

# **The impact of performative language teaching on oral skills in a Chinese as a foreign language classroom**

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## ABBREVIATIONS

A1	Breakthrough level of the CEFR
A2	Waystage/Elementary level of the CEFR
ABC	A newspaper in Spain
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
B1	Threshold level of the CEFR
B2	Vantage level of the CEFR
BIG	Bilingual Improv Group
BJI	Beijing Improv
BLCU	Beijing Language and Culture University
C1	Effective Operational Proficiency level of the CEFR
C2	Mastery level of the CEFR
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CFL	Chinese as a Foreign Language
CGTN	China Global Television Network
DALF	Diplôme Approfondi de Langue Française - Diploma in Advanced French Language
DELFL	Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française - Diploma in French Language Studies
D.C.	District of Columbia
DICE	Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competences
DiE	Drama in Education
DOG	Diario Oficial de Galicia – Official Diary of Galicia
DOL	Drama and Oral Language
DV	Digital Video



EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ETP	Enseñanza de idiomas con Técnicas Performativas – Performative Language Teaching
EOI	<i>Escuela Oficial de Idiomas</i> - Official Language School
ESL	English as a Second Language
FI	Formal Instruction
FL	Foreign Language
FLA	Foreign Language Anxiety
FLC	Free Lossless Audio Codec
FLCAS	Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale
Hanban	The Office of Chinese Language Council International (Chinese: guójiā Hànyǔ guójì tuīguǎng lǐngdǎo xiǎozǔ bàngōngshì).
HC	High Criterion
GLO-TOI	Glottodrama Transfer of Innovation
GWU	The George Washington University
HSK	Hànyǔ Shuǐpíng Kǎoshì - Chinese official level test
HSKK	Hànyǔ Shuǐpíng Kǎoshì-Kǒuyǔ - Chinese official oral level test
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
ITW	Italian Theater Workshop
K-12	from kindergarten to 12th grade
KET	Key English Test
L1	first language / native language / mother tongue
L2	second language / additional language
L1A	first language acquisition
L2A	second language acquisition

LAC	Limited Attention Capacity
LC	Low Criterion
MLAT	Modern Language Aptitude Test
MOE	Ministry of Education
MP3	MPEG-1 Audio Layer III
MRI	Magnetic Resonance Imaging
MS	Microsoft
MTCSOL	Master of Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages
PBS	Public Broadcasting Service
PC	Personal Computer
PLT	Performative Language Teaching
SA	Study Abroad
SCT	Socio-cultural Theory
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
STT	Story-Telling Test
TCSOL	Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages
TESOL	Teaching of English as a Second Language
TiE	Theater in Education
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TOEIC	Test of English for International Communication
TPR	Total Physical Response
T.V.	Television
UCLA	University of California Los Angeles
U.K.	United Kingdom
U.S.A.	United States of America

WAV	Waveform Audio File Format
WIT	Washington Improv Theater
YCT	Youth Chinese Test official Chinese exam
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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## ABSTRACT

China, as a cultural and economic power, has dramatically risen in the world during the last decade, and consequently, the number of Mandarin Chinese language learners has increased exponentially. However, most of the current pedagogical approaches used to teach Mandarin Chinese are teacher-centered and heavily influenced by Confucian heritage. Their focus is mainly on grammar, reading, writing, and traditional methods based on memorization and recitation techniques. Compared to the teaching pedagogy research in other prominent languages, such as English or Spanish, there are extremely few research studies examining new pedagogical methods to improve Chinese language teaching, and even fewer still specifically targeting the development of oral skills in Chinese. No study to date has used quantitative research methods to investigate the impact of performative language teaching (PLT) in the Chinese as a foreign language classroom.

This study follows Derwing, Rossiter, Munro, and Thomson (2004) and Galante and Thomson (2017) in examining how PLT techniques can influence speech variables such as fluency, comprehensibility, and accent. We recruited untrained native Chinese raters to evaluate the Chinese language learners' oral Mandarin performance. Using a pre-test-post-test design with four different tasks (first-person picture description, third-person picture description, monologue, and improvised role-play dialogue), the researcher obtained speech samples from sixteen learners of Mandarin Chinese from Spain (L1: Spanish) at the Official Language School in the city of Vigo, Spain. The control group of eight students received four months of instruction in a traditional Chinese language program in 2017. The treatment group of eight students took part in a four-month PLT-based Chinese classroom in the same school in 2018. The teacher was the same in both cases. Both groups were tested before and after

participation in each program. Temporal measures were made on each sample. Seventy-five untrained native Chinese judges/raters used their personal digital devices, online forms with embedded text, images, and audio integrated with Jotform combined with Google Drive to evaluate randomized recorded speech samples. They provided fluency, comprehensibility, and accent scores of the participants' performance in each task. Afterward, the development of oral skills of both groups was compared.

Our findings indicate that fluency, comprehensibility, and accent improved for the treatment group, but not for the comparison group. The improvement in fluency was greater than the improvement in comprehensibility and accent, which had similar degrees of development, although accent had slightly lower improvement scores than comprehensibility.

From a descriptive statistical perspective, research confirmed that fluency, comprehensibility, and accent varied across the different speaking tasks. Overall, participants in this research obtained better scores in fluency, comprehensibility, and accent in Task 4 (dialogue) than in Task 1 (first-person narration). A detailed statistical analysis revealed that a significant difference in fluency scores occurred for Task 4 relative to Task 1 at T1. Regarding comprehensibility and accent scores, results found that a significant variance happened at Task 4 relative to Task 1 at T1. For the treatment group, PLT training differentially impacted fluency performance in Task 1 and Task 2, and comprehensibility and accent performance in Task 1.

On the basis of the study, we could claim that PLT instruction leads to more gains in the participants' oral skills in Chinese as a foreign language than traditional Chinese instruction. This work presented in this thesis contributes to the understanding of how the use of a PLT methodology might have a positive impact on the teaching of Chinese in a foreign language classroom. The findings suggest that the characteristics

of PLT, which fosters interaction and cooperation by being student-centered, could make it a powerful methodological approach.

**Keywords:** language teaching; applied linguistics; Performative Language Teaching (PLT); (Mandarin) Chinese; drama.

## RESUMEN

China ha crecido de manera vertiginosa como potencia mundial, cultural y económica en la última década y, consecuentemente, el número de estudiantes de chino (mandarín) en todo el mundo ha aumentado también de forma exponencial. La creación de Instituto Confucio y su expansión global ha contribuido de forma decisiva a la difusión del idioma chino. En España también se ha producido un crecimiento importante del número de alumnos de chino en los últimos años, tanto en Institutos Confucio, universidades, Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas (EOI) y otros centros privados. Mención especial a las EOI, que son centros públicos que ofrecen cursos de varios idiomas a adultos con un precio de matrícula muy reducido. Sin embargo, la mayoría de las metodologías actuales para enseñar chino mandarín están centradas en el docente y muy influenciadas por la herencia confuciana, con un enfoque basado principalmente en gramática, lectura, escritura y en el uso de métodos tradicionales centrados en la memorización y la repetición.

Una metodología prometedora es el uso de técnicas performativas para aprender idiomas. En la cultura china y occidental existe una tradición teatral de más de dos mil años de antigüedad. Grandes escritores y géneros teatrales forman parte del patrimonio cultural inmaterial de la humanidad. Es necesario distinguir por una parte entre el concepto tradicional de teatro, con roles delimitados para actores y público y en donde lo importante es el producto (obra) final, y, por otra parte, el concepto de técnica dramática, cuyo énfasis está en el proceso y donde los actores son también a la vez público. Por eso es necesario un nuevo paradigma que englobe a diversas técnicas dramáticas: técnicas performativas para la enseñanza de lenguas (TPL) (Fleming, 2016; Piazzoli, 2018; Schewe, 2013). Existen multitud de actividades de tipo TPL, de las que hemos seleccionado tres para presentar en detalle en este estudio:

improvisación, *Process Drama* y el método *Glottodrama*. Además, hemos relacionado las TPL con las teorías cognitiva-interaccionista (Long, 1985a, 1985b, 1996) y sociocultural (Vygotsky, 1930/1978) del campo de la adquisición de segundas lenguas, resaltando además los beneficios de la colaboración desde una perspectiva neurocientífica. Los trabajos que se han realizado hasta el momento parecen indicar que las TPL tienen una influencia positiva en el aprendizaje de lenguas (Aliakbari & Behroz, 2010; Catterall, 2002; Chérrez Sacoto, 2017; DICE Consortium, 2010; Galante & Thomson, 2017; Hui, He, & Ye, 2015; Kao, 1994, Podlozny, 2000; Ryan-Scheutz & Colangelo, 2004; Stern, 1980; Stinson & Freebody, 2006; and Torico, 2015). Sin embargo, la gran mayoría de estos estudios se realizaron en contextos de inglés como segunda lengua y apenas existen trabajos de investigación sobre el estudio de las TPL en el aula de chino mandarín. Los pocos estudios publicados utilizaron metodologías de investigación de tipo cualitativo con algunos problemas de diseño que impidieron a los autores obtener resultados concluyentes (Corderi Novoa, 2015, 2019; Meng & Wan, 2013; Wang, 2009; Wen, 2015; Zhang, 2013, 2017). Consideramos que, por lo tanto, es necesario realizar estudios más rigurosos que incluyan un componente de tipo cuantitativo para poder establecer una clara conexión entre las TPL y el aprendizaje del chino mandarín.

En este estudio hemos revisado diversos factores que influyen en la adquisición de segundas lenguas, como la edad, el contexto, el tipo de instrucción, el tipo de aprendizaje (implícito vs. explícito) y también hemos revisado algunas ideas sobre adquisición de segundas lenguas provenientes del ámbito humanístico. Hemos resaltado la importancia de la producción oral en una segunda lengua y hemos definido y analizado en profundidad las tres variables objeto de nuestro estudio: fluidez, comprensibilidad y acento. También hemos realizado una revisión detallada de

estudios experimentales en los que se describen metodologías de medición y evaluación de esas tres variables (Derwing & Munro, 1997; Derwing & Munro, 2013; Derwing, Munro, & Thomson, 2008; Derwing, Thomson, & Munro, 2006; Derwing, Munro, Thomson, & Rossiter, 2009; Derwing, Rossiter, Munro, & Thomson, 2004; Derwing, Munro, Foote, Waugh, & Fleming, 2014; Galante & Thomson, 2017; Munro & Derwing, 1995a, 1995b; Munro & Derwing, 1999). Asimismo, hemos introducido el concepto de tarea, su tipología y su influencia en la producción oral, revisando estudios previos sobre este aspecto (Foster & Skehan, 1996; Gilabert, 2007; Hu, 2018; Levkina & Gilabert, 2012; Mora & Valls-Ferrer, 2012; Robinson 2007, 2011; Skehan & Foster, 1999).

## **El estudio**

### **Objetivos y preguntas de investigación**

Tal y como hemos mencionado, consideramos que existe una clara necesidad de realizar estudios de investigación destinados a mejorar la pedagogía de la enseñanza del chino como lengua extranjera que estén enfocados específicamente en el desarrollo de las habilidades orales. Nuestro trabajo tiene dos objetivos: en primer lugar, investigar hasta qué punto la utilización de TPL en el aula de enseñanza de chino como lengua extranjera tiene algún impacto en la producción oral de aprendices adultos. En concreto, nuestro objetivo es analizar ese posible impacto en las variables fluidez, comprensibilidad y acento. En segundo lugar, nuestro objetivo es determinar el impacto del tipo de tarea en esas mismas variables.

En nuestro estudio, nos hemos planteado las siguientes preguntas de investigación:

- **Pregunta de investigación 1:** ¿Obtienen mejores resultados en habilidades orales los alumnos de un grupo de TPL en una clase de chino mandarín en

comparación con alumnos de un grupo sin TPL? Específicamente, ¿obtienen mejores resultados en fluidez, comprensibilidad y acento?

- **Pregunta de investigación 2:** ¿Existe variación a través de las tareas utilizadas en las variables de fluidez, comprensibilidad y acento antes y después del programa TPL?
  
- Las hipótesis del estudio son las siguientes:
  
- **Hipótesis 1:** El programa de TPL mejorará las habilidades orales en chino mandarín. Específicamente, y en base a estudios realizados con otras lenguas (Derwing et al., 2004; Derwing & Munro, 2013; Galante & Thomson, 2017), esperamos que exista una mayor mejor en fluidez y en comprensibilidad, en ese orden, y que el acento sea el aspecto que se vea menos afectado por el tipo de instrucción.
  
- **Hipótesis 2:** Existirá variación en fluidez, comprensibilidad y acento dependiendo del tipo de tarea. Estudios anteriores han dado lugar a conclusiones contradictorias y, por tanto, es difícil avanzar una hipótesis concreta. En general, parece que se debería encontrar menor fluidez en tareas de narración de imágenes comparado con tareas dialógicas o monológicas (Derwing et al., 2004; Mora & Valls-Ferrer, 2012). Por otra parte, otros estudios obtuvieron resultados diferentes, menor fluidez en la tarea dialógica que en la monológica (Foster & Skehan, 1996) o incluso mejores puntuaciones en la tarea de narración de imágenes en primera persona que en la tarea monológica (Galante & Thomson, 2017). En lo que respecta a comprensibilidad y acento, las tareas monológicas y de narración en primera persona dieron lugar a mejores resultados que las de juego de roles (Galante & Thomson, 2017). Además, Derwing et al. (2014) encontraron mejores



resultados de comprensibilidad para la tarea de narración de imágenes y de acento para la tarea monológica.

Algunos estudios, como el de Derwing et al. (2004) confirmaron variación de fluidez dependiendo del tipo de tarea. Sin embargo, en Derwing et al. (2014) no encontraron variación significativa en las Tareas 1 y 2. Galante y Thomson (2017) descubrieron que las diferencias en fluidez, comprensibilidad y acento en las cinco tareas que utilizaron en su estudio no dieron lugar a diferencias estadísticamente significativas. Por consiguiente, en base a estudios previos, es complicado predecir los resultados para la Hipótesis 2 en nuestro estudio.

## **Metodología**

### ***Contexto***

Este estudio se llevó a cabo en la EOI de la ciudad de Vigo en España. La ciudad tiene una población de más de 300 000 habitantes. La EOI de Vigo fue construida en 1988 y ofrece cursos de alemán, chino mandarín, japonés, italiano, francés, inglés, portugués y español como lengua extranjera. En el año 2018 había un total de 6502 estudiantes y 102 profesores. El departamento de chino tenía aproximadamente 100 alumnos y tres profesores.

### ***Participantes***

En el estudio participaron un total de 16 alumnos de chino de nivel B1.2 (L1: español) que se dividieron en dos grupos: el grupo de control, con 8 alumnos (3 mujeres y 5 hombres), de una edad media de 41,5 años (rango 28 – 53), recibió docencia de tipo tradicional de enero a mayo de 2017. El grupo experimental, formado por 8 alumnos (5 mujeres y 3 hombres), de una edad media de 38 años (rango 27 – 54), recibió docencia con TPL de enero a mayo de 2018. El libro de texto y contenido

curricular fue idéntico para ambos grupos y el profesor (el autor del estudio) fue también el mismo.

En el estudio participaron también 75 jueces (64 mujeres y 11 hombres), todos nativos de China (L1: chino mandarín), con una edad media de 32,56 años (rango 21 - 55). Todos estaban viviendo en tres países: España (50,67%), Portugal (29,33%) y EE.UU. (20%).

### ***Procedimiento***

Utilizando un diseño pre-test (Tiempo 1) – post-test (Tiempo 2) con cuatro tareas diferentes (descripción de una secuencia de dibujos en primera persona, descripción de una secuencia de dibujos en tercera persona, monólogo y diálogo improvisado/ juego de rol), se obtuvieron muestras de audio de los 16 participantes. Tanto el grupo experimental como el grupo de control fueron evaluados antes y después de su participación en cada uno de los programas. Un grupo de 75 jueces nativos chinos no profesionales evaluaron muestras de audio de los alumnos empleando sus dispositivos digitales personales, formularios en línea con texto, imágenes y audio integrados con Google Drive proporcionando puntuaciones numéricas sobre la fluidez, la comprensibilidad y el acento del desempeño de los participantes en cada tarea. Después se comparó la evolución de las habilidades orales de cada grupo.

Siguiendo los estudios de Derwing et al. (2004), and Galante and Thomson (2017), se diseñaron cuatro tareas:

Tarea 1. Narración en primera persona de un cómic de un niño jugando al fútbol que se lesiona.

Tarea 2. Narración en tercera persona de un cómic de un chico que regresa a casa para comer con sus padres.

Tarea 3. Monólogo para describir su ciudad favorita.

Tarea 4. Diálogo improvisado con el profesor (el autor del estudio) en el estudiante da la bienvenida a un estudiante de intercambio extranjero de China, papel que realiza el profesor.

El procedimiento de codificación y procesamiento de la información obtenida fue el siguiente:

1. Grabar digitalmente los resultados orales de las tareas de cada alumno.
2. Procesar digitalmente los audios con el software Audacity.
3. Subir los audios procesados a SoundCloud.
4. Diseñar y crear los formularios online con las imágenes, texto y los audios embebidos usando JotForm.
5. Enviar los formularios online a los jueces a través de WeChat.
6. Finalizar el proceso de puntuación por parte de los jueces.
7. Enviar los resultados a Gmail, Hotmail y Google Drive – Google Sheets.
8. Exportar la información de Google Sheets a MS Excel.
9. Exportar los datos de MS Excel al software estadístico STATA para su análisis.

## **Resultados**

Los resultados indican que la fluidez, la comprensibilidad y el acento mejoraron en el grupo experimental pero no en el grupo de control. La fluidez mejoró más que la comprensibilidad, y esta última, a su vez, mejoró más que el acento. Los

resultados estadísticos descriptivos confirmaron la existencia de una variación en las puntuaciones de fluidez, comprensibilidad y acento dependiendo del tipo de tarea utilizada. En general, los participantes en el estudio obtuvieron mejores resultados de fluidez, comprensibilidad y acento en la tarea de diálogo (Tarea 4) que en la de narración en primera persona (Tarea 1). Un análisis estadístico más detallado indicó que existió una variación significativa de las puntuaciones de fluidez en la Tarea 4 relativa a la Tarea 1 en el Tiempo 1. En el caso de comprensibilidad y acento, esta variación se produjo en la Tarea 4 relativa a la Tarea 1 en el Tiempo 1. En el grupo experimental, la intervención con TPL influyó de forma distinta en la Tarea 1 y la Tarea 2 en fluidez y en la Tarea 1 en comprensibilidad y acento.

## **Conclusiones**

En base a los resultados de este estudio podríamos afirmar que una instrucción basada en técnicas performativas ayuda a mejorar la destreza oral en chino como lengua extranjera de los participantes en mayor medida que una instrucción de tipo tradicional. El trabajo que se presenta en esta tesis contribuye a nuestra comprensión de cómo el uso de una metodología basada en técnicas performativas podría tener un impacto positivo en la enseñanza del chino como lengua extranjera. Los resultados obtenidos sugieren que una metodología basada en técnicas performativas, centrada en el alumno y basada en la interacción y la colaboración, puede dar lugar a resultados positivos. Con todo, somos conscientes de que es necesario realizar más estudios sobre TLP aplicados a la mejora de metodologías de aprendizaje de idiomas en general y del chino mandarín en particular.

## **Originalidad de este estudio**

Podemos resaltar la originalidad de este estudio en cinco puntos clave:

1. Este es el único estudio hasta la fecha que ha realizado una investigación cuantitativa del impacto de las TPL en el aula de chino mandarín.
2. Este es el primer estudio de este tipo cuyos participantes son hispanohablantes (L1: español).
3. Este es el estudio de estas características que más jueces ha reunido (75).
4. Esta investigación ha utilizado las muestras de audio completas de los alumnos, a diferencia de otros estudios similares que han utilizado solamente una parte de dichas grabaciones.
5. Existe una innovación tecnológica y metodológica en el apartado de recogida, codificación, procesamiento y distribución de los datos en formato digital. Se han empleado diversos programas de software como Audacity, SoundCloud, JotForm, WeChat, Google Drive – Google Sheets, Gmail, Hotmail, MS Excel y Stata. Consecuentemente, los jueces han podido utilizar dispositivos electrónicos para realizar el proceso de evaluación y asignación de puntuación en diversas partes del mundo de forma remota.

**Palabras clave:** Enseñanza de lenguas; lingüística aplicada; pedagogía teatral; teatro; chino (mandarín).

**“A magician is an actor that pretends to be a magician.”  
Harry Houdini (1874-1926).  
American illusionist, actor, and magician.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In recent decades, the world has seen the rise of China as an economic, industrial, commercial, and cultural power. More and more schools and universities offer Chinese language courses, and the number of students who learn Chinese has increased dramatically in recent years. Unfortunately, most of the pedagogical methodologies employed in the world to teach Chinese are not suitable for Western students. Moreover, many Chinese language classes rely on the memorization of grammatical structures and vocabulary and repetition. There is a dearth of adequately engaging materials: some of the textbooks used in Chinese classrooms are old, outdated, and unappealing to the students. Many Chinese teachers are also not qualified. The teaching styles are traditional: providing little to no context for the lessons, staying teacher-centered, focusing on repetition, forcing memorization of vocabulary lists, and grammar points, all without focusing on communication or oral proficiency.

