ambiguity

Oral presentation: "In each of the following sentences there's a word with more than one meaning. You will need to say how many and what these meanings are."

4.0) The bank did a good job.
LQ: What – and how many – meanings do you see in the word "bank"?
LA: (Answer given with examiner)
MLQ: Therefore, according to the first sense of the word, what does "The bank did a good job" mean?
MLA: (Answer given with examiner)
MLQ: And according to the second sense of the word what does it mean?
MLA: (Answer given with examiner)
"Now you're going to answer on your own"

***

4.1.A) The plant was thriving.
LQ: What – and how many – meaning do you see in the word "plant"?
LA: _____
MLQ: Therefore, according to the first sense of the word, what does "The plant was thriving" mean?
MLA: _____
MLQ: And in the second case, what does "The plant was thriving" mean? (This question should be asked only if more than one meaning has been identified)
MLA: _____

4.1.B) The tables were made of stone.
LQ: What – and how many – meaning do you see in the word "tables"?
LA: _____
MLQ: What is the first meaning you found for "The tables were made of stone"?
MLA: _____
MLQ: What is the second meaning of that sentence?
MLA: _____

4.1.C) To get a card. To get a haircut. To get old.
LQ: Do you think the expression "to get" has the same meaning in all three cases or not?
LA: _____
MLQ: Try to say these sentences differently. For example: "To get a car".
MLA: _____
MLQ: What's another way of saying "To get a haircut"?
MLA: _____
MLQ: What's another way of saying "To get old"?
MLA: _____

4.2.A) Grandmother is painting. Grandmother's portrait is finished now.
LQ: What does "Grandmother's portrait" mean? Is it a picture of grandmother or is it painted by grandmother?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

4.2.B) John is easy to please.
LQ: Does John please others, or is he the one who is pleased?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

4.2.C) John is easy to influence.

LQ: Is it John who influences others or is he the one who is influenced?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

4.2.D) John is ready to please.
LQ: Does John please others or he is the one who is pleased?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

5) Grammatical Function

Oral presentation: "The following sentences portray actions carried out by someone. You will be asked to explain parts of these sentences."

5.0) The child is listening to the radio.
LQ: Who is doing the action?
LA: (Answer given with examiner)
MLQ: What makes you sure it's the child?
MLA: (Answer given with the examiner)
"Now you will answer on your own".

<div align="center">***</div>

5.1.A) Mary is combing her hair.
LQ: Who is doing the action?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

5.1.B) The kitten was cuddled by Mark.
LQ: Who is doing the action?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

5.2.A) James broke the class.
LQ: What was broken?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?

MLA: _____

5.2.B) The bread was cut into slices.
LQ: What was cut into slices?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

5.3.A) The soldiers marched with the band.
LQ: What's being said about the soldiers?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

5.3.B) Peter is a good boy.
LQ: What is being said about Peter?
LA: _____
MLQ: What makes you sure of that?
MLA: _____

5.4.A) Dad is going to leave tomorrow.
MLQ: What makes you understand when the departure will occur?
MLA: _____

5.4.B) Traffic is moving slowly.
MLQ: What tells you how the traffic is moving?
MLA: _____

5.5.A) I'm taking my umbrella because it's about to rain.
MLQ: What makes you understand why?
MLA: _____

5.5B) I'm activating the burglar alarm because there's a chance that thieves might break in.
MLQ: What makes you understand why?
MLA: _____

5.6.A) I'm leaving immediately so I can arrive on time.
MLQ: What makes you understand why?
MLA: _____

5.6.B) I study every day in order to pass.

MLQ: What makes you understand why?
MLA: _____

6) Phonemic Segmentation

Oral presentation: "The following sets contain words that are partially similar and partially different from one another. You will need to specify how they are alike and how they are different."

6.1 Phonetic and phonological similarities and differences in minimal word sets.

6.0) Bound/Sound
LQ: What makes them similar?
LA: (Answer given with examiner)
LQ: What makes them different?
LA: (Answer given with examiner)
MLQ: What do these words mean?
MLA: Bound: (Answer given with examiner)
Sound: (Answer given with examiner)
"Now you will answer on your own".

***

6.1.1) Bound/Bond
LQ: What makes them similar?
LA: _____
LQ: What makes them different?
LA: _____
MLQ: What do these words mean?
MLA: _____

6.1.2) Casket/Basket
LQ: What makes them similar?
LA: _____
LQ: What makes them different?
LA: _____
MLQ: What do these words mean?
MLA: _____

6.1.3) Sole/Soul

LQ: What makes them similar?
LA: _____
LQ: What makes them different?
LA: _____
MLQ: What do these words mean?
MLA: _____

6.1.4) Poppy/Puppy
LQ: What makes them similar?
LA: _____
LQ: What makes them different?
LA: _____
MLQ: What do these words mean?
MLA: _____

6.1.5) Fever/Forever
LQ: What makes them similar?
LA: _____
LQ: What makes them different?
LA: _____
MLQ: What do these words mean?
MLA: _____

6.1.6) Ship/Sheep
LQ: What makes them similar?
LA: _____
LQ: What makes them different?
LA: _____
MLQ: What do these words mean?
MLA: _____

6.2 Syllable Scansion

Oral presentation: Divide the following words into syllables."