Consequently, there is a need to develop a new teaching methodology for the Chinese classroom. Students need a modern and more effective way to learn the Chinese language. This dissertation hopes to contribute to research a new pedagogy using performative techniques that help improve students' oral skills.

We would like to summarize the novelty of our study in five key points. First, this is the only study to date that has investigated the impact of Performative Language Teaching (henceforth, PLT) in a Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) context using

quantitative research methods. Second, within the context of research on the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language using PLT, this is the first study whose participants were Spanish speakers (L1: Spanish). Third, another differentiating factor in our study is the large number of performance raters, seventy-five, who assessed the participants' oral production. This number is much higher than in all previous studies. Fourth, there is a methodological innovation in stimulus preparation: in previous studies, the researchers took brief excerpts of the participants' speech samples from the beginning of their oral production and prepared the stimuli for the raters; however, in the present study, we used the full speech audio files in order to provide more input for our raters. Finally, there is also a significant technological difference in our research: in previous studies, the raters had to be together at the same time in the same room where they were provided with paper forms, listened to all the stimuli, and had a few seconds to assess each of the excerpts in rapid succession. However, our study used integrated online forms (Google Drive) with audio and pictures (Jotform) that raters could access at any time anywhere in the world. Thus, our raters had the opportunity to access the Internet and complete their evaluations from multiple locations in different countries using their computers, cell phones, or tablets. This new design was faster and more convenient than traditional methods. We think this unique technological and methodological difference could be useful for future research studies because it allows for more participants or raters to take part in the study using the Internet.

This dissertation is organized into three parts. The first part is the Literature Review, which is comprised of three chapters. Chapter 1 describes the context of China and the Chinese language in the world. It also highlights the dramatic rise in the number of students of Chinese and the number of schools that offer Chinese courses. We will discuss the role of Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms and analyze

the situation of Chinese learning and teaching in the world and then focus on the situation in Spain. We introduce the *Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas* (Official Language Schools), their origin, and the status of foreign language teaching in those institutions, focusing on the teaching and learning of Chinese.

Chapter 2 reviews the theatrical tradition in China and also in Western civilizations. Since the use of drama is one promising methodology in the teaching of foreign languages, we will describe the concepts of drama and theater. We will introduce the idea of PLT and will explain in detail three forms of PLT: Improvisation, Process Drama, and the Glottodrama method. Moreover, we will explain how the cognitive-interactionist and sociocultural approaches in second language acquisition (SLA) research put emphasis on collaboration and establish how these two approaches can be related to PLT.

In addition, we will consider the benefits of collaboration from a neuroscientific perspective. We will review several studies that provide evidence that collaborative engagement through PLT positively influences students' learning.

We will also review more specific research on the use of PLT in the language classroom and the multiple benefits that it has been claimed to have. We will see how the vast majority of those past studies have been carried out in English as a Second Language (ESL) context, so there is little information about experiences using PLT in the CFL classroom. Those that exist lacked reliable and well-designed research instruments and were merely based on subjective answers from simple questionnaires. The chapter argues for the need for more well-designed quantitative research.

Chapter 3 deals with some relevant topics in adult second language (L2) acquisition and oral production. As the participants in our study are adults, we will first briefly discuss the main differences between children and adults in L2 acquisition



and focus on the latter by reviewing some of the characteristics of the process of adult L2 acquisition. Since the current research was carried out in a Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) (vs. a second) language context, we will consider the relevance of context in L2 acquisition. We will also review some ideas about adult learning from a humanistic perspective and their impact on education. The second part of the chapter will focus on the literature surrounding the three constructs in oral production that will be measured: fluency, comprehensibility, and accent. We will introduce and define these three variables, how they have been measured in previous studies, and how we will measure them in our research. The chapter concludes with a brief review of the importance of tasks in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and a review of the literature on previous studies that have demonstrated the impact of task type on L2 speech production. To end with, we will also discuss previous relevant empirical studies on L2 fluency, comprehensibility, and accent.

The second part of the dissertation is devoted to the study itself and is comprised of two chapters. Chapter 4 presents the study, its rationale, research questions, and hypotheses. Moreover, we will present the context of the study, namely the *Escuela Oficial de Idiomas* in Vigo, Spain. We will also provide detailed information about the participants, the raters, and the four tasks used (Task 1: First-person picture narration; Task 2: Third-person picture narration; Task 3: Monologue; and Task 4: Improvised role-play dialogue).

In addition, we will describe in detail the methodology used in the research, the teaching procedures, the traditional control group, and the PLT treatment group. Then, we will compare the different methodological approaches employed in the CFL classroom in the control group (traditional methodology) and the treatment group (PLT). We will pay special attention to the detailed description of the data collection

and data processing used in our research because some of the technological procedures have not been used before. The most complicated technical challenge was integrating audio from the Cloud using SoundCloud software combined with JotForm software and Google Drive, which allowed the raters to access information from different countries using different devices (cell phones, iPads, computers, etc.). Chapter 5 will present the results of the study and its analysis of the effect of the PLT methodology on the participants' fluency, comprehensibility, and accent and task effects on oral performance.

Part III of the dissertation is comprised of Chapter 6, which highlights general conclusions, presents pedagogical implications, and acknowledges limitations, which are themselves lines for future research.

# **PART I LITERATURE REVIEW**

# CHAPTER 1. CHINA AND CHINESE LANGUAGE TEACHING

**“China is a sleeping giant.  
Let her sleep, for when she wakes,  
She will move the world.”  
Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821).  
French political and military leader.**

This chapter provides an overview of the importance of China and the rise of Chinese in today’s world. It first presents an introduction to China, its context, and the learning of Mandarin Chinese in the world and in Spain. Finally, it considers the context of the *Escuela Oficial de Idiomas* (Official Language School) (EOI), where this research study was conducted.

## 1.1 The rise of China and the Chinese language

China is like a big theater play, a play that has been going on for five thousand years (Peng & Long, 2012). We all arrive late at this vast play, even native Chinese people. Therefore, it is hard to know what the relationship is among the stage, the characters, and the plot of the story. We can only try to guess.

According to Norman (1988), the first written records of ancient Chinese language appeared over 3,000 years ago during the Shang dynasty. With time, several variations from the evolution of the original Chinese language created multiple dialects that were mutually unintelligible. “Chinese” is, in fact, not a single language, but a group of related language varieties that belong to a bigger family of languages called “the Sino-Tibetan” language family.

Chinese is spoken by the ethnic Han majority (more than 90% of the population) and by the 55 ethnic (minority) groups. China is the most populated country in the world, with about 1.4 billion people. Around one-fifth of the world’s

population speaks some kind of Chinese as their first language (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 2012).

Chinese languages are diverse (DeFrancis, 1984). According to Wurm, Li, Baumann, and Lee (1987), depending on the classification criteria, there are around 8-12 main regional groups of Chinese languages. The most spoken in the country by far is Mandarin (about 800 million speakers), followed by Wu (77 million, e.g., Shanghainese), Yue (71 million, e.g., Cantonese), Min (60 million), and others.

Standard Chinese (known in China as *Pǔtōnghuà*, “common tongue/speech”), a form of Mandarin Chinese, is the most extensive understood language in the territory and is the official national spoken language in China (Coblin, 2000).

Figure 1 below illustrates the Chinese dialect groups:

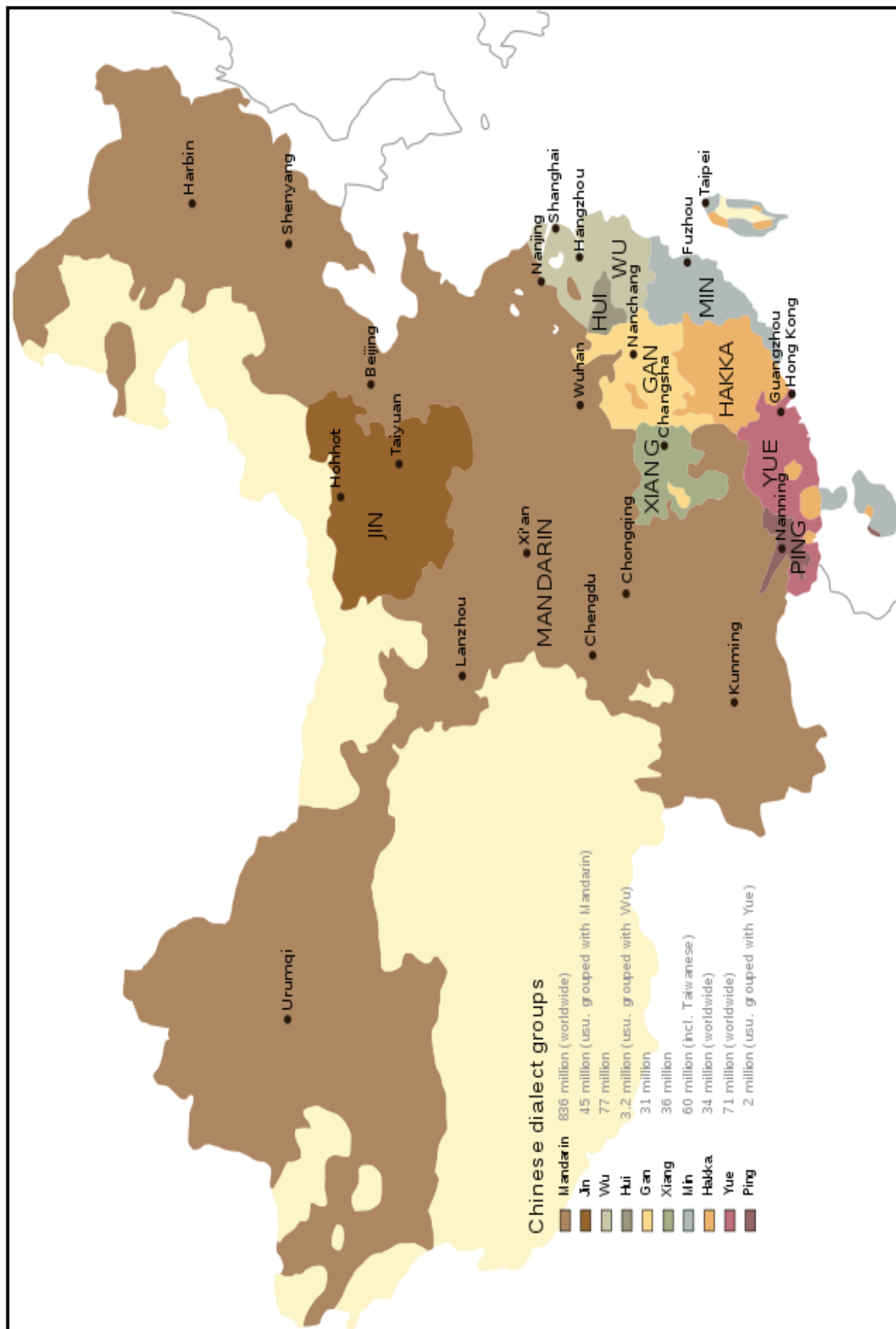


Figure 1. Range of Chinese dialect groups according to the Language Atlas of China (Wurm et al., 1987).

The People's Republic of China was founded in 1949. Since that time, the Chinese central Government in Beijing started to promote and standardize its national language. In 1956, *Pǔtōnghuà* became the standard language of the People's Republic of China. Its phonology was based on the sound system of Beijing, the vocabulary from Mandarin dialects in general, and the grammar and idioms of exemplary modern Chinese literature (Peng & Long, 2012).

At the beginning of the 1950s, 41% of the population of the country understood *Pǔtōnghuà*, including 54% of speakers of Mandarin dialects. However, only 11% of the people whose first language were other dialects were able to understand it. By 1984, the proportion of people who were able to understand the standard language in the country had risen to 90%. Also, at that time, a staggering 91% of Mandarin dialect speakers could understand the standard language (Chen, 1999).

In this dissertation, when I refer to “Chinese, Mandarin Chinese or Chinese language,” I mean the Standard Chinese or *Pǔtōnghuà* (common tongue). During the Qing dynasty, the officials were called “Mandarins,” and later on, the official language was named after that term. *Pǔtōnghuà* is also the official language of Mainland China. However, for political reasons, in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, they do not call it *Pǔtōnghuà*, but *Guóyǔ* instead. In practical terms, “Mandarin Chinese” and *Pǔtōnghuà* are actually the same (Norman, 2003).

Several other autonomous regions in China have additional official languages. For example, the Tibetan language has an official status within the Tibet Autonomous Region, and the Mongolian language has official status within the province of Inner Mongolia. The language laws of China are applied in a particular way to Hong Kong and Macau. These two territories have different official languages from the mainland because both of these cities contain native Cantonese speakers, Hong Kong has many

native English speakers, and Macau has many native Portuguese speakers (Norman, 2003).

In the late 1970s, thanks in large part to Deng Xiaoping, China embarked on a significant economic reform that opened China to the world. In 1987, China created *Hanban*, the Chinese Government's Ministry of Education department that manages official overseas Chinese education. As Starr (2009) points out, soon after its creation, in the 90s, Hanban started the worldwide promotion of Chinese language learning and testing. Hanban created new partnerships among Chinese and overseas universities and established many new Confucius Institutes. Universities in China started to offer more Chinese courses and attract a growing number of international students to travel to China and study Chinese. Finally, Hanban also created the new Chinese Level Test *Hànyǔ Shuǐpíng Kǎoshì* (HSK) and many test centers in China and around the world. With all these initiatives, there is no doubt that Hanban had a crucial role in Chinese language training in China and the rest of the world.

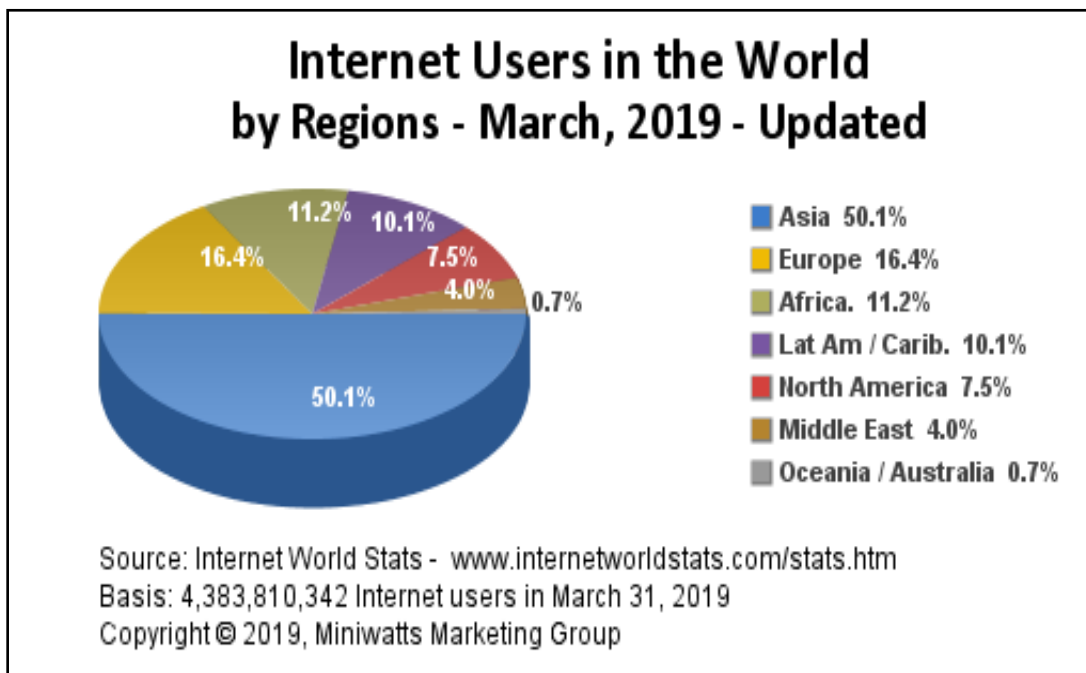
The rise of China in recent years, seen by some as a new “soft power” (Kurlantzick, 2007), is transforming the world as we know it. To understand the world, one must understand China, and to understand China better, one must learn Chinese.

However, English is still the most important language in the world in terms of the number of speakers, and number 3 after Chinese and Spanish if we count native speakers (Duffin, 2020). English is, by far, the most widely learned second language. Besides, English is either the official language or one of the official languages in almost 60 sovereign states. More people have learned it as a second language than there are native speakers. The number of English speakers (native speakers L1 and L2) is 1,268 billion worldwide (Duffin, 2020). The current position of English is in part due to the economic and military power of the U.S.A., especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century



after World War II (Crystal, 2008). Nevertheless, few could have foreseen that a new major international power would come into play over the past several decades: China. Therefore, we must also recognize China as a key world economic and cultural power, which means that the Chinese language will become more and more important in the world stage.

According to Internet World Stats (2019), in March 2019, 50.1% of Internet users were from Asia. It is a significant change in the history of the Internet because Asia currently has more active Internet users than the rest of the other continents combined. Graph 1 below illustrates Internet users in the world by region:



Graph 1. Internet users in the world by region.

In addition, the Internet progress of the Chinese language has been astronomical, with a 2000–2016 growth rate of Internet users of over 2,227.9 %, compared to 573.9 % for English speakers. In absolute terms, in March 2019, the top three languages on the Internet were English 25.2%, Chinese 19.3%, and Spanish 7.97%. Moreover, there were 861,634,814 Chinese Mandarin speaking Internet users

in the world, which accounts for 19.4 % of the whole world population of Internet users (Internet World Stats, 2016, 2019).

## **1.2 Chinese language teaching in the world**

According to Hanban, 100 million people were studying Chinese in the world in 2019, up from fewer than 30 million in 2006 (China Daily, 2016; Hanban official website, 2019). In 2004, Hanban created a new institution which they called the Confucius Institute. The aim was to expand the influence of China and the Chinese language in other countries. It had a tremendous impact. Starr (2009) predicted that “the aim of the Confucius Institute program is, if not to achieve Chinese domination of Asia, at least to see Chinese recognized as a global language” (p. 90). The growth of Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms in the world has been meteoric. According to Statista (2018), in about fifteen years, from the first Confucius Institute in Seoul in 2004 until December 2018, the Chinese Government opened 548 Confucius Institutes. It established 1,193 Confucius Classrooms in 140 countries and regions. In 2019, the Confucius Institutes and Classrooms worldwide enrolled more than 2 million students and hosted cultural events of various types, receiving 14 million participants. In Europe, there are 182 Confucius Institutes (Hanban official website, 2019). Figure 3 illustrates the increasing number of Confucius Institutes in the world from 2013 to 2018.

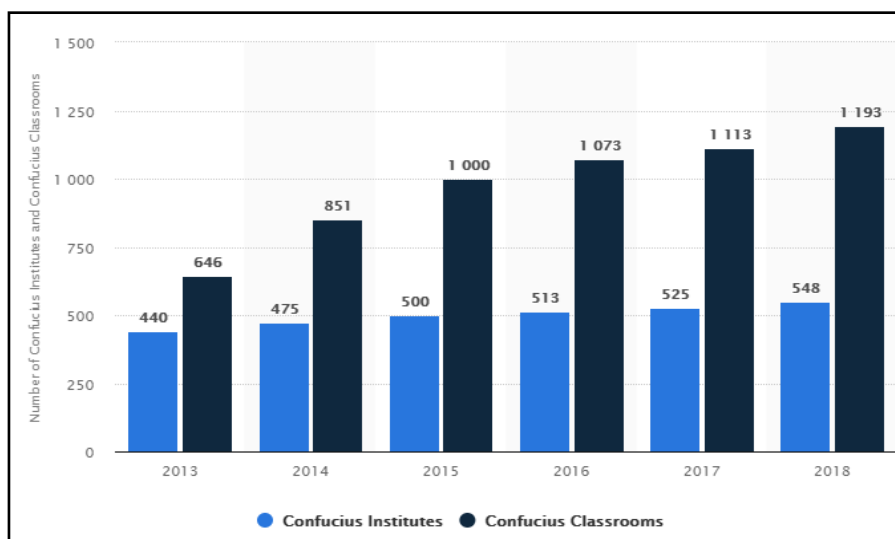


Figure 2. Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms (Source: Statista, 2018).

It is important to note that each Confucius Institute has a designated partner university in China. Some universities, such as Beijing Language and Culture University (BLCU), whose main task is teaching Chinese to foreigners, has many Confucius Institutes abroad, whereas other universities from China have fewer. Chinese universities need to send Chinese teachers to their partner universities abroad and cooperate in several tasks. In 1985, the Chinese Ministry of Education approved only four universities to offer the Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (TCSOL) program, formerly known as the Teaching CFL program. One of those universities was BLCU. Sometimes there are simply not enough qualified Chinese teachers and experienced candidates to send to work at overseas Confucius Institutes. Therefore, Hanban employs young, recently graduated teachers, primarily aged 22 – 25, with little or no previous experience in Chinese teaching, and sends them to teach at Confucius Institutes or Confucius Classrooms abroad. This strategy requires a lot of coordination between the Chinese university and the foreign partner school. Because management styles and cultural values vary from China and other countries, sometimes, this creates problems in partnerships.

According to Hanban, many governments around the world have started Chinese programs in their education systems. For example, the United Kingdom has more than one million students of Chinese. In 2013, then Prime Minister David Cameron urged the British government to establish Mandarin Chinese as a first foreign language instead of French. The Department of Education of the U.S.A. reported that, after Spanish, Mandarin was the most popular dual-language education program implemented by individual states in 2013. In 2016, there were two hundred thousand K-12 Mandarin language learners in the USA (U.S. News, 2016). In September 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping and President Barack Obama started the “One Million Strong” effort initiative to reach one million students of Chinese language in the U.S.A. by 2020 (PBS, 2016).

Europe is the region of the world where there are the most Confucius Institutes, 182 in 2019. Several countries have started implementing Mandarin Chinese in their education systems. South America also has an extensive network of Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms. In addition, Africa has 59 Confucius Institutes. In February 2019, Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz decided to also include Chinese in the educational curriculum at all levels (CGTN, 2019).

Regardless of this tremendous growth, there are some critical voices against Hanban. For example, according to Hartig (2016), the Confucius Institute’s “overall setting benefits China more than it does the international partners” (p. 188). Nevertheless, despite the massive investment by the Chinese Government, some had hoped that China’s image in the world would have risen more in connection with the proliferation of Chinese language learners. There is much work to be done in terms of “Chinese soft power.”

In fact, while we can clearly see that the expansion of Confucius Institutes to so many locations around the globe in about fifteen years has been truly impressive, there is still no clear evidence about what impact they have on promoting China's image abroad. We could argue that the main goal of Hanban was to create many Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms in different locations in a short time. If we have a look at the numbers, we can say that Hanban achieved the goal of increasing the number of students of Chinese around the world. However, there are many doubts about the quality of the Chinese teachers, the methodologies used to teach Chinese, and the long-term sustainability of these projects and institutes. Maybe Hanban chose speed over quality.

According to HuanqiuShibao (2006), there were several problems at some Confucius Institutes in Germany: lack of coordination, late arrivals of teachers from China, lack of understanding of the Western culture, and teaching methodologies that were not suitable for the students' needs. All these setbacks caused the number of students to drop drastically.

In addition, recently, we have witnessed how some Confucius Institutes were closed in the U.S.A., Canada, and Europe. For example, in the U.S.A., in 2018 and 2019, at least fifteen American universities decided to close their Confucius Institutes. The most often stated reason is that Western countries view the Chinese government's control of Hanban as malicious. Therefore, there has been more pressure on that issue (Inside Higher Ed, 2019; Washington Post, 2019). Previously, in 2013, McMaster University in Canada closed its Confucius Institute due to hiring issues over *Falun Gong* (an organization that is considered as a rogue cult or sect by the Chinese government in Beijing), and more Confucius Institutes in Canada and Australia closed in 2019. We can argue that Hanban now has to face new challenges and opposition

from several governments. How Hanban will respond to all these challenges will shape the future of Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms in the world.

### **1.3 Chinese language teaching in Spain**

In Spain, the number of students of Chinese in schools and other educational centers has increased dramatically in recent years. For instance, the number of privately-owned language schools that teach the Chinese language increased 40 times between 2011 and 2016 (El Mundo, 2016).

Different kinds of schools and institutions offer Chinese courses. In public centers, such as the *Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas* (Official Language Schools in Spain), in Universities Language Centers, at Confucius Institutes, and, in a few cases, in public primary, middle, and high schools in Aulas Confucio (Confucius Classrooms). Of course, even some privately funded kindergartens and schools have started to offer Chinese language classes.

According to Fundación Universia (2014), in 2014, the total number of students of the Chinese language in Spain was forty thousand (fifteen thousand were adults, and twenty-five thousand were students under 18 years old). In 2019, the total number of students of Chinese language increased to fifty-two thousand, around half of those students were under 18. Currently, in 2019, there are 13 Confucius Classrooms and more than 60 affiliated public schools. There are more than 100 volunteer assistant teachers sent and paid by Hanban, all of them native Chinese speakers.

In Spain, there are currently eight Confucius Institutes, located in Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Granada, León, Las Palmas, Castilla La Mancha, and Zaragoza (Hanban official website, 2019). The Confucius Institutes in Spain not only teach Chinese in their partner Universities, but they also expand their activities to other schools and institutions, even in other cities. For example, the Confucius Institute in

León also opened a Confucius Classroom at the University of Vigo and the University of Oviedo, in two towns that geographically belong to other regions. They also teach Chinese in several high schools in the city of León. In Barcelona, the Confucius Institute is a foundation that cooperates with the University of Barcelona, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Beijing Foreign Studies University, and Casa Asia.

In Madrid, the regional education department started an experimental program in 2013 - 2014, with more than ten public schools in the northern area that included Chinese in the official curriculum and was offered as an extracurricular subject. This course was free of cost due to Hanban's support stemming from an agreement signed with the *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid*. In 2016-2017, the program was extended to fourteen primary schools and thirteen high schools, with more than one thousand students. In 2018-2019, more than thirty-three schools offer Chinese language courses where eleven thousand students in public primary and middle schools in Madrid are currently learning Chinese as a subject. Demand for Chinese classes at schools has grown exponentially in the past years. In 2016, nineteen private centers included Chinese as a core curricular subject, with the same importance as more traditional subjects such as Mathematics or History (ABC Madrid, 2016). In 2019, eighty-nine private schools had Chinese as a subject. Parents are investing in their children's future, and the Chinese language is becoming more appealing and associated with career success. They are also hiring private Chinese tutors, Chinese "au pairs" and sending their children to summer camps in China so that they can learn "the language of the future" (El País, 2019).

In the southern Spanish region of Andalucía, Hanban signed a cooperation agreement in 2014/2015 of five years' duration with the possibility of renewal with the regional education department of Andalucía and eight Confucius Classrooms were

created in different primary, middle and high schools in Andalucía. As part of an institutional agreement, Hanban sends teachers, books, teaching materials, and helps with the organization of cultural activities related to China. In the Confucius Classrooms in Andalucía, there are two models of Chinese teaching and learning. The first one is with Chinese integrated as a subject in the official curriculum, similar to other disciplines such as Mathematics and History, for example. The second model is to learn Chinese as an extracurricular activity in the afternoon after the other official curriculum subjects. There were more than twenty native Chinese teachers sent from Hanban in this program in 2018/2019. Although they are “volunteer teachers,” they have a salary paid by Hanban. They must have graduated from university with a bachelor’s degree; in some cases, a Spanish language degree in China is also required. All the teachers must pass a Chinese language-teaching test and complete a forty-day training program in China before coming to Spain. However, not all the Chinese teachers sent by Hanban speak Spanish, which can be a problem while trying to communicate with the school students. Currently, in 2020, there is one Confucius Classroom school in each province of Andalucía. In addition, every Confucius Classroom coordinates with other associated schools in the same area that have Chinese as a subject in their curriculum and as an optional extracurricular activity. In 2018/2019, thirty-two schools took part in this program, and there were three thousand eight hundred students of Chinese.

The methodology used in the Confucius Classrooms in Andalucía is communicative, with recordings and authentic teaching materials. Project-based learning and other cultural activities that aim to promote student’s interest in the language and culture are also used (Confucius Classroom program Junta de Andalucía Education Section Spain, 2019). Additionally, the Youth Chinese Test (YCT), a test for



young learners of Chinese, and Hànyǔ Shuǐpíng Kǎoshì (HSK) – a Chinese Level Test for adults - are administered at the end of the school year. This pioneering program in Andalucía is an excellent example of the successful cooperation of Hanban in Europe.

Apart from Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms, at several Spanish universities, Chinese can be studied as an optional extracurricular subject in their languages center for extra credits and, in some cases, as a subject part of an official degree. The main problem at Spanish universities is that there is currently no degree in Chinese Philology in Spain. There are only several “Asian or Chinese studies” degrees in a few institutions in Spain, but there is no Chinese Teaching bachelor degree, master’s degree, or even training certificate. Therefore, there is no professional Chinese teaching training degree in Spain. Besides, there is no authority or government body that regulates the quality of Chinese language instruction in Spain. In recent years, the increase in demand for qualified Chinese teachers from public and private educational centers in Spain was so high that some schools could not find Chinese teachers. Spanish nationals have no chance of receiving professional training as a Chinese teacher with a master’s degree. Some Chinese citizens who live and work in Spain and teach in private schools are, in most cases, not qualified to teach Chinese, as most of them did not even finish high school education. Chinese university students who are studying other degrees in Spain are not professionally trained teachers either. Because of this situation, many Chinese teachers in Spain are not professional teachers. As there is a growing demand for Chinese teachers and a short supply of qualified professional Chinese teachers, most teaching positions are taken by inexperienced individuals who have not studied Chinese teaching or pedagogy before (La Voz de Galicia, 2019).

## 1.4 Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas in Spain

*Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas* (EOI) are public Official Language Schools funded by each Spanish regional education government where adults can study languages part-time for a reduced fee. The first school was founded in Madrid in 1911 with the name “*Escuela Central de Idiomas*” (Central School of Languages). At that time, there were three languages taught: English, French, and German (Boletín Oficial de La Gaceta de Madrid, 1911). In 1912, they added Spanish as a foreign language and Arabic, and soon after that, Italian, Portuguese, and Esperanto. During the Civil War, the school was closed and reopened later after the war. However, in 1957, the study of Russian was added. In 1960, new schools opened in the Spanish cities of Barcelona, Valencia, and Bilbao. They were now called “*Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas*” (Official Language Schools). Chinese was introduced in 1965. In 1982, four new schools were opened in Burgos, Ciudad Real, Murcia, and Salamanca. From then on, regional education departments started to manage the EOI instead of the central Government. More than one hundred years after the first school was created, there is currently a network of more than fifty schools in all the Spanish territory where more than twenty different languages are taught. Adults (fourteen years and older) in Spain can choose to study languages at a low fee (less than two hundred euros per year) at one of the Official Languages Schools. In the European Union, the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)* (Council of Europe, 2001) establishes the different proficiency levels learners can attain from the A1 level (beginner) to the C2 level (proficiency). The official certificates are recognized in Spain and are valid for public examinations, for example (Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 2019).

Currently, the EOI schools in Spain face a big problem: the number of students decreases every year. Official data obtained from the official website of the Spanish

Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia de España, 2016, 2018) show that in 2014/2015, there were 499,198 students at EOI schools in Spain. Still, three years later, in 2017/2018, the number dropped to 332,936 students, a dramatic 33% decrease. Table 1 below shows the number of registered students at EOI by language and levels 2014 – 2015. Besides, Figure 3 below illustrates the total number of students at EOI in 2017-2018:

**Tabla 7: Alumnado matriculado en enseñanzas de E.O.I. por lengua y nivel de enseñanza**

	TOTAL	ENSEÑANZA PRESENCIAL				ENS. A DISTANCIA		
		Nivel Básico	Nivel Intermedio	Nivel Avanzado	Nivel C1 (1)	Nivel Básico	Nivel Intermedio	Nivel Avanza-do
<b>Total</b>	<b>499.198</b>	<b>191.449</b>	<b>145.598</b>	<b>95.190</b>	<b>16.229</b>	<b>23.151</b>	<b>25.239</b>	<b>2342</b>
Alemán	50.639	33.884	10.842	5.352	561	0	0	0
Árabe	3.295	2.505	539	251	0	0	0	0
Chino	3.605	2.882	577	146	0	0	0	0
Danés	62	40	15	7	0	0	0	0
Francés	68.226	37.415	18.246	11.166	1399	0	0	0
Griego	353	209	96	48	0	0	0	0
Inglés	325.037	90.955	103.867	68.436	11.047	23.151	25.239	2342
Irlandés	10	7	3	0	0	0	0	0
Italiano	16.642	9.875	3.879	2.788	100	0	0	0
Japonés	1.133	854	225	54	0	0	0	0
Neerlandés	265	165	54	46	0	0	0	0
Portugués	5.504	2.871	1.503	1.078	52	0	0	0
Rumano	60	41	11	8	0	0	0	0
Ruso	3.445	2.595	640	210	0	0	0	0
Fines	67	50	9	8	0	0	0	0
Sueco	93	56	14	23	0	0	0	0
Español para extranjeros	8.325	4.080	2.365	1.718	162	0	0	0
Catalán	1.189	337	172	228	452	0	0	0
Euskera	8.851	1.995	2.085	2.920	1.851	0	0	0
Gallego	484	98	81	210	95	0	0	0
Valenciano	1.783	429	351	493	510	0	0	0

(1) Se incluyen 1.169 alumnos matriculados en el Nivel C2

Table 1. Registered students in Official Language Schools by language and levels 2014 – 2015.

(Source: Ministry of Education and Science of Spain. Statistics. Non-university courses. Foreign language teaching. Years 2014 – 2015.

<http://www.mecd.gob.es/servicios-al-ciudadano-mecd/estadisticas/educacion/no-universitaria/alumnado/Lenguas-extranjeras/Curso-2014-2015.html> )

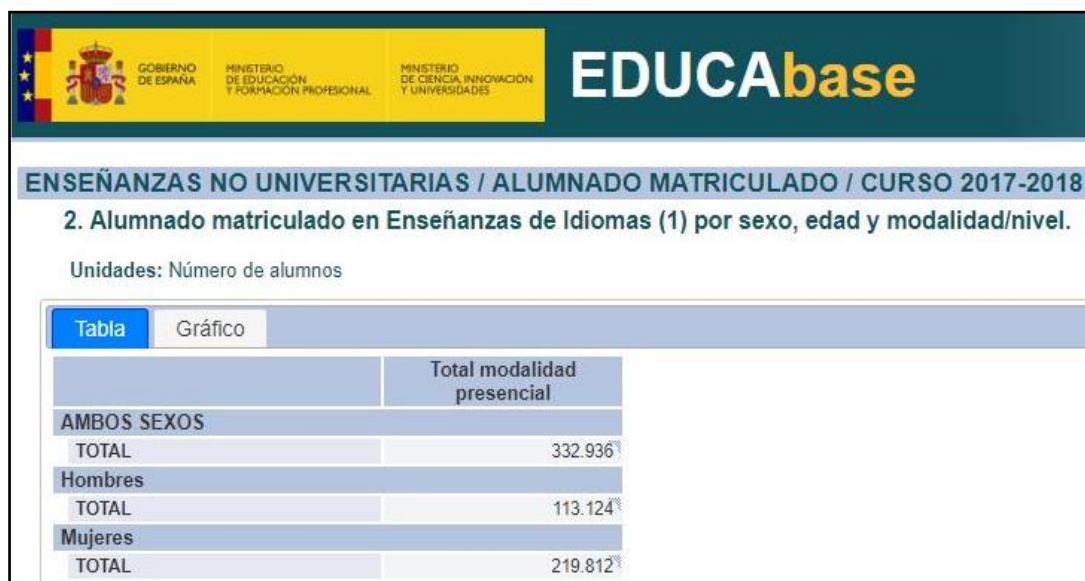


Figure 3. Total number of students at Escuela Oficial de Idiomas in 2017-2018.

(Source: Ministry of Education and Science of Spain. Statistics. Non-university courses. Foreign language teaching. Year 2017 – 2018.

<http://estadisticas.mecd.gob.es/EducaJaxiPx/Datos.htm?path=/Educacion/Alumnado/Matriculado/2017-2018RD/REIdiomas/10/&file=Idiomas3.px&type=pcaxis> )

Table 1 also shows that in 2014 - 2015, there were 3,605 students of Chinese language: 2,882 beginner level students, 577 intermediate level students, and 146 students at an advanced level. These numbers illustrate the dramatic drop off after beginner classes, with fewer and fewer students managing to become proficient at an advanced level. In 2017-2018, the total number of students of Chinese at the EOIs around the country was 2,484, which represents a 31 % decrease from 2014 – 2015.

Although EOI schools are public and have very low tuition fees, they are losing students due to several possible reasons. One example is the rigid, bureaucratic regulations imposed by each regional education government, which only allows students to start studying a new language once a year, only in September/October. Additionally, they have to be at least 14 years old. Another common complaint of EOI is that the courses are very long, 120 hours, spreading the academic year across nine months. Classes are usually four hours per week. Therefore, in order to obtain an A2

level in Chinese at the EOI in Galicia, for example, a student needs to study for three years. Besides, the same student being forced to move at EOI's curriculum's pace will have to go to class for another three years to reach a B1 level finally.

Some students who need a faster and more personalized way to study a new language might choose other options, such as university language centers or private language schools. Another problem for the EOI is their certificates are not valid worldwide. Consequently, they are less competitive than other internationally recognized language tests. A certificate from an EOI does not carry the same weight internationally as IELTS® (International English Language Testing System), or TOEFL® (Test of English as a Foreign Language) / TOEic® (Test of English for International Communication®) for English, or DELF® (*Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française* - Diploma in French Language Studies) / DALF® (*Diplôme Approfondi de Langue Française* - Diploma in Advanced French Language) for French. In the case of Chinese, the official international certificate from Hanban is called the HSK® (*Hànyǔ Shuǐpíng Kǎoshì*- Chinese Level Test). The HSK exam is valid all around the world. However, the certificate of Chinese from an EOI is only valid in Spain.

Moreover, regarding Chinese language teachers at EOIs in Spain, most of them do not have a degree in Chinese Philology, and their Chinese level is lower than C2. Therefore, the lack of professional teachers, outdated textbooks, old-fashioned teaching methods, and lack of student and teacher motivation could all be barriers for students trying to progress. These myriad factors contribute to the lack of students at EOIs who move past simple introductions and conversations about hobbies to reach real fluency in Chinese. Besides, there is also the fact that, due to government regulations, children under 14 years old (who have some learning advantages over adults) cannot attend EOI; they might go to private schools instead.

In addition to EOI, some kindergartens and primary/middle schools have Chinese language as an extracurricular activity, which is becoming more and more common in private schools and even in some universities' language centers. Offering Chinese in a school is seen as a way to attract more students and a sign of prestige. Still, the lack of regulatory checks means the teachers' credentials and their teaching are of unverifiable quality.

Furthermore, the typical textbooks used to teach Chinese are old, outdated, and unattractive for the students. The deficiencies of the teacher-centered classes are structural: no cultural context is provided, and instruction is based on repetition, memorization of vocabulary, and an emphasis on grammar patterns. No stress is given to communication or oral proficiency. We will return to the issue of methodological choices and the comparison of the pedagogies used in Chapter 4.

To improve the quality of Chinese education in Spain and other countries, we need to create Chinese departments at universities that can issue degrees in Chinese Philology, Chinese teaching, and we need more masters' educators to train future Chinese teachers in Spain (La Voz de Galicia, 2019).

## **1.5 Foreign language learning at Official Language Schools**

The present study was carried out at the EOI of Vigo, located in the city of Vigo, on the Atlantic coast of Northwest Spain, in the Autonomous Region of Galicia. In Spain, the Spanish Central Government transferred the competences of education to each regional Government. Therefore, *Xunta de Galicia* (The Regional Government of Galicia) and its Department of Education called *Consellería de Educación, Universidade e Formación Profesional* (Department of Education University and Professional Training) regulates the laws and decrees in terms of education. As

mentioned above, EOIs are public schools. In the case of the EOI in Vigo, the *Xunta de Galicia*, Education Section is in charge of regulating the school. We believe it is relevant for this dissertation to introduce official laws that regulate the EOI in Vigo and are related to methodology.

According to article 2 of Decree 114/1982 1<sup>st</sup> of September about education and competence transfer, Galicia has an Autonomy Code named “*Estatuto de Autonomía*” which establishes that this Autonomous Region has the sovereign right to legislate, regulate and manage education at all levels and forms. Article 1 of Decree 4/2013 10th of January establishes the organizational structure of the Culture, Education, and University Governance Section of the *Xunta de Galicia* regional government.

Apart from the regional laws that govern education, there are national laws from the Ministry of Education of the Central Government of Spain that the *Xunta* has to abide by. For example, the Organic Law 2/2006 of Education regulates language teaching at the EOI in Spain, and they are considered “special regime” teachings. European languages teaching, including other official languages of Spain, is one of the main objectives of the study, and these courses operate much differently from the Chinese language courses (DOG Diario Oficial de Galicia, 17/09/2018).

According to Chapter I, Article 2, language teaching that belongs to the “special regime” category has the objective to train students in the correct use of languages outside the traditional education system. Besides, the purpose of this education in languages is to facilitate the development of the ability to acquire, update, complete and increase the communicative competence of the students in foreign languages, throughout their life, for their personal and professional development. EOIs are the public schools that offer the educational environment and context for the

learning and practice of foreign languages, especially the official languages of the State Members of the European Union, of the other official languages in Spain and Spanish as a foreign language. The law also states that other languages of particular cultural, social, or economic interest would also be taught (DOG Diario Oficial de Galicia Núm. 154, 13/08/2018, p. 37622).

Chinese belongs to the last group mentioned in the previous law. It belongs to the group of particular interest because of “cultural, social, or economic” reasons.