6.2.0 Escalate
LQ: What are the syllable in this word?
LA: (Answer given with examiner)
LQ: How many are they?
LA: (Answer given with examiner)
"Now you will answer on your own."

***

6.2.1) Slumbers
LQ: What are the syllables in this word?
LA: _____
LQ: How many are they?
LA: _____

6.2.2) Fertilize
LQ: What are the syllables in this word?
LA: _____
LQ: How many are they?
LA: _____

6.2.3) Policemen
LQ: What are the syllables in this word?
LA: _____
LQ: How many are they?
LA: _____

6.2.4) Necessary
LQ: What are the syllables in this word?
LA: _____
LQ: How many are they?
LA: _____

6.2.5) Unfortunately
LQ: What are the syllables in this word?
LA: _____
LQ: How many are they?
LA: _____

6.2.6) Unbelievable
LQ: What are the syllables in this word?
LA: _____
LQ: How many are they?
LA: _____

6.3 Phoneme repetition

Oral presentation: "In the words you will now hear some sounds are repeated. You will be asked to identify them and state how many times they are repeated."

6.3.0) Rural/Rigorous
LQ: What sound can you hear more than once in the word *Rural*?
LA: (Answer given with examiner)
LQ: How many times can you hear it?
LA: (Answer given with examiner)
LQ: What sounds can hear more than once in the word *Rigorous*?
LA: (Answer given with examiner)
LQ: How many times can you hear them?
LA: (Answer given with examiner)
"Now you will answer on your own."

***

6.3.1) Elementary
LQ: What sound can you hear more than once?
LA: _____
LQ: How many times?
LA: _____

6.3.2) Simplistic
LQ: What sound can you hear more than once?
LA: _____
LQ: How many times?
LA: _____

6.3.3 Usual
LQ: What sound can you hear more than once?
LA: _____
LQ: How many times?
LA: _____

6.3.4) Effervescent
LQ: What sound can you hear more than once?
LA: _____
LQ: How many times?
LA: _____

6.3.5 Murmuring
LQ: What sound can you hear more than once?
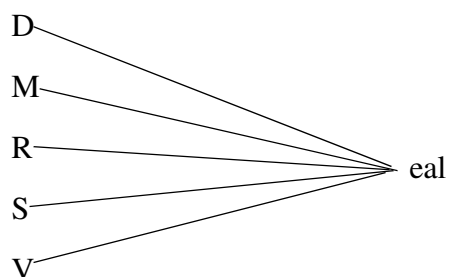
LA: _____
LQ: How many times?
LA: _____

6.3.6) Pessimistic
LQ: What sound can you hear more than once?
LA: _____
LQ: How many times?
LA: _____

6.4. Word Formation

Oral presentation: "You will be shown individual letters with which you can form some words. The letters are the left; part of a word is on the right. Try to form all the words you can be combining each letter with the word fragment provided."

6.4.0)

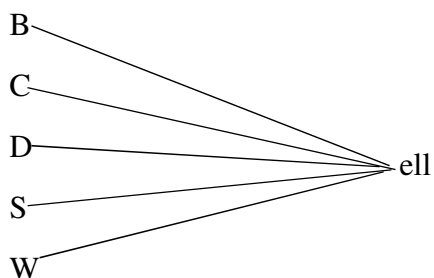LQ: Form all the words you can by combining all the letters with the word fragment to the right.
LA: (Answer given with examiner)
MLQ: Write next to each word whether it's a verb, an adjective, an adverb, a noun or a pronoun.
MLA: (Answer given with examiner)
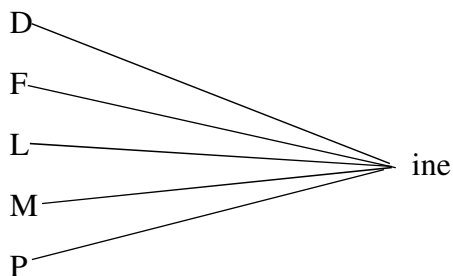"Now you will answer on your own."

***

6.4.1)

LQ: Form all the words you can by uniting all the letters with the word fragments to the right.

LA: _____

MLQ: Write next to each word whether it's a verb, an adjective, an adverb, a noun or a pronoun.
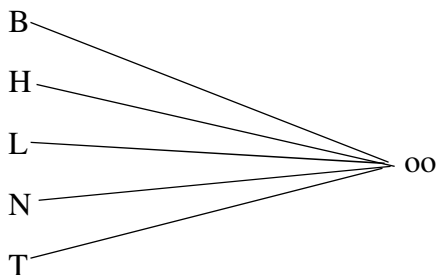
MLA: _____

6.4.2)

D
F
L
M
P

ine

LQ: Form all the words you can by uniting all the letters with the word fragments to the right.

LA: _____

MLQ: Write next to each word whether it's a verb, an adjective, an adverb, a noun or a pronoun.

MLA: _____

6.4.3)

B
H
L
N
T

oo

LQ: Form all the words you can by uniting all the letters with the word fragments to the right.

LA: _____

MLQ: Write next to each word whether it's a verb, an adjective, an adverb, a noun or a pronoun.
MLA: _____