In Chapter II of the DOG, article 6, section 5, the DOG establishes that “educational centers will have the necessary organizational and pedagogical freedom” and that the educational center will “encourage teamwork and cooperation among teachers and stimulate research activities based on their practical teachings” (DOG Diario Oficial de Galicia Núm. 154, 13/08/2018, p. 37626).

As there is a concept of pedagogical “freedom” at EOI, there is not a strict set of rules and guidelines regarding the teaching methodology of the languages. However, at the same time, in the law in Chapter II, Article 7, titled “Methodological principles,” there are several guidelines about methodology. The law explains that language teaching should be practical, with the objective of teaching language in use. To achieve that, “the classroom should be a place where real or simulated communicative situations take place.” The law continues to describe that “in these situations, the students should be able to participate and carry out listening, production and mediation activities according to each level” (DOG Núm. 154, 13/08/2018, p. 37626).

Moreover, the law states, “methodology will be focused on action and will create learning contexts.” According to the law, those learning contexts will, “on the one hand, help each student find their own learning strategies and, on the other hand,



foster student's autonomy". The law finishes the section about teaching methodology by describing that the purpose of these learning contexts is "to maximize all the learning opportunities to improve their own communication ability, in the classroom and outside the classroom" (DOG Núm. 154, 13/08/2018, p. 37627).

After having reviewed the official laws that dictate the teaching methodology at EOI, we have found these guidelines about teaching methodology that are explicitly written in the law align perfectly with PLT, as we will see in Chapter 2.

Diaz Ortega (2005) analyzed the methodological aspects of foreign language teaching at EOI. She pointed out that some of the most common teaching methodologies employed at this type of school are the communicative approach (Savignon, 1991) and task-based language teaching and learning (Ellis, Skehan, Shintani, & Lambert, 2020). However, in the case of Chinese language teaching at EOI, the textbooks used are not communicative nor task-based; and the methodology most teachers follow is more traditional. The main goal of EOI schools is to develop in the students the four skills of language (speaking, listening, writing, and reading). Even though she mentioned the communicative approach as one standard teaching methodology at EOI, that does not mean that listening and oral production are more important than other skills.

On the contrary, writing and reading are also key components and often employed in the classroom. The different types of activities that are typically used at EOI in most languages (not in Chinese) are group work activities (in pairs or groups of 3 or 4 or more), listening exercises, writing and reading tasks, speaking activities ... etc. Grammar rules and structures are not the main objectives of the methodology, but instead, the use of language in a communicative way is the central focus. The activities and methods employed vary depending on the teacher and the language

department's choice. Most Chinese departments at EOI in Spain use traditional teaching methodologies that focus on grammar, memorization, and repetition that follow the selected Chinese textbooks prevalent throughout the world (see Chapter 4 for more detailed information).

## 1.6 Conclusion

**“I think the rise of China is  
one of the great events of all economic and human history,  
and I think this will be overwhelmingly  
a positive thing for the region and the world.”  
Paul Keating (1944 - ).  
Former Prime Minister of Australia.**

This chapter has summarized the information about the increase in the number of students of Chinese and the number of institutions and schools that offer Chinese courses in the world. The impact of the Chinese government's Ministry of Education *Hanban* has to do with the dramatic increase in the number of Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms globally. We can see a global trend where there is an increase in the number of students of Chinese worldwide at all educational levels and ages. It is interesting to see that not only Confucius Institutes but also universities, public and private schools, and institutions worldwide started to offer Chinese courses in response to the increasing demand to learn about the Chinese language and culture. In Spain, the number of students of Chinese in schools and other educational centers has also increased dramatically in recent years.

However, there are several problems related to the quality of Chinese language teaching and learning, such as the lack of trained teachers and adequate engaging materials. One of the main issues is the teaching pedagogy and methodology of

Mandarin Chinese to students worldwide. Traditional Chinese teaching methods rely heavily on memorization and repetition. They lack communicative language use, and, in many cases, they are not suitable for the learning styles of students in other countries. Chinese teaching needs a new methodology that can help students improve their oral proficiency skills, which will, in turn, help them increase their motivation towards learning the language.

Therefore, there is a need to develop a modern and more effective methodology for Chinese language teaching and learning. Specifically, students of the Chinese language need a more collaborative and engaging approach. In this study, we will consider the concept of PLT. In the next chapter, we will introduce the idea of PLT, further analyze several research studies that use PLT in the classroom, and discuss the benefits that this methodology brings.

## CHAPTER 2. PERFORMATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

**“All the world’s a stage,  
and all the men and women merely players:  
they have their exits and their entrances;  
and one man in his time plays many parts,  
his acts being seven ages.”  
William Shakespeare (1564 –1616).  
English poet, playwright, and actor.**

This chapter introduces the Chinese theatrical tradition and the culture of theater in Western civilizations. Then the origin of the term PLT is explained as a way to overcome the theater vs. drama divide, and three examples of PLT are described: Improvisation, Process Drama, and the Glottodrama method. The relationship between collaborative engagement and PLT is analyzed considering insights from two well-known explanations of the process of SLA: The Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1985a, 1985b, 1996) and Socio-cultural Theory (SCT) (Vygotsky, 1930/1978).

The chapter also reviews neuroscientific research studies that provide support for PLT, studies that deal with emotions, movement, and physical activity, stress and anxiety, play, and creativity. We discuss how these issues can be addressed in a classroom following a PLT class. The final parts of the chapter will be devoted to reviewing research on the use of PLT in the language classroom and, more specifically, in the Chinese language classroom.

## 2.1 The Chinese theatrical tradition

Theater in China has a long and rich history. The oldest records of theater in China are from the Shang dynasty (16<sup>th</sup> century B.C. – c. 1046 BC). There are registers of rain dances performed by shamans, music, and singing recitals (Siu & Lovrick, 1997).

In the first period of Zhou dynasty (c. 1046 BC – 256 BC), poems and songs were performed in court dances. “The Zhou royal court employed professional entertainers which included not only dancers and musicians but also actors. The earliest court actors were likely clowns who pantomimed, danced, sang, and performed comedy” (Dolby, 1983, pp. 9 - 10). According to Ye (2008), the *Canjun* Opera from the Zhao Dynasty (319–351) was the origin of an early form of Chinese drama. It consisted of two actors: a clown who ridiculed a corrupt officer. Historians believe that the roles who appear in *Canjun* Opera are the precursors of the ones in later Chinese opera.

In the Six Dynasties period (220– 589), there were several different dramas with songs and dance, some involving masks and others telling stories. During the later Tang dynasty (923-937), there was an emperor named *Li Cunxu* (885-926); he liked theater so much that he himself also performed (Faye Chunfang Fei, 2002).

Later during the Song dynasty (960 – 1279), the first known government in human history to use paper money, we could find numerous famous plays that included acrobatics and music. A crucial moment in theater history in China was during the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368), when a more refined drama form called *Zaju* was created. Yuan drama expanded across China and turned into different types of local drama forms. One of these was later developed into Beijing Opera, probably one of the most popular current styles (Crump, 1990).

According to Shen (2019), during the Ming period (1368-1644), Chinese theater had three categories depending on the audience: the first one was for the Emperor and his court, the second was for the aristocrats, and the third one was for the public in general. The actors had to be skilled in dancing, singing, and performing. Also, “during the Ming period, officials, rich merchants, and eunuchs liked to manage private theater troupes as a way of entertainment or a sign of status” (Shen, 2019, pp. 28-29). Another typically old drama art form in China was shadow puppetry. There were two different styles of shadow puppetry, Beijing style (northern) and Cantonese style (southern). Nowadays, in China, there are still some shows of shadow puppetry around the country (Ye, 2008).

China has a traditional comedic performing art: *Xiangsheng* (crosstalk, literally: ‘face and voice’). As Ding (2017) points out, *Xiangsheng* is typically performed as a dialogue between two actors. The language in *Xiangsheng* is full of tongue twisters that are part of a unique oral art of Chinese folk literature. A combination of puns, allusions, duplications, and reversals create sets of short and amusing sentences or passages. A specific language variety often used is the Beijing dialect of Mandarin with a strong northern accent. Master Ding Guangquan (1944 – 2018) was famous in China for teaching foreigners *Xiangsheng* and creating unique shows that sometimes included singing, Chinese rapping, and musical instruments. Disciples of Master Ding include the famous Dashan (Mark Rowswell) from Canada, Julien Guadfroy from France, and Jesse Appell from the U.S.A., among others, who are well known all over China. The author of this dissertation had the honor to attend Master Ding’s classes while in Beijing, China, in 2014 and 2015.

The theater of late imperial China and modern times includes operas or *Xiqu* (Dolby, 1983). Peking (Beijing) opera became one of the most famous styles of

Chinese opera. It started in Beijing in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and flourished until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (mid-Qing Dynasty). This style of opera is a combination of other forms of arts, for example, acrobatics, music, dance, mime, singing, etc. This type of opera became fully established in the 19th century (Goldstein, 2007).

According to Wichmann (1991), Peking opera features four main role types, *sheng* (gentlemen), *dan* (women), *jing* (rough men), and *chou* (clowns). A Peking opera troupe usually had several actors of each type and numerous secondary and tertiary performers. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20th centuries in Shanghai, there had already been earlier spoken drama performances by Western amateur groups. The first Western-type theater house was the New Shanghai Stage, built by the Chinese themselves and opened in 1908 (Hays, 2008).

The tradition of the spoken theater started to evolve in China at the beginning of the 20th century. As Miettinen (2018) explains, the first part of the People's Republic, starting from its establishment in 1949, was a very dynamic period for the arts. The Communist Party of China understood the importance of theater as a way for social change. Therefore, Mao Zedong established the guidelines for the Communist Theater and declared complete control over the arts, creating new Peking operas, many music dramas, and other spoken dramas during this period. Unfortunately, after the start of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), all traditional forms of theater were gradually banned. After that, only operas with modern themes were favored.

According to Miettinen (2018), after the death of Mao, and the subsequent reforms of late 1970s China, the country was more open to the world, and Western forms of theater were allowed to enter China again. Classics like Shakespeare, Molière, as well as more contemporary classics, such as Bertolt Brecht and Samuel Beckett, were staged regularly. For example, in the mid-1990s, Arthur Miller directed

his play *Death of a Salesman* in Beijing (Miettinen, 2018). China's theater in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is thriving, with more than 3000 theater houses in the country. Nevertheless, there are many new challenges; theater in China has to adapt to rapid changes in the country and the world, since T.V., the Internet, and social media are now part of modern Chinese society, including entertainment and education. In the year 2020, with the Covid-19 pandemic, theater and the arts in general face many challenges since there were lockdowns and many theaters and shows had to close for several months.

## **2.2 Theater in Western civilizations**

Brown (1998) argues that classical Greek theater originated in the city-state of Athens, which was the cultural center at the time. The Greeks believed in several gods. One of them was the god Dionysus, who the people celebrated with an annual drama festival in his honor. The dominant culture in Greece of the fifth century (500 – 490 BC) was a key factor that helped create the dramatic genres of tragedy and comedy. Key figures of this period were Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, among others.

Beacham (1996) states that Western theater developed and expanded considerably, thanks to the Romans, who stood on the shoulders of the Greek playwrights. The theater of ancient Rome was a flourishing and varied art form that included performances of street theater, dancing, acrobatics, and others. Famous theater writers were Plautus and Seneca.

Brockett and Hildy (2003) described that the birth of medieval theater occurred in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, after the fall of the Western Roman Empire. This period lasted until the Renaissance (15<sup>th</sup> century). Those were dangerous times with shifts of power across empires and other colossal changes (Olson, 2015). Sometimes theater was banned. The power of religion and the Catholic Church had a significant influence on



society. Wise and Walker (2003) explain that the concept of medieval theater consists of several genres. Some of those were religious (liturgical drama), and some were more mundane (farces). Therefore, the medieval drama was, for the most part, very spiritual and moral in its origins, themes, staging, and traditions (Walsh, 2002).

During the Renaissance period (circa 15th to the early 17th century), European drama began to adapt original Greek and classic Roman plays to contemporary culture and language. The profession of acting began to assume new dignity, and the first professional companies were formed (Law, 2013). Key figures of this period were Pietro Aretino, Giovanni Giraldi, and Torquato Tasso in Italy; France's Étienne Jodelle; Spain's Lope de Vega and Miguel de Cervantes; as well as England's Shakespeare, among others.

One essential theater style of the Renaissance period was *Commedia dell'arte*, a theater art form that originated in Italy around 1550. *Commedia dell'arte* has its origins in the ancient masked comedies of Rome. According to Katritzky (2006), as opposed to classic theater, *commedia dell'arte* wanted to bring theater closer to the public. It combined improvised dialog, mime, acrobatics, and broad humor. Rudlin and Crick (2001) describe that there were several typical archetypes in the show, each with a different personality and costume: *Pierrot*, *Pierrette*, *Pantalone*, *Il Dottore*, *Brighella*, *Il Capitano*, *Colombina*, *the Innamorati*, *Pedrolino*, *Pulcinella*, *Sandrone*, *Scaramuccia* (also known as *Scaramouche*), *La Signora* and *Tartaglia*. *Commedia dell'arte* had a significant influence in theater in Europe. Some famous plays of this style are *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare, *Les Fourberies de Scapin* by Molière, *Servant of Two Masters* by Carlo Goldoni, the *Figaro* plays of Pierre Beaumarchais, and others.

Bermel (2012) illustrates that during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, elements of Enlightenment thinking culminated in the American, French, and Haitian revolutions. The 18<sup>th</sup> century saw the flourishing of theater as a popular past time, and many theaters were enlarged and new playhouses built. A key figure of this period in France was Molière, one of the top comedic playwrights of the time. He revolutionized the way comedy was written and performed by combining Italian *commedia dell' arte* with comedy from the French neoclassical period to create some of the longest-lasting and most influential satiric comedies.

As Brockett and Hildy (2003) describe, the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw theater bursting in a cornucopia of new ways and places. The popular theatrical forms of Romanticism, melodrama, and Victorian burlesque gave way to Naturalism and Realism, farces, and musical theater. Besides, we cannot forget Oscar Wilde, symbolism, August Strindberg, Henrik Ibsen (proto-expressionism), among many others.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century was, at the same time, very prolific and very complicated for drama. There were many difficult periods, such as those of the two World Wars and the Great Depression. Brockett and Hildy (2003) highlight authors like Stanislavski (realism), Bertolt Brecht (political theater), Samuel Beckett (Theater of the Absurd), Eugène Ionesco, Augusto Boal and Paulo Freire (Theater of the Oppressed), and many more experimental theater styles and key figures whose lasting influence continues.

### **2.3 Theater and Drama**

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, scholars such as Bentley (1968) maintain a division between the terms theater and drama was established. In theater, an actor (X) plays a role or performance (Y) in front of an audience (Z). On the other hand, in drama, the actor

(X) is performing a role (Y) and, at the same time, is the audience (Z). In drama, the participants are both passive (observers) and active (performers).

Drama focuses more on the process of creating something together using imagination. In contrast, theater focuses on a final product that has to be prepared, carefully rehearsed, and then finally, one day played in front of an audience. Thus, whereas theater focuses on the final product, drama focuses on the process. Drama invites us to explore different situations and think about what happened before and what will happen soon. It is a social activity that needs the collaboration of different perspectives and voices to come to life.

From the perspective of language teaching, Dougill (1987) researched typical drama activities such as mime, role-plays, simulations, Improvisation, and Process Drama, among others. In drama activities, students embody the target language instead of just memorizing it. Therefore, drama does not refer only to the product (the performance), but also to the entire process of language learning and teaching (Phillips, 2003).

## **2.4 Performative language teaching (PLT)**

According to Bentley (1968), theater and drama are different. Schewe (2013) introduced a new concept called PLT to overcome the 1980's drama/theater divide. Fleming (2016) also considered PLT to be a suitable substitute for the self-created dichotomies between drama and theater, product and process, and spectator and participant. More recently, Piazzoli (2018) summarized the concept of PLT as an “embodied approach to teaching second languages” (p. 40). PLT consists of a vast range of dramatic forms that can be used for education and language teaching.

Schewe (2013) differentiated between small-scale forms and large-scale forms of PLT. Small-scale forms, also called Drama in Education (DiE), are, for example, Improvisation, Playback Theater, Forum Theater, and Process Drama (we will focus on Improvisation and Process Drama below). On the other hand, large-scale forms are more product-oriented, where there is rehearsing and a final play in a stage. They are called Theater in Education (TiE). It is essential to point out that *both* are PLT. Therefore, we can argue that PLT is an “umbrella term” for all different forms of activities related to theater and drama. Small-scale forms can be more readily integrated into many existing curriculums. They have a shorter duration, can use a diversity of linguistic forms and vocabulary, and are thus very rich for the language classroom. Large-scale forms need more time to prepare, sometimes even months, so they tend to fit better as extracurricular activities.

Motos (2016) created and designed a 3D cube that graphically represents the different performative forms. Motos maps out a variety of existing dramatic forms on three axes, inter-connected into a 3D cube. On the vertical axis, Motos positions the process/product continuum; on the horizontal axis, he places the participation/non-participation continuum. Finally, on the diagonal axis, the play/performance continuum (Piazoli, 2018). Figure 4 below illustrates the 3D map of dramatic forms.

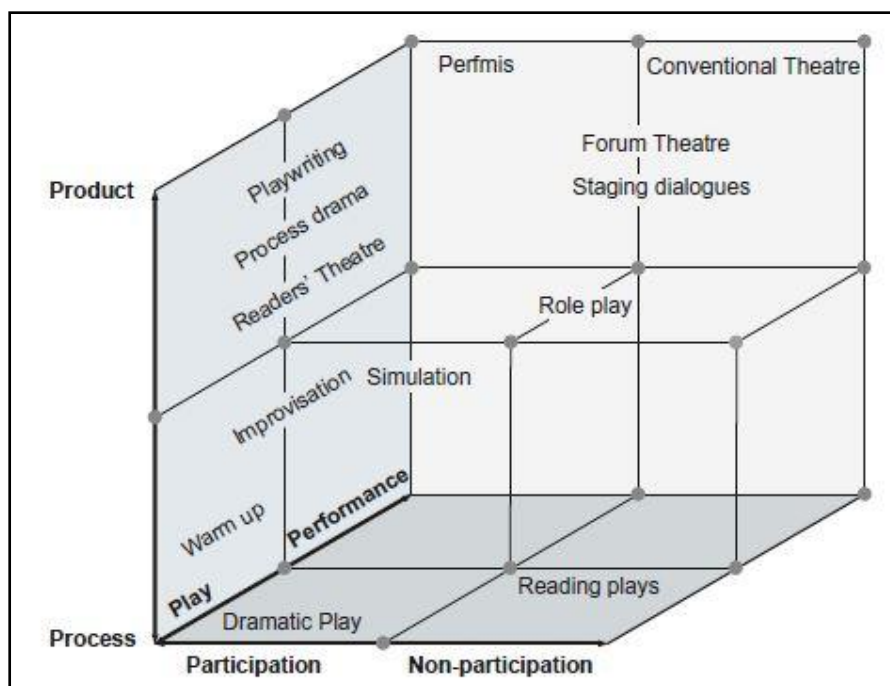


Figure 4. 3D map of dramatic forms (Motos, 2016).

From this mapping of performative dramatic forms by Motos, we will select Improvisation and Process Drama because they are important and more closely related to the methodology and research used in the current dissertation.

#### 2.4.1 *Improvisation and language teaching*

Because we will often refer to it in the methodology section of this dissertation, we will focus on Improvisation (also called “improv”) as a tool for language learning and teaching. According to Bedore (2003), Improvisation is the ultimate teaching tool and team-building exercise. The benefits of Improvisation include teaching students to adapt, developing confidence and creativity, strengthening speaking and listening skills, teaching cooperation, and even promoting tolerance by helping students to accept each other. Improvisation has its roots in *commedia dell’arte* (see Chapter 2.2 above). As Bedore (2003) summarizes, modern Improvisation started in Chicago in the 1930s after the Great Depression.

Viola Spolin (1906-1994) was a key figure that connected Improvisation and education. She designed a set of theater activities and games that were initially intended for children. She developed these Improvisation activities to help children with their creativity and confidence, and they were designed to be used in the classroom. They were not originally intended to be performed in front of an audience. However, Spolin had realized the potential to increase language learning. She is considered a pioneer in this field, and her contribution to Improvisation and education is truly significant. Some of the games she created are still being played today in classrooms around the world (Spolin & Sills, 1999).

Spolin had a unique approach to PLT and education. She was one of the original foundational theorists for what we now refer to as Improvisation and PLT education. Spolin (1986) referred to theater workshops as a powerful tool for learning, where students can interact, connect with others, and learn and acquire the target language during the process. She also noted how these workshops could help students communicate better in speech, writing, and nonverbal ways. She led countless theater workshops and showed time and again how these theater games could bring fresh air to the language classroom.

In the 1950s, Spolin's son, Paul Sills, had the idea of using these Improvisation games on the stage. Thus "The Compass" show was born. This show used Improvisation games on stage and became more and more popular in the Chicago area. In 1959, "Second City" was born. This organization had a significant impact on Improvisation for education and actors on stage.

In 1960, Del Close joined Second City and helped it develop and grow. He created what we call "long-form" Improvisation, also named "The Harold." This type of Improvisation consists of various scenes and creates a longer story in a free-form

style. In the past, short-form Improvisation consisted of games and activities that typically lasted between five and ten minutes. Long-forms can last for one hour or longer, depending on the actors, the story, and the audience (McKnight & Scruggs, 2008).

In another part of the world, in Canada, also in the 1960s, a professor at the University of Calgary, Keith Johnstone, had a new goal in mind: to reach the masses using Improvisation and theater. He knew he had to create something different using Improvisation and competition, which would appeal to the people. Therefore, he invented “Theatersports,” a new form of entertainment that combined improv games with a scoring system. Two teams of improvisers compete in scenes and get points from the public and selected judges.

Thanks to the pioneering work of Spolin, Paul Sills, Second City, Del Close, and Keith Johnstone, among others, nowadays, shows of Improvisation continue to use a mix of the short form, long-form, and Theatersports. For example, a popular T.V. show in the U.S.A., *Whose line is it, anyway?* helped to spread improv to the masses with a flurry of success.

#### ***2.4.2 Process Drama and language teaching***

We can define Process Drama as a kind of applied drama for educational purposes. All the participants (learners, teachers, facilitators, etc.) create new contexts and realities together using their imagination. It belongs to the small-scale form of PLT (Schewe, 2013) and can be easily integrated into a curriculum.

The concept of Process Drama emerged in England in the 1970s thanks to drama educator Dorothy Heathcote as documented by Wagner (1976) and O’Neill (2015). Another essential contributor to the field was Bolton (1979). The new revolutionary concept was that drama now had explicit educational purposes.

Therefore, the idea of “educational drama” could be a suitable method to teach core curriculum subjects. Heathcote introduced the strategies of “teacher in role” and “mantle of the expert” (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995), which nowadays are common elements in Process Drama. The concept of “teacher in role” means that both the students and the teacher have a role to play in the story that they will create together.

On the other hand, the concept of “mantle of the expert” is about the teacher giving the students the role of experts in some subject and sending them in an imaginary task or quest working on commission hired by someone. The purpose is for students to learn and acquire more using PLT. For example, a team of archaeologists finding old tombs in Cairo, a group of detectives solving a crime, etc.

In Process Drama, language learners can develop their language skills and improve their abilities in the target language because they need to communicate in the fictional roles created in that imaginary world of Process Drama. They will explore this new fictional world together with their teacher. Therefore, Process Drama is about the present moment, and this helps student’s confidence and fosters their autonomy.

As described by Piazzoli (2018), the term Process Drama was initially conceptualized by Bolton (1979), who drew on Vygotsky’s (1930/1978) theories to ground Drama in Education (DiE) in symbolic play, emotion, and development. The first one to use the term was O’Toole (1990) and then Haseman (1991). Later O’Toole (1992) and O’Neill (1995, p. xv) define it as “an improvised drama form for active participants with no performance or external audience.” More recently, Haseman and O’Toole (2017) continue to elaborate on the concept of Process Drama.

As Hall (1989) proposed, time is not necessarily monochronic or linear (this concept is typical in Western cultures). Time can also be polychronic, with many



things happening concurrently (this idea belongs to Asian cultures). Therefore, time not only is product- or goal-oriented but can also be focused on the process. Process Drama can and does use polychronic time. There can be multiple short scenes at different times that are all connected and relevant to the story.

O'Neill (1995) describes Process Drama as a “complex dramatic encounter,” which “evokes an immediate dramatic world bounded in space and time” (p. xiii), and shares with theater its emphasis on aesthetic form and meaning. She identifies some characteristics of Process Drama:

1. An episodic structure; all episodes are connected by temporal and spatial relationships, which together form a “web of meaning.”
2. The absence of a script; from the pre-text, the participants are invited to actively create and explore these episodes, forming a collective narrative.
3. An integral audience; both the teacher and the students are at the same time actors and spectators.

Kao and O'Neill (1998) argued the importance of Process Drama for learners and teachers to build a context and situations similar to the real world. Therefore, when students play a character and interact, they will use the target language. One of the core features is that the teacher takes on a role within the story (Teacher in Role). Teachers and students co-create the dramatic “elsewhere,” a place that does not exist in real life but can also be a stage where they can interact using the target language. Process Drama focuses on the learning process rather than the final product, hence the aptly chosen name. There is no external audience since both students and teachers are actors and spectators at the same time. It usually begins with a starting context or topic to motivate the students. After that, different locations and times create several improvised scenes that are all part of the same story.

The power of PLT is that it facilitates language learning. For the students being in a role in context reinforces Willis's point that "if the need to communicate is strongly felt, learners will find a way of getting around words or forms they do not yet know or cannot remember" (Willis, 1996, p. 24).

In Process Drama, the teacher has many different roles, not only as a facilitator who can create the right environment for the students but also as an actor. He or she can assess the students' language skills and can even help students by using the correct target language in some situations of the story to help students learn. Finally, the teacher can also challenge the students during their interaction in a role (Liu, 2002).

#### ***2.4.3 The Glottodrama method and language teaching***

Another example of PLT is the "Glottodrama" method. Nofri and Gimeno (2010) created the "Glottodrama" method as a structured procedure that uses drama techniques in the language classroom. It is an excellent example of applied PLT. Several didactic units were taught at the Valencia Polytechnic University in Spain in the academic year 2014-2015 in a Spanish as a foreign language course as part of the project *Glottodrama Transfer of Innovation (GLO-TOI)* coordinated by professors Ana Gimeno and David Perry. Members of the theater group "CRIT," Daniel Tormo Martínez and Josep Valero, taught the classes.

Several of the experiences and views of the Glottodrama method were revolutionary. One proposal was that two teachers, a language teacher and a drama teacher, should work together in an adapted classroom with a stage. The classes were filmed with a video camera. Micro texts and stress on acting skills, voice, mime, and gestures were all combined in the Glottodrama method. One purpose of this method is to foster student's collaborative skills and teamwork. It also includes a final objective to perform in front of an audience.

With this methodology, the designers of Glottodrama wanted to integrate foreign language learning with a performative approach. They devised several aspects of PLT to increase the student's emotional involvement in various contexts and situations that were more relevant for them from a psychological perspective. The final aim was to boost student's motivation to learn and perform as well.

According to Nofri and Gimeno (2010), in Glottodrama, each didactic unit has a functional goal using a specific grammar point and vocabulary. It can use several dramatic styles, such as role-play, monologues, Improvisation, etc. based on the input text. A didactic unit in the Glottodrama method comprises one or more sessions and starts with a micro text input (usually a dialogue) played first by the teachers. Then, the teacher begins formulating questions to prepare the students for their first performance. Afterward, students have their first performance, which is video-recorded to review their performances and self-assess. The students will receive feedback from the teachers too. The next step is "linguistic reflection" and "language corner," where the whole text is explained in terms of grammar and meaning. Afterward, the "actor's study" is the process of analyzing how to perform the text. Students are asked to reflect on their acting skills and how to improve their last performance. The last part of the process is to go back again and repeat the performance, thus giving the didactic unit in the Glottodrama method a circular approach. In this second performance, the students play the same text, but this time they exchange their roles and characters, diversifying the linguistic requirements each student should perform by the end of the unit.

Another interesting concept of Glottodrama is that each didactic unit has a "satellite unit." As we have just mentioned, in the didactic unit, teachers propose and process the input. However, in the satellite unit, students are the ones that produce the

input, under the close supervision of their teachers (creative writing). Students can continue the story, imagine what will happen next, write different endings, or write a completely different story. All these inputs will generate the satellite unit.

The courses that took place in the European project Glottodrama Transfer of Innovation (GLO-TOI) during 2013-2014 confirmed the results of previous experiences. The goal of the classes was to teach eight different foreign languages in eight different European countries. After comparing the experimental groups with the control groups in each of these languages, the results showed that the students in the experimental groups following the Glottodrama method obtained better results both in the oral and written exams (Nofri, Drago, Masella, & Stracci, 2014).

To summarize, Glottodrama is an interesting approach that helps promote PLT in the teaching /learning of foreign languages. The original circular design of the didactic units and the ingenious concept of the satellite unit are significant contributions to the field. However, the use of a fixed text as an input in the didactic unit might not give students enough freedom to create and improvise, so this portion is not considered Process Drama. There is one exception with the so-called satellite unit, where students are entitled to create a new input. In addition, because this methodology requires two teachers, one language teacher, and one professional drama teacher, it is harder to implement. It depends on the school's resources, but it is simply harder to coordinate and pay two teachers than just to hire one language teacher who knows enough drama skills to help the students. Further research on this issue is necessary.

Figure 5 below illustrates the concept of a teaching unit in the Glottodrama method in Nofri and Gimeno (2010, p. 44):

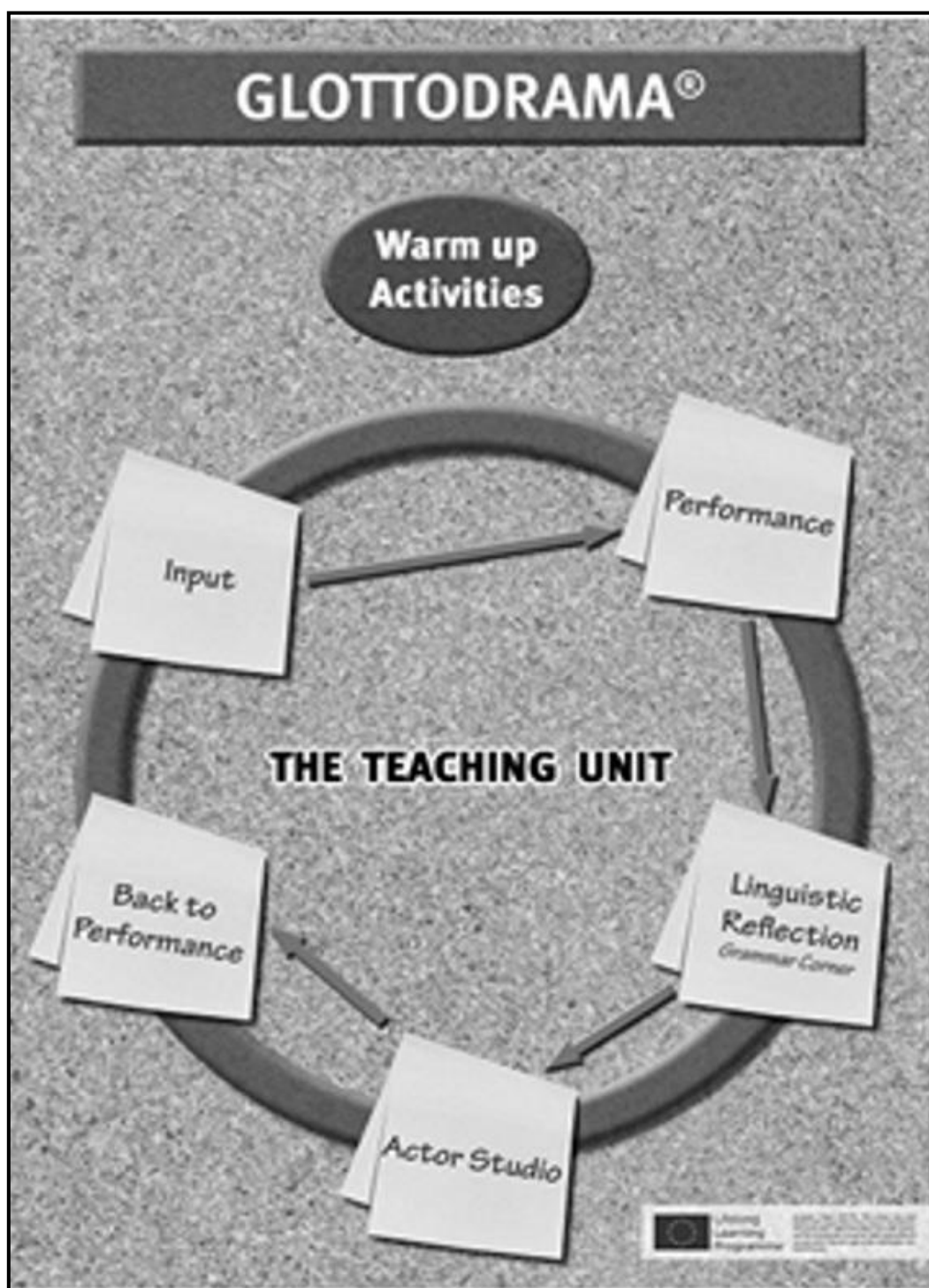


Figure 5. A didactic unit in the Glottodrama® method by Nofri and Gimeno (2010, p. 44).

To conclude, Table 2 below displays the commonalities and differences between Improvisation, Process Drama, and Glottodrama and the strengths and weaknesses of each:

	<b>Improvisation</b>	<b>Process Drama</b>	<b>Glottodrama</b>
<b>Student participation</b>	High	High	Medium-high
<b>Stress on the process</b>	High	Medium-high	Medium-high
<b>Preparation time</b>	Short	Medium	Long
<b>Activity duration</b>	Short	Medium	Long
<b>Level of structure</b>	Low	Medium	High
<b>Freedom to create</b>	High	Medium-high	Medium
<b>Cost of resources needed to implement</b>	Low	Medium	High

Table 2. Commonalities and differences between Improvisation, Process Drama, and Glottodrama.

According to Motos (2016), these three PLT forms have a high degree of participation from the students and a balance of performance and play. Improvisation and Process Drama are the ones with higher student participation and collaboration, primarily because students need to create stories together in a context. However, in Glottodrama, learners usually work with a text that is already given. In addition, Improvisation is more concerned with the process than Glottodrama or Process Drama. Improvisation often relies on the actors to create stories on the spot based on suggestions. The process is more important than the product. In Process Drama, the story is acted and created on the spot, with the teacher who also has a role. In Improvisation, the activities are in a short form style that is both brief and independent.

In Process Drama, there is usually a story that has several interconnected scenes. On the other hand, in Glottodrama, the students have to prepare to perform in front of an audience. Consequently, it seems that the concept of 'product' is more important in Glottodrama as compared to Improvisation and Process Drama.

From the perspective of preparation time for the teacher and the students, it is evident that Improvisation is the one requiring the least amount of preparation time, as most activities are not rehearsed nor prepared in advance. In Process Drama, the teacher has to design and prepare several inputs or key elements to help the students create the story. On the other hand, Glottodrama requires a lot of preparation for the teachers and the students, with several steps of input, performance, linguistic reflection, actor studio, and back to performance in a circular approach. Hence, Glottodrama has a more sophisticated level of structure than Process Drama or Improvisation. Also, because it has a more defined structure, Glottodrama does not allow students' freedom, as the input text cannot be changed. However, in the satellite unit in Glottodrama, the students are given more freedom. From the point of view of freedom to create, Process Drama is located in an intermediate position between Improvisation and Glottodrama. In Process Drama, the students also have the possibility to create, but the context and the story are usually given by the teacher.

The main strength of Improvisation is that it requires little time for preparation, almost no need to allocate monetary resources, and it provides a high degree of freedom, creativity, and student participation focused on the process. It is a powerful complementary pedagogy that provides short activities that can be "smuggled" into a language class effortlessly and conveniently. The main weakness of Improvisation is its somehow lack of structure. As there are independent short activities, they should be chosen depending on the specific needs of the language classroom. Also, the choice

of some topics and the requirements of several activities might be more difficult for some students and require a higher cognitive level and language skills. A teacher must create a safe enough environment for students to feel comfortable taking risks and making mistakes if they are to gain the most out of Improvisation for their language development.

Process Drama is a balanced choice. It gives a sense of freedom but also a structure. It is not as long as Glottodrama and not as short as Improvisation. The main weakness is that it is more difficult for the teacher to design, implement, and engage students than in more straightforward improvisation activities.

The Glottodrama method has a clear and defined structure and could be used to create a long-term syllabus. However, the level of complexity, the higher demand for preparation time, and the need to have two teachers make it difficult to implement in most schools. Besides, it will have a higher cost in resources and time than the other two PLT forms, making it less practical.

Improvisation would be like a wolf, free and wild, whereas Process Drama and Glottodrama would be like a trained, domesticated dog. If we compare them with cars, Improvisation will look like a sports car, as students have more freedom to create. Process Drama would be a family sedan, and Glottodrama would be a public bus because buses have fixed routes with clear stops (higher level of structure).

Although, in principle, PLT is suitable for any proficiency level, many improvisational games or activities require some previous knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, and they might turn out to be a bit difficult for beginner learners. The research we have carried out has combined Improvisation, Process Drama, and some adapted Glottodrama techniques.



In section 2.4, we have introduced PLT and described three of its forms, namely, Improvisation, Process Drama, and Glottodrama. We have also considered how PLT fosters collaboration. In the next section, we will consider collaboration from an SLA perspective (cognitive-interactionist and socio-cultural approaches) and introduce its benefits from a neuroscientific perspective.

## **2.5 Collaboration through PLT**

This section considers the importance of collaboration from the perspective of two well-established approaches to SLA, namely, the interactionist-cognitive approach (Long, 1996; Pica, 2013) and the socio-cultural approach (Vygotsky, 1930/1978). We will relate the central claims of both approaches to PLT, which is the methodology we will use in our study.

### ***2.5.1 Collaboration from two SLA approaches: Interactionist- cognitive and Socio-cultural***

#### ***2.5.1.1 The Interaction Hypothesis and PLT***

The Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996) is an approach to L2 acquisition, whose primary claim is that interaction among learners facilitates L2 learning. Long (1985a, 1985b) analyzed the interactions between L2 learners and native speakers of the language, and interactions between two non-native speakers, a topic that was underexplored at that time. He documented that conversational adjustments and repetitions were significantly more frequent when a non-native speaker was involved in the interaction. Based on his study, he proposed the Interaction Hypothesis (1985a, 1985b, 1996), which claimed that oral interaction among language learners (or among learners and native speakers) facilitated acquisition.

Long claims that interaction facilitates language development. When interacting, learners negotiate for meaning and form. Long (1996, pp. 451-52) defined negotiation as follows: “the process in which, in an effort to communicate, learners and competent speakers provide and interpret signals of their own and their interlocutor’s perceived comprehension, thus provoking adjustments to linguistic form, conversational structure, message content, or all three, until an acceptable level of understanding is achieved.” Several studies in the past three decades have revealed that negotiated interaction benefits L2 acquisition both in second and in foreign language settings (Gass & Mackey, 2007; Mackey, 2012; see also García Mayo & Alcón, 2013, and Loewen & Sato, 2018) for state-of-the-art accounts of the importance of interaction). Interaction provides learners with opportunities to receive positive input, produce output, and also receive corrective feedback from their interlocutors, all of which have been shown to facilitate L2 acquisition. Moreover, interaction triggers cognitive mechanisms such as noticing (Schmidt, 1990), which have been claimed to be a key starting point for SLA.

In addition, Swain (1985, 2000) proposed the Output Hypothesis. According to Swain, output, the production of language orally or in writing, triggers three functions: the *noticing function*, when learners notice a gap between their interlanguage knowledge (Selinker, 1972) and the target language, which prompts them to solve their linguistic problem; the *hypothesis-testing function*, when learners use language production in a trial-and-error fashion to test their production; and the *metalinguistic reflective function*, when learners reflect on the language they are learning by producing output, which allows them to control and internalize linguistic knowledge.

Long's Interaction Hypothesis integrates two hypotheses about the process of L2 acquisition: the input and the output hypotheses. The Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) stresses the importance of receiving enough "input" to learn the target language. This input includes listening to audios recordings, reading texts, grammar rules, and structures, vocabulary lists, etc. The Output Hypothesis, on the other hand, focuses on the act of producing language, when the learner engages in conversations or writing using grammar structures and vocabulary.

As does the Interaction Hypothesis, PLT also fosters interaction. In PLT, students have to negotiate meaning while collaborating. PLT provides students a unique opportunity to create and negotiate meaning together. For example, Improvisation can develop plenty of output from very little "input." A few suggestions from classmates such as location and character relationship for a scene can trigger more elaborate, spontaneous dialogues and stories, which can be very rich "output." These dialogues are the result of the collaborative process carried out by a group of learners. Therefore, Improvisation is an excellent example of a PLT form that fosters collaboration between students. Sawyer (2003) claims:

Improvised dialogues are created by collaborative efforts of the entire ensemble. No single actor creates the performance; it emerges from the gives and takes of conversation. Improvised dialogue results in the creation of a dramatic frame, which includes all aspects of the performance; the characters enacted by each actor, the motives of those characters, the relationships among those characters, the joint activity in which they are engaged, the location of the action, the time period and the genre, the overall plot and the relation of the current joint activity to that plot. The dramatic frame is constructed turn by turn; one actor proposes a new development for the frame, and other actors respond by modifying or embellishing that proposal (p. 41).

In Process Drama, for example, the teacher also collaborates with the students (Teacher in Role) to create a story. In Improvisation, listening to other students' suggestions, learning to accept others' ideas, and adding new meaning and information

to the story is a process that allows for collaboration and negotiation of meaning. Consequently, PLT pedagogy and collaborative tasks that foster this type of interaction are valuable tools for promoting L2 acquisition. Process Drama also ensures collaboration between students. A play or a story that is created by a group of people is a very dynamic process. This collaborative method embedded in PLT pedagogy is a unique opportunity for group interaction and, therefore, for language learning. Liu (2002) states:

Process Drama allows students to work together in large groups, small groups, and in pairs to discuss and improvise possible scenarios or dramatic situations, and construct and explore images, roles, ideas, and situations while developing their language skills. As such, Process Drama not only strengthens the creativity in the students' meaningful learning set but also helps enable students to be actively involved in acquiring the language skills in a meaningful context. Language instruction is more desirable if language is regarded as a creative process. The cognitive function of Process Drama hence serves this purpose. (p. 56).

In Process Drama, students usually work in a group, which means they are encouraged to be interdependent. Besides, the group will make them build trust and confidence (Salii & Bytyqi, 2014). The students can improve their oral skills creatively and effectively by interacting with the teacher and other classmates (Wagner, 1990).

In the Glottodrama method, each didactic unit combines both input and output. Every unit has an input, that is, a functional goal using a specific grammar point and related vocabulary words. It can use several dramatic styles, such as role-play, monologues, etc. based on the input text. The micro text input (usually a dialogue) is played first by the teachers, and then the teacher helps to prepare the students for their first performance. In the performance, the students will have a chance to practice the "input" they had previously learned; thus, they will have an opportunity to interact with other classmates in a meaningful context and use the grammar structures and vocabulary to create, which is their actual "output."

### ***2.5.1.2 Sociocultural Theory, collaboration, and PLT***

Sociocultural Theory (SCT) was first introduced by Vygotsky (1930/1978). Vygotsky's SCT states that the development of language learning and other cognitive capacities is socially co-constructed. Improvement occurs in the interaction between experts and apprentices, where the expert (e.g., parents, teachers, more knowledgeable peers) provides appropriate assistance to the novice. A range of tools mediates the provision of assistance. These tools can be material artifacts (e.g., computers, toys) or symbolic (e.g., gestures, language). For assistance to be appropriate and effective, it needs to be dynamic and graduated, aligning with the novice's evolving capacities rather than existing ones (Storch, 2002, 2005, 2019). The difference between these two types of abilities is summarized in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is the difference that exists between what a student is able to do on their own and what the learner can accomplish with the help of others. The carefully adjusted assistance has also frequently been referred to in the literature as scaffolding (Wood, Bruner, & Ross 1976). As several researchers have shown (Donato, 1994; Storch, 2002), scaffolding can also occur among peers when working in group/pair work. Thus, from a social constructivist perspective, learners should be encouraged to participate in activities that foster interaction and co-construction of knowledge. From a pedagogical viewpoint, the use of small group and pair work is further supported by the communicative approach to L2 instruction and its evidence-based emphasis on providing learners with opportunities to use the L2.

When humans interact, they do not merely exchange information, but also bring into the activity their agency, which is to say, their emotions, goals, beliefs, and desires. These affective factors will determine the kind of relationship they form (Storch, 2019).

The social function is a crucial component of Process Drama. As Liu (2002) described, Process Drama “pursues to create communicative competence and confidence among participants through working with others, which is one example of collaborative learning” (p. 56). Process Drama fosters student interaction and cooperation; therefore, it creates memories that will be very useful for learners when they must use the target language in a real-life situation (Nunan, 1992). The learners create together a context where they can use the language. This context should be as close as possible to the real outside world; it could be improvising a location, a communicative situation, a negotiation of meaning, etc. Learners are acting and rehearsing for the future.

A language is a tool made for communication. In Process Drama, students use the target language when they must prepare and discuss a new scene. Acting is a way to feel one’s own and classmates’ emotions, which are socially constructed in the classroom each day and helps students develop the key ability of empathy while interacting with others. When the teacher creates the right conditions using a PLT activity, students are motivated and take risks because they have lowered their affective filter. In PLT, it is acceptable to make mistakes because they are opportunities for students who are in their ZPD to improve and for peers and teachers to provide assistance. PLT enables students to work together and participate actively. Everybody is on the same team and has a common goal. They create a group support network, and through interaction, improvement almost always occurs.

Consequently, PLT is aligned with Vygotsky’s SCT. In addition to language growth, students will improve their self-confidence and ability to manage their emotions, while also understanding others better. Because Process Drama is made

collaboratively, participants must work together and decide how to continue with the story using the target language in a communicative way.

As Kao and O'Neill (1998) state:

The group role provides tremendous support for L2 [second language] students to overcome insecurities as well as their incompetence in using the target language at this initial stage of making drama (p. 25).

As all the students and the teacher are active participants during Process Drama, it “requires active and collaborative work, so that every student has to engage in this teamwork. Collaborative learning is an important strategy in making drama” (Liu, 2002, p. 57). All students and the teacher need to interact by using the target language. “In this team-building method, students have more opportunities to interact, which helps build an effective support system” (Liu, 2002, p. 57).

This teambuilding reflects Vygotsky's ZPD. When rehearsing for a new scene as part of a scene in Improvisation, Process Drama, or Glottodrama, students can learn from classmates who have a higher language level. Moreover, learners can develop their competence to reach their full potential. Students have the chance to learn not only from the teacher but also from their peers. Some of those peers might have a more developed target language competence than others. When they interact, they will practice more by using the target language in a context, thus, improving their capabilities. “The mutual assistance not only helps them establish a sense of security but also gain confidence in language learning” (Liu, 2002, p. 57).

In the Glottodrama method, in a didactic unit with a circular design, students have to socially co-construct their performance. They interact using the target language. Afterward, they will receive feedback from the teachers. Here we also find Vygotsky's ZPD and scaffolding. In Glottodrama, there is a stage called “linguistic reflection” and language corner. In this section, the whole text is explicitly explained

in terms of grammar and meaning. Again, more ZPD. After that, the next step is “actor’s study,” a process of analyzing how to perform the text. Students reflect on their acting skills and how to improve their last performance. What one finds here is the internalization of socially co-constructed knowledge.

Compared to a traditional classroom where there is usually less student interaction, PLT offers a much more significant collaborative interaction with peers, promoting language learning.

### ***2.5.2 The benefits of collaboration from a neuroscientific perspective***

In recent years, with new technological improvements in the fields of computer science and physics, there has been an increase in research in the field of neuroscience as it applies to education. In this subsection, we will review several studies that specifically researched the relationship between collaboration and the brain.

Neuroscientist Guillen (2017) states that the human brain has developed neuronal circuits that allow us to thrive in a social environment. The brain, he argues, is a “very social organ.” We evolved in groups, and our brains help us to adapt to our environment. We are always learning from others and teaching others. Recent studies about cooperative behavior in the laboratory with Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scans discovered that, during tasks that require collaboration, regions in the brain related to reward-synapses are activated, and those regions are also associated with emotional decision making (Stallen & Sanfey, 2015). A study by Müller, Sängler, and Lindenberger (2013) revealed that brain waves are synchronized when several people do the same task simultaneously, such as during a musical performance or dance choreography, even when they are improvising. When teachers ask students to help other students by explaining some concepts, dopamine is liberated in the brain. Our brains are wired to connect. Research has also shown that when you ask students to



learn something to teach other classmates instead of just learning it for the final exam, students can grasp and retain more information (Lieberman, 2013).

Roseth, Johnson and Johnson (2008) carried out a meta-analysis of 148 studies in which 17 000 early adolescents aged 12 to 15 took part. They showed that better academic results and improved peer relationships were linked to collaborative learning in the classroom, as opposed to methodologies that foster competitive and individualistic relationships at schools. Besides, the study reported a correlation between the student's peer relationships and academic results, which shows that friendship is a fundamental tool for every student's wellbeing.

Cooperative work has been found to have a positive influence on students' motivation and learning, according to another meta-analysis where the results of 629 independent studies that took place in 26 different countries were analyzed (Johnson, Johnson, Roseth, & Shin, 2014).

Moreover, in a study where the same teachers used the same teaching materials and assessment, Linton, Farmer, and Peterson (2014) reported that the students who completed the tasks in cooperative groups obtained better results than those who completed the same tasks individually.

## **2.6 Neuroscientific research about the brain and its importance for education**

For the same reason that we need to know the shape and function of our hands before designing gloves to wear, we also need to understand better how our brain works to develop more effective language teaching methodologies in the classroom. In what follows, we will review several research studies where new advancements in brain scanning and imaging were employed. Neuroscientists have discovered further

important information about the brain that language teachers should take into account. We summarize these new findings and their connection to PLT.

### ***2.6.1 Neuroplasticity***

Our brain is always growing, changing, and evolving; that is what neuroscientists call “neuroplasticity.” From an educational perspective, all these findings from research on neuroplasticity are valuable because they show that our brain features a mechanism that allows us to adapt, develop, and learn. Thus, this research could suggest that adults of any age can learn a new language using PLT methods because of neuroplasticity.

Research shows that the brain can adapt and change over the years, not only when we are young, and also that active learning changes our brain. Without neuroplasticity, it would not have been possible to learn new things. Consequently, everybody has the potential to improve at any age. Studies show that virtuous violinists had an increase in the region of the brain that controls the fingers of the left hand (Elbert, Pantev, Wienbruch, Rockstroh, & Taub, 1995). Research also shows that, when compared to inexperienced drivers, taxi drivers in London had a more prominent hippocampus region of the brain because they need to memorize the streets of the city (Maguire, Gadian, Johnsrude, Good, Ashburner, Frackowiak, & Frith, 2000).

Álvaro Pascual-Leone, a Spanish Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School, and his team did extensive research on neuroplasticity, proving that our brains change and adapt. In one experiment, they had two groups of volunteers; the first group learned how to play a song on the piano using five fingers. The other group did not have a keyboard; they had to learn and imagine playing the song using their minds. Neural scans of the first group showed “dynamic shifts in the strength of preexisting connections across distributed neural networks” and changes in the neural section in

charge of the movement of the fingers. What was more significant is that the other group, where the participants had to imagine that they were playing the song, also showed activation of the same region. (Pascual-Leone, Amedi, Fregni, & Merabet, 2005, p.1). In another experiment, Pascual Leone had a group of volunteers that were blindfolded for five days and taught them how to read using the Braille system. Leone also had those volunteers complete listening tasks to distinguish different tones using headsets. Analysis of the brain scans of the participants after five days showed that their visual cortex section changed and was now processing Braille reading and listening. However, when the volunteers could see again, the visual cortex shifted back to the original state.

Even video games can make our brains change. Recent research shows that adults who played the video game *Super Mario 64* during two months increased their gray matter and the hippocampus (Kühn, Gleich, Lorenz, Lindenberger, & Gallinat, 2014).

The concept of neuroplasticity is of paramount importance in this research. The idea that our brain, regardless of age, is always changing, is the foundation of education. When teachers teach, they hope the students' brains change with the teaching to acquire and improve their language skills. The challenge we face is to find the best combination of methodologies in the language classroom to achieve the best outcome for our students. Limb and Braun (2008) showed that PTL, more specifically Improvisation, activates more regions of the brain compared to memorizing, and can thus be a powerful tool for the language classroom.

### **2.6.2 Emotions**

Neuroscientists Immordino-Yang and Damasio (2007) stressed the importance of emotions in the learning process. The old Descartes saying “Cogito, ergo sum” (I

think; therefore, I am) should be changed to “I feel, therefore I exist,” and, in performative teaching, “I feel; therefore, I learn.” Immordino-Yang (2016) stressed the importance of emotions in the learning process because “learning is dynamic, social, and context-dependent because emotions are, and emotions form a critical piece of how, what, when and why people think, remember and learn” (p. 17).

The connection of emotions with PLT is vital. PLT allows students to recognize and manage their feelings and emotions. By acting, we improve our ability to understand other people (empathy), and we learn to cooperate with others (socialize). Emotions should be a central part of any educational activity and should be blended into the performing process. Several key factors that directly influence education and learning, such as attention, memory, motivation, social relations, and creativity, are closely related to emotions.

### ***2.6.3 Movement and physical activity***

When we do activities in real life, we have to move, change locations, and interact with space, the environment (and often other people). However, in traditional language teaching contexts, the students have to sit down in a classroom for extended periods of time and must listen to the teacher without being able to move or interact. In traditional methodologies, teachers direct students to learn through memorization and recitation techniques, focusing on vocabulary acquisition and grammar rules. According to Beck (2009), historically, the most common method employed in traditional education was “simple oral recitation” (p. 3). Students had to sit down quietly in the classroom and listen to the classmates who, one by one, had to recite the lesson when the teachers called them. Consequently, the students’ primary activity was to memorize the assignments at home. Assessment in this type of education was by a test or oral exam at the end of a unit. Besides, this process was repeated with each

didactic unit. Beck called this “assignment-study-recitation-test” (p. 4). Traditional education relies heavily on rote memorization, with little effort directed at understanding the meaning. Moreover, it is disconnected and has no context. As Beck points out, “it was also an extremely inefficient use of students’ and teachers’ time” (p. 6).

So, in traditional education environments, students are usually forced to sit down for long hours in the classroom. However, human beings have the natural inclination to move, which is also part of the survival and evolution of the species. Consequently, students need to move and use their bodies while speaking because that is what we, as human beings, usually do in a normal conversation (Maley & Duff, 1982).

The connection with PLT is straightforward. In most PLT activities, students have to use their bodies to perform. They are actively participating, interacting, moving their legs, arms, and creating different scenes. PLT activities like “I am a tree” (see Chapter 4) or performing scenes are examples of the physical movement needed in the PLT classroom. The use of physical exercise in the language classroom dates back to the 1970s. Asher (1977) created the methodology of Total Physical Response (TPR). In TPR, learners studied vocabulary and phrases using their bodies. According to Asher, this was a way to help them process and internalize these new concepts, because human language also includes movement, gestures, and embodiment, not only speech. The brain has a strong connection with our body’s movement and also memory. Several PLT forms and dramatic techniques also encourage students to use their bodies and gestures. Even though TPR uses some performative ideas to aid L2 acquisition, drama is not the primary goal. There are not stories that are created together with classmates, or dramatic tension, just gestures and kinesthetic movements to help students learn

some vocabulary and structures. Therefore, although TPR can be a useful resource in a language classroom, TPR cannot be labeled as a PLT form.

#### ***2.6.4 Stress and anxiety***

Neuroscientist Guillen (2017, p. 46) states: “current studies know that stress affects learning. A little stress is necessary, and even beneficial because it activates the neural circuits that control attention and memory and avoid getting bored”. Nevertheless, research shows that if stress levels are too high, it has a very negative effect on learning, causing anxiety and exhaustion. It is also bad for our memory, due to the increasing levels of the cortisol hormone that harms the hippocampus and other areas of the brain (Sapolsky, 2015).

Since anxiety is an emotional variable that can keep students from learning (Dörnyei, 2005), investigating a foreign language teaching technique that can mitigate stress and anxiety should be a top priority for educational researchers. Students feel more interested and stimulated if given a friendly environment where they can occasionally “take risks in the language” (Maley & Duff, 1982, p. 14). It is a way of experimenting and testing their language knowledge and discovering their shortcomings. PLT encourages students to experience the language in specific, low-risk contexts and situations (Dougill, 1987).

Several studies show that PLT can reduce the levels of anxiety in the classroom: Coleman (2005) investigated the effectiveness of using a PLT EFL curriculum to improve the English fluency of 60 Korean adolescents (L1: Korean, L2: English) attending an English as a Second Language (ESL) summer camp for two months. The instructional program was designed to be student-centered, collaborative, and low anxiety. The instructional strategies included voice training, Improvisation, role-play, and stage movement. Each session’s culminating activity was a 15-minute

dramatic presentation before an audience. The study used a one-group pre-test-post-test research design. Results of the videotaped performance-based assessment showed significant pre-test to post-test gains in all ten dimensions of English verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors. The highest benefits were in the management of anxiety and apprehension, voice modulation, and English pronunciation. Results from the post-treatment questionnaires, post-treatment interviews, and the researchers' field notes revealed that students perceived they achieved the highest gains in English pronunciation and voice modulation. Students also reported feeling more self-confident and relaxed while speaking English due to their participation in the program. After the PLT immersion camp, students were less stressed and calm when speaking English. Coleman (2005) argued that PLT helps oral communication among Korean students.

Piazzoli (2011) investigated the impact of Process Drama on a group of adult learners studying Italian at a university in Brisbane, Australia. The 12 participants were students of either Education, Linguistics, or Italian Studies (L1: English except for one student whose L1 was Japanese; L2: Italian). The author designed and facilitated six Process Drama workshops. The research instruments were the video-recording of the workshops, the teacher's reflective journal (written before and after watching the videos), the transcriptions (and translation into English) of the communicative forums, ten semi-structured individual interviews with the students (conducted in English), and three concept mapping diagrams and a focus group using video-stimulated recall.

Results indicated that PLT helped engage learners to use the target language in a more authentic context while playing a role. PLT was a way for students to produce more spontaneous speech and communication. Moreover, findings from this study also showed that "affective space generated by Process Drama was beneficial in reducing

a degree of language anxiety in some of the participants” (p. 156). Learners who were anxious at the beginning of the study were able to become more confident and reduce their anxiety levels.

Galante (2018) investigated the impact of PLT on foreign language anxiety (FLA). Twenty-four young adolescents from Brazil (L1: Portuguese, L2: English) took part in the study. They were split into two different groups, a treatment group, and a control group. The duration of the intervention was four months in total. To measure the participants’ anxiety levels, the researcher used the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). This test was administered before and after each program. Results from the FLCAS indicated that anxiety levels decreased in both groups over time; however, learners in the PLT group experienced more improvement.

Therefore, PLT seems to have a significant connection with reducing stress and anxiety in the language classroom. By reducing the stress and anxiety of the students (student’s affective filters), it is easier for them to learn the target language and have a positive attitude towards their subject of study. Reducing stress and anxiety has paramount importance in today’s education.

### ***2.6.5 Play***

Guillen (2017, p. 151) states: “game and play is a natural mechanism in our DNA that sparks curiosity, it is pleasurable and helps us learn different skills that are key to our life.” Forés and Ligoiz (2009) demonstrated that game and play are key to learning in the classroom because they are fun, stimulate curiosity and creativity, increase self-esteem, are a tool to express emotions, help students socialize, and stimulate physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. Traditionally ‘playing’ in L2 settings is often associated with games. However, there is a direct



connection with PLT because it has a component of play of a higher cognitive order than just “games.”

As Piazzoli (2018) suggests, “Play mediates a felt-experience of learning” and stresses the fact that “language learning is about symbolic mediation” (p. 138). The origin of mediation in PLT is the use of play combined with the different elements of drama (the situation or context, the dramatic role, the narrative, or dramatic tension).

### ***2.6.6 Creativity***

According to neuroscientists Kounios and Beeman (2015), creativity is the capacity to reinterpret something by dividing it into its elements and then rearranging them in an unexpected way. Limb and Braun (2008) studied how Improvisation in jazz musicians or rappers can activate several regions of their brains. Kaufman and Gregoire (2016) demonstrated that several complex neuronal networks and brain areas are activated during the creative process.

PLT has a powerful connection with creativity. In most PLT activities, students have to create new stories, with locations, characters, relationships, objectives, conflicts, etc. In Improvisation, for example, there are several activities where students ask classmates for suggestions to start a new scene from scratch. In Process Drama and Glottodrama, there are also several storytelling activities where students have to create a story on the spot with the input from their classmates. In this way, PLT is literally about creating something that didn’t exist before. For a detailed explanation of some of these activities, please see Chapter 4.

## **2.7 Research about the benefits of PLT**

All the studies mentioned in the previous section lay a foundation to argue for the use of PLT in the classroom. In what follows, we will focus on the numerous benefits that PLT offers.

Wessels (1987) states that the primary purpose of PLT is making learners talk in the classroom, which is achieved because the methodology tricks students and instills an urge to speak as they interact with other classmates to create dramatic scenes, dialogues, role-plays, simulations, or by problem-solving tasks. PLT activities “bridge the gap between the carefully controlled classroom work and the complexity of language in the outside world” (Dougill, 1987, p. 145). By playing different roles in communicative situations, students can express their emotions, thoughts, and feelings (Fleming, 2016). Another positive part of PLT is that it helps students communicate in a concrete situation that can be seen as training for the real world outside the classroom, where social pressures and anxieties can inhibit language production (Janudom & Punchalee, 2009). PLT activities are beneficial for communication because they use different language registers and situations to foster socialization (Aldavero, 2008). Also, PLT allows students to express their emotions and personality. As Ulas (2008) stated, PLT activities have a clear context and focus; students can feel the language and have a more personal experience. Therefore, the topics are more successfully assimilated and not forgotten, as memory and emotions are closely related. Furthermore, PLT creates a friendly atmosphere in the classroom and increases students’ motivation (Desiatova, 2009). Taylor (2000) and Kalidas (2014) mentioned that PLT is exciting and entertaining, providing a very positive learning environment that can increase learners’ confidence and motivation.

Phillips (2003) explains another positive effect of PLT: shy students can “hide behind” another character in the target language while using their personalities because this “personalization makes language more meaningful and memorable than drilling or mechanical repetition can” (p. 5). In addition, when students are playing a role, like wearing a mask, they can “escape from their everyday identity” (p. 6). PLT can engage every person and is integrated with games and play in a natural way, such as when children play by acting out stories and scenes without any input from adults. PLT is indeed a great way to inspire students, especially hesitant or shy ones. To summarize, PLT is a powerful tool because it involves not only language itself, but also the body, mind, emotions, and social interaction.

Dougill (1987) maintains that PLT activities allow for unpredictability in language use and transport students from the classroom to real-life situations in a more authentic way than traditional textbooks. They also have several psychological and emotional advantages, such as helping learners be more confident, motivated, and creative. Some of the activities allow students to have physical involvement and release stress. Finally, PLT has the power to “help cater for mixed-ability classes and large numbers” (p. 8).

Catterall (2002) reviewed previous studies about the effects of PLT. He reported that the use of PLT in the classroom not only helps improve students’ scores in other subjects but also helps students develop many different psychological skills. These studies investigated the degree of understanding in children after the use of dramatic stories and texts. Results showed that children were able to identify characters, their goals, and objectives, and even conflicts. According to Catterall, the arts contribute in many ways to academic achievement, student engagement, motivation, and social skills. The author argues that the arts need to have a place in the

curriculum, and he advocates for compulsory PLT programs in schools. Caterall (2002) points out that PLT has several advantages over traditional teaching methodologies because learning becomes more interesting as it is closer to the real world. PLT helps participants understand situations better because abstract concepts become closer to real life and help students improve their vocabulary. Besides, PLT has several psychological benefits for the students, as it increases their self-esteem and self-control. As students have to play several roles, they can understand other people's circumstances in life and be more empathic, tolerant, and respectful of others.

Maley and Duff (2005) described several key points related to PLT and language teaching. Since most PLT activities, especially Improvisation, include spontaneous verbal expression, this methodology can integrate language skills more naturally, as opposed to memorizing lists of words from a textbook. PLT also includes non-verbal communication, which is an essential part of real life and can be culturally specific. When students perform, they are accessing both the cognitive and affective dimensions. By giving them a context, the students interact with an intense focus on meaning. There is also a "transfer of responsibility for learning from teacher to learners" (Ulas, 2008, p. 1).

According to Fleming (2016), PLT benefits language learning through a series of paradoxes. Because the participants know that the scene they are performing is not real, they can be involved but, at the same time, distant. Moreover, the students can act as if they were very serious, but in the end, they know there are no real-life consequences for their character's behavior. For example, in one scene, one student goes out to a nightclub, drinks too much alcohol, and drives his car (illegal and reckless behavior). Another participant can play the role of a police officer; they will interact

as if it were real; however, both students know it is not. Another advantage of PLT is that the participants can be actors and audience members at the same time.

More recently, Chérrez Sacoto (2017) suggested that the use of PLT in the classroom, apart from improving speaking skills, could provide several benefits, such as positively impacting the development of vocabulary and grammar. Dramatic activities foster collaborative learning because the students usually have to perform in a group. Consequently, Chérrez Chacoto states that PLT increases student-speaking time in class, sometimes by more than 500 percent. Similarly, “an interactive session in class results in more language output in two minutes than in a non-interactive one in an hour” (p. 45).

Piazzoli (2018) claims that when students enter the classroom, they are playing the role of language learners, that is, they are also wearing the “L2 learner mask”, which cannot be taken off, but can be acknowledged. Besides, when they take part in PLT activities, they explicitly agree to represent a role and to pretend it is real for the purpose of PLT, which is referred to as “make-believe.” Thus, learners play another character and engage in “a playful exchange between the real context and the play context” (p. 287). Therefore, L2 learners wear a second mask that they add to the first mask. This second mask is that of a dramatic role. This concept is what Tschurtschenthaler (2013) called “mask-upon-a-mask” (p. 230). This double masking metaphor symbolizes the degree of interaction of the L2 with one’s role. This effect allows learners to believe they are outside the L2 classroom in a context that is very similar to real life, thus, interacting with other classmates that are also wearing two masks with different roles. PLT creates situations that allow learners to produce more natural and spontaneous output and have conversations closer to everyday life, like talking to friends in a café or ordering food, for example. “Thus, paradoxically, the

double masking effect of the make-believe brought the learners closer to real-life communication” (Piazzoli, 2018, p. 287).

Guillen (2016) mentioned a comprehensive study carried out by Winner, Goldstein, and Vincent-Lancrin (2014) about the influence of artistic education in the brain. The study reported evidence that the use of PLT at school had a very positive effect at the cognitive level and an even more pronounced effect at the socio-emotional level. PLT classes improve verbal skills, creativity, empathy, emotional regulation, and the ability to have different points of view.

## **2.8 Experimental research on the use of PLT in the language classroom**

Now that the benefits of PLT have been considered, we can review the actual experimental research about the use of PLT in the language classroom.

Stern (1980) studied the use of PLT techniques in an advanced ESL classroom. He administered a questionnaire to 24 non-native English speakers enrolled in three ESL classes at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). These 24 students had participated in PLT activities. He also administered open-ended questions about the use of PLT from the teacher’s perspective to the instructors of these students. The evidence suggested that the PLT methodology positively influenced psychological factors such as motivation, self-esteem, and spontaneity.

Kao (1994) carried out another pioneering study in the field. She used mixed-methods with 33 first-year university students at National Cheng Kung University in Taiwan, China (L1: Chinese, L2: English). The learners were traditional first-year college students who had taken EFL as a required subject for six years in high school before they attended the university. The class investigated was taught by the researcher

herself, and PLT was the core of classroom activities. A questionnaire was administered in the first meeting of the semester to gather information about the subjects' prior experience in learning English. Task-based pre- and post-course oral proficiency tests were administered to the students at the beginning and the end of the semester. The task consisted of describing a cartoon-strip story containing some pictures to a listener who did not know the story but needed to identify the sequence of scenes.

Audio and video records were taken in every class meeting from the fifth to the thirteenth week. In addition, to analyze the students' and teacher's responses to the course, the researchers also collected the students' anonymous journal entries written in their native language, the teacher's lesson plans, as well as the field notes taken immediately after each class. The findings showed that PLT activities positively affected L2 learning and increased students' confidence in speaking English. The PLT activities demonstrably created an interactive learning environment for the students to learn conversational English. In this classroom, the students were no longer passive receivers of what the teacher presented; instead, they independently initiated new topics, grasped the floor to speak, and cooperated with each other to move the conversation forward or do other activities. It can be seen here that PLT gave learners a chance to rehearse for real-life situations. The students could access their knowledge of the target language and communicate, thereby reducing their stress. In Asian contexts, students rarely have a chance to practice speaking skills in class, so the new PLT methodology providing more practice of the target language proved more effective for oral skills than traditional teaching methods.

A meta-analysis of 80 studies carried out by Podlozny (2000) evaluated the effects of PLT in the classroom regarding verbal skills by considering seven factors:

story understanding (written and oral), reading achievement, reading readiness, oral language development, vocabulary, and writing. Results showed that the effects of PLT in six out of seven factors were favorable. It was exceptionally positive for the understanding of written stories, probably because students not only read the story but also performed it. Vocabulary acquisition, however, was not significantly altered.

Ryan-Scheutz and Colangelo (2004) organized an extracurricular PLT theater class to research the impact of theater production in the language skills of university students and help students studying Italian at the University of Notre Dame in the U.S.A. The Italian Theater Workshop (ITW) was an extracurricular activity that investigated the different possible language interactions between the people who formed a foreign language theater ensemble. The project lasted for ten weeks. The eleven participants (L1: English, L2: Italian) in the ITW had studied before at least one year of Italian. However, they had different language proficiency levels.

The authors assigned different roles to the students: six actors, three stage managers, and two designers. According to Ryan-Scheutz and Colangelo (2004), there were different stages of the project divided into preproduction and postproduction. Preproduction included auditions, reading texts in Italian, rehearsals, etc. The preproduction assessment included a testing phase with oral and written exams. The postproduction focus on the final performance and the evaluation was carried out approximately one week after the three public performances of the selected play. It began with an oral proficiency interview (OPI), conducted by the same tester for the pre-tests. Afterward, the participants took another written exam based on a third theatrical. All participants rated on a scale from 1 (no improvement) to 10 (much improvement) how much they felt they had improved in various skill and sub-skill areas due to the ITW experience.



Results of a comparison of pre- and post-production tests showed general trends of improvement in oral proficiency, reading comprehension, knowledge of language structures and idioms, and writing ability. Moreover, the students' responses to survey questions indicated an overall positive influence on the affective benefits of PLT for L2 learning (confidence and self-esteem, among others). The authors recommended including PLT as a compulsory subject in the curriculum, such as a semester-long course within the foreign language curriculum.

Stinson and Freebody (2006) explored the influence of Process Drama on oral skills. The project was called Drama and Oral Language (DOL) and included four Process Dramas. The participants were Singapore learners. Although schooling was in English, Students had a variety of other L1s. The participants were 140 high school students, divided evenly between comparison and intervention groups.

The research involved using PLT facilitators to implement the four Process Dramas. There were ten one-hour classes. The learners did an oral exam similar in structure to the Ministry of Education's (MOE) "N-level" exam. The examiners showed a picture to the students and asked questions (mainly descriptive and interpretive). Some of the topics were related to personal experience and opinion. Then the students' pre- and post-tests results were analyzed, and the authors reported significant improvement in the results obtained by the students who received the PLT intervention. In contrast, the students in the comparison group who participated in regular English classes during this time showed no significant development in oral skills.

In 2010, the European Union created the "Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competences" DICE international project (DICE Consortium, 2010) <http://www.dramanetwork.eu/>. The project lasted for two years, and it aimed to

investigate the effects of PLT on five of the eight Lisbon Key Competences: 1). Communication in the mother tongue, 2). Communication in foreign languages, 3). Social, and civic competences, 4). Learning to learn, 5). Cultural awareness and expression (p. 13). The other three Lisbon Key Competences are: 6). Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology; 7). Digital competence, and 8). Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship. The project hypothesized that PLT would have an impact on the first five of the eight competences referred to above.

The study took place in twelve European countries (Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Serbia, Portugal, Palestine, Norway, Slovenia, the United Kingdom, and Romania). It was multidisciplinary research where teachers, students, PLT practitioners, psychologists, external assessors, etc. worked together to investigate the effects of PLT in education.

There were 4475 young participants aged 13 to 16 years old. In the control groups, students did not participate in any PLT activity. However, in the treatment groups, there were more than one hundred different PLT activities. The DICE study gathered valuable data using qualitative research methods and demonstrated that PLT is a very effective way to improve competence in the areas mentioned above.

Results showed that participants of the study who took part in educational PLT activities liked going to school more. They had higher self-esteem and were more engaged in language learning tasks. They were more creative, empathic, tolerant, and respectful of minorities and students from other countries. The researchers noted how PLT altered other socio-emotional areas, showing how participants engaged with more humor and dealt with stress better. They were also more innovative and willing to start their own business. The students who took part in the PLT classes were also more willing to participate in other areas of artistic (drama, writing, dancing, music, films,

etc.) and cultural events. The subjects were found to have spent less time watching television or playing video games and more time engaged with people around them: the students spent more time at school and more time at home with their families, playing with friends, doing housework, etc.

Aliakbari and Behroz (2010) carried out a study about the use of role-play in the EFL classroom. The participants in the study were 60 sophomores (L1: Southern Kurdish, L2: English; ages 18 to 30 years old; 40 females and 20 males) studying in different universities in the city of Ilam, Iran. The participants took the IELTS speaking test, and, based on their scores, were ranked from the highest to the lowest.

Sixty students were split into two groups. The learners from the control group did not work with role-play cards and instead followed a traditional teaching method. In the treatment group, students were instructed to act based on the role-play cards. To measure students' speaking abilities, the study used IELTS speaking scores in its pre-test and post-test. The results of this study indicated that the treatment group who took part in PLT activities outperformed the control group. Role-play activities proved to be an effective technique that allowed learners to improve their oral skills and discuss a wide range of real-life language situations.

Torico (2015) carried out a study with second-year EFL high school students in Spain (L1: Spanish, L2: English). Out of two classes with 21 and 28 students each, 13 students were assigned to the treatment group and received PLT techniques, while the control group followed a more traditional methodology. Both groups took a pre-test to measure their initial speaking abilities, pre- and post-motivational questionnaires, and a final oral test to assess any possible improvement in the students' speaking skills. The results of Torico's research showed an improvement of the PLT students' communicative skills, particularly with regards to speaking and vocabulary.

PLT techniques turned out to be powerful instruments to develop a more authentic use of the target language.

Hui, He, and Ye (2015) assessed Hong Kong's young children's gains in creativity and their teachers' application of arts education after a one-year artists'-teachers' collaborative arts education project, which included (drama, visual arts, and integrated arts). The participants were 790 kindergarten children (L1: Cantonese, L2: English) from seven different kindergartens in Hong Kong, 217 parents, and 65 teachers who had had a 60-hour training workshop from professionals in PLT. Measures included the Test for Creative Thinking–Drawing Production, Story-Telling Test (STT), the subscales of parent-rated creativity, communication and motivational characteristics, and the adapted Scale of Application of Arts in the Classroom. The study had a pre-test and post-test design and used both quantitative and qualitative methods. The pre-test was scheduled within a month after the beginning of the program, and the post-test was scheduled within a month before the end of the one-year program. Hui et al. (2015) found evidence that PLT classes improved the participants' verbal creativity and communication skills. The participants who took part in the experimental class had more creative answers, narrated stories in more detail, and were, in general, more expressive than the participants in the control groups. The PLT and visual arts groups gained significantly more verbal creativity than those in the integrated arts group.

Chérrez Sacoto (2017) investigated whether PLT activities increased oral fluency among university students. The location of the study was Politécnica Salesiana University in Ecuador (L1: Spanish, L2: English). The control and treatment groups were comprised of 26 university students each. This longitudinal study of five months. Regarding the first part of the study, the researchers administered oral tests to the

students before and after the treatment of the project. These tests were based on the Key English Test (KET) at the A2 proficiency level. The aim was to assess six skills: pronunciation, task completion, fluency, vocabulary, comprehensibility, and language control. A questionnaire was also given to the students at the end of the school year to gather information. In addition, the researcher used classroom observations and video recordings. In this study, many activities were used (dialogues, role-plays, and many more PLT activities). The findings from the study showed that the use of PLT activities turned out to be positive because they helped improve the participants' speaking skills, confidence, and motivation and enhanced their socio-emotional skills.

Galante and Thomson (2017) carried out a study in Brazil with 24 EFL learners (L1: Portuguese, L2: English). This study was groundbreaking in the field because it used quantitative data and native raters to assess the influence of PLT in the participant's oral performance. There were two groups, a treatment, and a control group. The intervention lasted for four months. The participants of the treatment group took part in a PLT English language program while the control group received a traditional EFL course. The researchers measured the oral skills of fluency, comprehensibility, and accent by using five different tasks, which consisted of a picture narration (there were two tasks, in one the students had to use the first-person and in the other one the third-person was used), a video narration, a role-play, and a monologue. The tasks were administered before the beginning of the intervention and after the completion of the program. Speech samples were recorded and presented to thirty raters. The raters were all untrained native speakers of English from Canada, who listened to the samples from the participants and assigned numerical values to them. Results of the study show that PLT instruction could "lead to significantly larger

gains in L2 English oral fluency relative to more traditional communicative EFL instruction” (Galante & Thomson, 2017, p. 1).

All the studies briefly reviewed above investigated the benefits of using PLT in the classroom from a variety of perspectives and languages. They showed that the use of PLT activities, regardless of L1 or L2, turned out to be effective not only because they improved the learners’ linguistic abilities but also because they enhanced other positive psycho-social components like motivation and confidence. Moreover, they helped learners to study the language more interactively and engagingly. However, the main caveat of these investigations is that the vast majority of studies focused on the learning of English as a second or as a foreign language. This researcher was unable to find any quantitative study focused on the learning of Chinese. In the following section, we will specifically focus on research carried out on the connection between PLT and the learning and teaching of Chinese.

## **2.9 Experimental research on the use of PLT in the Chinese language classroom**

There are few documented research studies with PLT in the Chinese language classroom. Wang (2009) is considered a pioneer in using PLT with Australian university students of Chinese. She described a case study where she used PLT in her classroom at the University of Melbourne. It was the first to document and research the use of PLT in a CFL class. Participants were twelve intermediate-level university students of Chinese, nine from Australia (L1: English), two of Chinese origin (Malaysia and Hong Kong L1: English), and one from Japan (L1: Japanese). The design of the experimental PLT class consisted of three text types, which included a variety of styles (dialogue, short reading, vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, and

culture) and three communicative situations (dating, renting an apartment, and going to the post office). The duration of each PLT class was two hours. Each class had four stages: 1). Unit review, 2). Small group discussion to write a script and assign roles, 3). Rehearsal, and 4). Performance and discussion. After observing students in the classroom, the author concluded that this PLT class helped participants improve their language skills (writing, speaking, and listening) in Chinese and also helped them work more collaboratively, increased their motivation, and helped them learn about Chinese culture. It is a case study that lacks quantitative data. Yet, it is mentioned here because it was one of the first recorded uses of PLT in the CFL classroom.

Meng and Wan (2013) used theater plays to teach spoken Chinese to South Korean university students at the Confucius Institute at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in South Korea from March 2012 to August 2012. The beginner-level students had to adapt a famous South Korean folk story “*Chunhyangjeon*” or “Chunxiang Xinzhuan” (in Mandarin Chinese). Students had to read it, rehearse, perform, and take part in theater festivals. This Chinese speaking course was called “Learn Chinese by performing a play” and helped many South Korean students overcome their timidity and improve their Chinese speaking ability in a short time thanks to PLT. Similar to Wang (2009), this case study did not present specific qualitative and quantitative research data, but merely subjective observations of the benefits of this PLT program in the students.

Zhang (2013) carried out a case study using full-scale theater (also a form of PLT) for Chinese language teaching that was conducted in Bard College at Simon’s Rock in the USA with 40 high school students (L1: English; L2: Chinese). The PLT pedagogy process consisted of three phases: described as a text study, rehearsal and performance, and reflection. One Chinese theater piece named “*Shengguan Tu*” was

chosen for the students. The duration of the intervention was a whole semester and combined all different levels of Chinese language learning together for twelve weeks, with four hours of class per week. Three beginner students, eight intermediate, and three advanced students were selected to perform the play. At the end of the intervention, feedback from the students was collected. The qualitative results from questionnaires showed that they enjoyed the class and felt that this pedagogy helped them better understand the meaning of vocabulary and grammar structures in context. Results also indicated that PLT could integrate language and culture. In addition, the students felt that acting helped them understand more about Chinese culture. To conclude, the students agreed that PLT increased their ability to work together and their motivation. However, as mentioned above, all the findings were based on subjective answers from the students.

For his Master's thesis, Corderi Novoa (2015) also carried out qualitative research with an experimental PLT class in Chinese with international students at Beijing Language and Culture University in Beijing. The students attended the PLT class after their regular Chinese courses. The researcher used observation, questionnaires, and interviews as research methods. The intervention lasted two months. The eight experimental 2-hour classes were all recorded in a video. There were 64 students from different countries (L1: Arabic, Dutch, English, Farsi, Japanese, Korean, Spanish; L2: Chinese) and different Chinese levels (Chinese HSK level 1 to level 6). The students were grouped to have heterogeneous language levels and used collaboration to help each other complete the tasks. In the Chinese experimental classroom, the following PLT activities were used: Improvisation, movie dubbing, simulation, mime, games, and Process Drama. Students were filmed, recorded, and requested to answer a questionnaire after each class. The classes were later analyzed



from the following seven perspectives: activity type and name, student group arrangements, time, goal, rules of the different activities, language points, and feedback. The findings showed a high score in the PLT experimental classes, with very positive opinions about the methodology. The students' favorite activity was improvised theater games followed by movie dubbing and interpreting. The least favorite activities were T.V. shows and hidden camera videos. Overall, from a qualitative research perspective, the study showed that PLT helped the students improve their skills in Chinese and also fostered their creativity and their ability to work in groups.

Wen (2015) explored Process Drama to teach CFL at Miami University. Wen worked with college-level Chinese major or minor students who were in an advanced Chinese language class. The class was mixed-gender, and three of the participants were of Chinese heritage, while the other six students had no Chinese background. The researcher attended seventeen 80-minute sessions, which included video clips, tongue twisters, etc. Wen had two roles, as both class observer and performer of the Chinese skit. The skit was a short informal performance (a brief comedy sketch or a piece of humorous writing, especially a parody) intended to educate or inform. This Chinese skit was created to lead several class activities and to help during the performance.

The main goal of Wen's study was to explore the attitudes of the class instructor and the nine students. After the student's performance, the researcher interviewed the professor and the students individually about their perceptions in language learning through rehearsing a play. The findings showed that PLT was a way to integrate different skills in language learning in a less stressful manner. PLT was also good to engage in teamwork and helped the students' creativity.

Zhang (2017) carried out a qualitative study about the use of theater in a CFL classroom. Thirty-five intermediate level students of Chinese from different nationalities (Japan, U.S.A., Thailand, Canada, Philippines, Ukraine, South Korea, Czech Republic, Russia, Indonesia, Argentina, and Romania) took part in a theater class at Qingdao International University in China. They were all 20 to 35-year-old adults and were taking an Advanced Chinese class. The duration of the PLT class was 18 weeks, four hours of instruction per week. The researcher selected two plays in Chinese that students had to memorize, rehearse, and perform. The class was called “Reading, Adapting, and Creative Performing.” Four different groups of students were asked to fill in four questionnaires about their PLT courses that were administered at four different times during the course. Questionnaire 1 had seven students; Questionnaire 2 had eleven students; Questionnaire 3 had five students, and Questionnaire 4 had nine students. The questionnaires revealed a more than 90% satisfaction rate with the classroom. However, this study lacked more reliable and better-designed research instruments and was merely based on subjective answers from self-reported questionnaires. There is clearly a need for a quantitative approach to be able to establish a link between PLT instruction in the CFL classroom and learners’ potential L2 development.

Corderi Novoa (2019) used qualitative measures to assess the use of PLT in a CFL experimental open drama summer class at Beijing Language and Culture University. A group of 28 intermediate and advanced students from several countries (L1: Arabic, English, Farsi, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish; L2: Chinese) took an experimental open class in Mandarin Chinese using PLT instruction in August 2018. The session consisted of several PLT activities, including Improvisation and theater games. Students had to fill in a digital questionnaire form

after the class. Qualitative results from questionnaires show that students enjoyed the course and highlighted that learners felt that PLT could not only help them improve their language skills but also their creativity, the ability to cooperate, and the ability to adapt to new situations, thus confirming previous qualitative research in the field.

Since there is an urgent worldwide need to update the methodology of Chinese teaching, the studies briefly reviewed above could be considered first steps in promoting PLT based on findings from qualitative research. However, there are still many unanswered questions. Most studies have been carried out in ESL contexts, and no study so far has used a quantitative approach to the impact of PLT in the CFL classroom. Moreover, until now, no study has been carried out with Spanish learners of Chinese. Consequently, the current study aims to fill this research gap using quantitative measures to assess the impact of PLT on the oral skills of Spanish learners of CFL.

## **2.10 Conclusion**

**“We must all do theater  
to find out who we are  
and to discover  
who we could become.”  
Augusto Boal (1931 –2009).  
Brazilian author, playwright, and director.**

This chapter has reviewed the Chinese theatrical tradition and theater in Western civilizations while also exploring the concept of drama versus theater. It has introduced PLT and three of its implementations, namely, Improvisation, Process Drama, and the Glottodrama method. The chapter has also established links between learner collaboration fostered by PLT and the cognitive-interactionist and socio-

cultural approaches in the SLA field. The chapter has provided neuroscientific information about the benefits of collaboration. It has reviewed several studies that point to the fact that collaborative engagement through PLT positively influences students' motivation and learning. Consequently, dramatic activities and collaborative tasks that foster learner interaction have become a valuable tool for L2 acquisition.

Previous research studies on the use of PLT in the language classroom found that this methodology had a positive impact not only on the students' target language development but also on psychological factors such as motivation, self-esteem, and spontaneity, among others. As it provides more use of the L2, PLT seems to be more effective than traditional teaching methods.

However, the majority of research so far has been carried out in ESL contexts, and there are few documented research studies and experiences in PLT in the Chinese language classroom. A selection of these papers was reviewed. It could be seen that most studies lacked reliable and well-designed research instruments and were mostly based on subjective answers from students' questionnaires. Thus, there is a need for a more quantitative approach and rigorous experimental design to establish a link between PLT instruction in the Chinese foreign language classroom and learners' L2 development. To the best of our knowledge, no study to date has used quantitative research methods to examine the impact of PLT methodology on the oral skills of Spanish learners of CFL. The current dissertation tries to fill in that gap in the literature.

## **CHAPTER 3. ADULT L2 ACQUISITION AND ORAL PRODUCTION**

**“Oh, to be sure, we laugh less and play less  
and wear uncomfortable disguises like adults,  
but beneath the costume is the child we always are,  
whose needs are simple,  
whose daily life is still best described by fairy tales.”  
Leo Calvin Rosten (1908 –1997).  
Polish-born American humourist.**

This chapter focuses on topics relevant to adult L2A because our participants belong to that population. It will then define the three major constructs of oral proficiency that will be considered in the experimental work (fluency, comprehensibility, and accent); explain how they have been measured in previous works, and review experimental studies on those constructs that have been carried out in different contexts. The chapter also considers the importance of tasks in L2A and how their characteristics might have an impact on oral production.

### **3.1 Relevant topics in adult L2 acquisition**

SLA is “the scholarly field of inquiry that investigates the human capacity to learn languages other than the first, during late childhood, adolescence or adulthood, and once the first language(s) have been acquired” (Ortega, 2009, p. 10). L1, ‘mother tongue,’ or ‘first language’ refers to the language a child learns from parents or caretakers in the early years of life. L1 acquisition or L1A is the process of learning the first language. The terms ‘second language,’ ‘L2’, and ‘additional language’ refer to any language learned after the L1. SLA refers to the field and discipline, and the terms L2 acquisition or L2A refer to the process of acquiring additional languages. In what follows, we will provide relevant information about L2A by adults, which is the target population in our study.

### ***3.1.1 Adult L2 acquisition: Explicit and implicit learning***

The idea that childhood is the optimal time for language acquisition seems clear as all typically developing children learn the language(s) they are exposed to and reach native speaker competence as adults (Meisel, 2011, 2012). Lennenberg (1967) argued for a critical period for L1 acquisition closing around the age of 12 (around puberty). This idea was extended from its initial application to L1A to include L2A through numerous studies that support the idea of an inverse relationship between the age of first exposure and level of ultimate attainment. As Herchensohn (2013) points out, “The clear existence of such age effects does point to an advantage in language acquisition for younger learners, but it is not sufficient to establish explicit temporal limits for a biological critical period” (p. 316). A consensus currently exists among researchers that there is some evidence for a sensitive period (rather than a critical period) for L2A or several sensitive periods, depending on the subdomain of language we are referring to (phonology, morphology, semantics, and syntax); see Abrahamsson and Hyltenstam (2009).

Back in 1979, Krashen, Long, and Scarcella already established a clear distinction between children and adults learning an L2. Children are good at reaching native-speaker levels, which does not mean that they learn faster than adolescents or adults. The key distinction that needs to be made is between the speed of learning and ultimate attainment. Krashen (1982) pointed out that adolescents and adults can also acquire L2 quickly and always make progress faster than children do with the same amount of exposure. A possible explanation has to do with cognitive maturity (Yao, 2011). Different studies have shown that if the same learners are tested at different points in time after limited amounts of exposure, older learners do better. Still, after several more years, young starters go further ahead (Larson-Hall, 2008; Muñoz, 2006).

An interesting distinction when referring to L2A by children and adults is that of explicit versus implicit learning. Several authors (Polanyi, 1958; Reber, 1967) first researched the term implicit learning, or “learning without rules,” in a more naturalistic way. This way of “unconsciously” learning was exciting since learners “could not specify which rule they had learned, nor did they realize that they had learned a rule at all” (Piazzoli, 2008, p. 21). On the other hand, explicit learning refers to learning with the intervention of controlled attention, which is usually summoned by the provision of rules or the requirement to search for them (Ortega, 2009).

Research on implicit versus explicit learning suggests that children are better at learning an L2 with mere exposure and communicative interaction. In contrast, adults prefer explicit learning (learning with the awareness of the structures being taught); therefore, adults usually learn languages better in the classroom (explicit learning) while children are naturalistic learners (implicit learning) (DeKeyser, 2000; DeLuca, Miller, Pliatsikas, & Rothman, in press). In a traditional school context, with limited access to L2 input, adults and older children will outperform younger children (Birdsong, 1999; García Mayo & García Lecumberri, 2003; Harley & Wang, 1997; Marinova-Todd, Marshall, & Snow, 2000; Muñoz, 2001). Thus, “full-scale immersion is necessary for children to capitalize on their implicit learning skills, and formal rule teaching is necessary for adolescents and adults to draw on their explicit learning skills” (DeKeyser, 2003, p. 335).

From past research studies analyses, one could conclude that differences between children and adults in L2A are attributed to the long-held idea that children learn implicitly while adults learn explicitly. However, there is a new line of research suggesting that differences in implicit versus explicit L2 learning are not only caused by maturation but also influenced by instruction. Thus, teaching children aged five;

three to seven; eleven (n = 40) and adults (n = 40) an artificial mini-language under implicit or explicit training conditions, Lichtman (2016) showed that explicit instruction affects children and adults in the same way. In a study with English-speaking learners of French as a foreign language aged eight to nine (n = 111), Roehr-Brackin and Tellier (2019) showed that language-learning aptitude, measured with the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) (Carroll & Sapon, 2002), significantly predicted the children's achievement in L2 French. Specifically, in language-analytic ability (grammatical sensitivity + inductive language learning), the ability to infer linguistic systematicities from the input and make generalizations proved to be strongly predictive.

Regarding this debate and its relationship with PLT, O'Neill (1995) argued that in Process Drama, the process of learning could occur implicitly, as it usually focuses on meaning. The participants in this type of PLT share the task of building a story, relying on the implicit process of learning "through a series of episodes that are interlinked together" (Piazzoli, 2008, p. 21). Many PLT activity types focus on the story that participants create together using the target language in a clear context. There is a flow in the story with students interacting, and changes are described with a focus on meaning. Unless the teacher requires it, the participants are not limited to a specific set of grammar rules. Piazzoli (2008) reported that several adult participants in her PLT workshops were able to acquire new vocabulary implicitly.

However, PLT activities can foster explicit learning, too. For example, during Improvisation, the teacher can ask students to use a specific grammar rule. Thus, when the learners are acting the scene, they can explicitly use specific vocabulary or grammar points. One example is the PLT activity called "What are you doing?" (See



Chapter 4). In Glottodrama, the didactic unit is comprised of a series of grammatical rules and structures and vocabulary patterns that are explicit.

In short, PLT methodology can foster both implicit and explicit learning. It all depends on the focus of the instructor. If the instructor decides to promote explicit learning, they can choose to highlight a specific rule or structure that the learners can apply during the PLT activity (Improvisation, Glottodrama, Process Drama, etc.). Another option is to ask learners to focus on meaning in the stories during the activities and rely on implicit learning.

### ***3.1.2 The importance of the linguistic context***

People do not learn languages in isolation. Instead, people usually learn languages with and for others. Individuals who belong to a group or society create linguistic material that generates a linguistic environment surrounding the learners (Ortega, 2009). Many studies point out that the learning environment is a critical factor in language learning (Muñoz, 2014; Philp & Tognini, 2009). Research confirms that time spent in a context where the L2 is spoken, such as study abroad context, is beneficial for L2 learners (Pérez Vidal, 2014; Wood, 2010). However, when language learning happens in decontextualized environments inside a language classroom with little chance of daily interaction with the target language community because the language being learned is not the official one in the country, we are referring to foreign language environments. In a foreign language setting, students learn the target language formally as a subject at school in a context where most learners share the same L1 (Muñoz, 2006). Moreover, in a foreign language environment, the instructional framework and other contextual factors such as quality of input and

pedagogical approaches, rather than age, may constitute the determining factors underlying the success of these programs (Murphy, 2014).

As we mentioned in previous chapters, our experimental study was carried out in a foreign language context, the EOI Vigo, Spain. All our participants were L1 Spanish learners of CFL; thus, they had limited access to the target language outside the classroom. Table 3 summarizes the main differences between a foreign language context and a second language context, where learners do have access to the target language, which is official in the country.

<b>Foreign language context</b>	<b>Second language context</b>
Low-level input: typically 1-3 hours a week timetabled lessons	High(er) level input: more than just a timetabled lesson
No/restricted opportunities to outside class use of the target language	Regular opportunities to use the target language outside class
Focus on language as a formal system and as a subject	Focus is on content and language integrated across the curriculum

Table 3. Differences between SL and FL contexts. Pinter (2011: 87).

Students in second language contexts are exposed to more and varied types of input, both in oral and written format. Therefore, this impacts the chances to learn a language in more appropriate conditions, similar to the ones children learning their L1 have. Children in these contexts have more opportunities to use the target language in a natural way outside class, and programs integrate language and content across the curriculum. On the contrary, one of the main characteristics of mainstream foreign language contexts is that the learner has very few (three to four) hours of weekly exposure to the language and, besides that, no or very limited access to it outside the classroom. Contexts in which there is no exposure to the language outside the

classroom are referred to as “low input level contexts.” This situation is currently changing, though, due to greater access to the Internet, allowing learners to contact native speakers at least in virtual environments (Pinter, 2011). The Internet also offers a wide variety of materials for practicing the target language in a more autonomous way. Moreover, there is an increasing trend in the implementation of Content and Learning Integrated Learning (CLIL) programs (Nikula, Dafouz, Moore & Smit, 2016), in which students learn about a subject in the foreign language besides having their regular foreign language classes, increasing their weekly hours of exposure.

In Chapter 2, we discussed the multiple benefits of the use of PLT in the classroom. If the students are in a foreign language context, with low-level input and fewer opportunities to use the L2, PLT could be an excellent way to increase the students’ contact time with the language. PLT offers more opportunities for the learners to interact and to practice the target language in the classroom thanks to the meaningful PLT activities the teacher can implement. Moreover, PLT could engage the students in out-of-class extracurricular activities. Consequently, PLT could be beneficial for language learners since it could help mitigate the lack of exposure in mainstream foreign language contexts.

### ***3.1.3 Adult L2 learning from a humanistic perspective and its relationship with PLT***

Piazzoli (2008) mentioned that four different models in the humanistic school of thought have implications for adult language learning, namely, andragogy, experiential learning, reflective learning, and implicit learning. As we have already briefly referred to implicit learning above, we will summarize the main tenets of the other three models and their relation to PLT.

The first concept we will review is **andragogy** (Knowles, 1984), which refers to several principles in adult education. As Knowles (1990) summarized:

1. Need to know: there is a need in adult's minds to understand why they have to learn something. Adults learn best when they have some input into what, why, and how they learn.
2. Experience: the belief that we learn by doing, and also from mistakes. Their experience is used as a learning resource.
3. Self-concept: Adults have the need to be in charge of their own decisions related to learning and instruction. Therefore, teachers should inquire into the learner's needs and interests and frame their educational objectives based on them.
4. Readiness: Adults prefer to learn something that is closely related to their work or life instead of purely theoretical knowledge. Adults learn better when "what is to be learned" relates to the individual current life situation (p. 57).

The relationships between PLT and **andragogy** can be taken into account when teaching adults and using PLT. In PLT, adult learners should be informed about the goals of the activities (need to know). In addition, they learn by acting, by doing, by making mistakes, and improving (experience). Besides, learners in PLT are active learners and create scenes and stories with their classmates. They are in charge of their learning (self-concept). Moreover, performing in near real-life contexts can help students create memories of the L2 and better prepare them for the time when they will need to use L2 in real-life situations (readiness). Finally, PLT techniques such as Improvisation, role-play, simulation, etc. focus on solving relevant problems for the students they will face as part of society in different situations (useful).

Another model of adult learning is **experiential learning** (Lewin, 1946). Kolb (1984) argued that adults learn better through experience and provided a descriptive model of adult learning processes. Piazzoli (2008) described Kolb's cycle as follows:

When a ‘concrete experience,’ occurs, it is followed by a ‘reflection’ on that experience, and then followed by an ‘abstract conceptualization’ or a formulation of a rule to describe that experience; this, in turn, is followed by ‘active experimentation,’ or the construction of ways to modify the next occurrence of the experience. This, in turn, leads back to a new concrete experience (p. 20).

**Experiential learning** and PLT have a close relationship. In Process Drama, for example, several common points have a direct connection to Kolb’s cycle. The “concrete experience” that happens while students and the “teacher in role” are performing will create a “reflection phase” of that previous experience. Because the story is co-created by the students and the teacher collaboratively, this is also “active experimentation.” All this will create a “reflection phase” of that previous experience. Therefore, we can see how this adult learning theory can be intertwined with PLT.

Another adult learning model closely related to experiential learning is called **reflective learning**. Following Kolb’s model, Schön (1983) elaborated on reflective learning theory. This school of thought stressed the importance of the reflective phase of the model, that is, adults need to reflect on actions, and doing so will help them excel. Another key contributor to this line of thought was Mezirow (1990), who created what he called “**critical reflection theory**.” In his opinion, for adults to learn, they first need to reflect on previously learned knowledge to build new knowledge. Mezirow stressed that critical reflection should be one of the essential goals in adult education.

According to Piazzoli (2008), **experiential learning, reflective learning, and critical reflection learning** are all relevant to PLT. For example, Process Drama utilizes a reflection phase as a key point for learning. In that phase, students are asked to reflect on their acting, their emotions, and the words and sentences they used. It is an opportunity to build new knowledge. Kao and O’Neill (1998) suggest that in this phase, foreign language students have the chance to review the structures learned

during the PLT activity and make specific references and connections to the language acquired with an experiential approach. Moreover, in the Glottodrama didactic unit, there is the phase called “actor’s study,” where students are asked to reflect on their acting skills and how to improve their last performance.

## **3.2 Oral production in an L2**

### ***3.2.1 The importance of oral skills in an L2***

According to Harmer (2007), there are two types of language communication skills: receptive skills (listening and reading) and production skills (speaking and writing). In the former, the learners receive and process the information they are exposed to, although not passively, as it was traditionally claimed, as they entertain hypotheses when listening and reading. In contrast, in production skills, learners have to create language actively, to produce output. Of the four skills, speaking is probably the most important. When human beings meet, they speak more than they write. Consequently, oral skills are the most natural and common form of communication. Speaking should be one of the main goals for any student studying an L2 (Torico, 2015).

In many countries, such as China and Spain, learners spend many years from primary school learning English as an L2. Still, most of them will not achieve oral fluency by the time they graduate from high school or university. Several possible reasons exist. The first one is the type of instruction. Because grammar has a long written tradition, teachers have to spend their classroom time teaching their students how to write and read in an L2. This teaching style focuses on memorization and repetition. Teachers often speak most of the time while students listen without having

the opportunity to use the target language while in school. In addition, many L2 classrooms are in an FL environment with a lack of input and few opportunities to use the L2 outside the classroom. Moreover, a lack of motivation and other factors can contribute to the low level of L2 speaking skills many students have. Therefore, we can argue that speaking is one of the most challenging skills language learners have to face and also the one ability that urgently needs to be improved (Bueno, Madrid & McLaren, 2006; Segura Alonso, 2013).

In addition, the oral component in well-known standardized tests is sometimes critical to be obtaining a passing grade. Several international official exams include oral speaking tasks (monologues, dialogues, etc.). Some of those exams are the TOEFL®, the TOEic®, the IELTS®, for the English language; the DELF®, the DALF® for the French language; and the DELE for the Spanish language.

Furthermore, teachers devote time to prepare their students to develop their oral proficiency so that they can face real-life situations. As we have previously introduced in Chapter 2, PTL can help L2 learners find new ways to improve their oral skills. Also, PLT techniques can boost students' motivation, foster students' interaction, cooperation, and create specific situations similar to real-life, where they can speak and practice their L2 in a meaningful context.

In the current study, we will focus on oral speaking skills, and we will measure three constructs: fluency, comprehensibility, and accent.

### ***3.2.2 Measuring fluency***

There are several definitions of the construct fluency in the literature. Some authors defined fluency as “the capacity to use language in real-time, to emphasize meanings” (Skehan & Foster, 1999, p. 96). Others described fluency as the ability to

communicate efficiently (Koponen & Riggensbach, 2000). Derwing et al. (2004) described oral fluency as the fluidity or ease with which the L2 is spoken, and the perception of listeners of fluency in speech.

Derwing, Munro, and Thomson (2008, p. 360) point out that lack of fluency can be a severe problem in communication: “filled pauses, excessive pausing, pausing in inappropriate places, false starts, and a slow speaking rate can all affect the listener negatively.” Hence, fluency problems can be frustrating for L2 speakers and have a negative impact on communication (Derwing & Munro, 2001; Munro & Derwing, 2001). Therefore, being a fluent speaker of an L2 is one of the main goals of any L2 learner (Chambers, 1997; Guillot, 1999).

De Jong, Groenhout, Schoonen, and Hulstijn (2013) made an important distinction between *utterance fluency* and *perceived fluency*:

This is what Segalowitz (2010) calls *cognitive fluency*: the ability of the speaker to smoothly translate thoughts to speech. However, this ability cannot be measured directly. Therefore, researchers use measures of *utterance fluency* to gauge speech-planning difficulties that surface in utterances by counting the number of filled pauses, corrections, and repairs, and by measuring the duration of pauses. Yet another sense of fluency is *perceived fluency*, which pertains to the inference listeners (raters) make on the basis of the utterance about speakers’ ability (about speakers’ cognitive fluency) (p. 225).

In our research, we will focus on perceived fluency, as we followed several past studies that have also measured this type of fluency. Specifically, we followed previous studies by Derwing et al. (2004), Derwing, Thomson, and Munro (2006), Derwing, Munro, and Thomson (2008), Derwing, Munro, Thomson, and Rossiter (2009), Derwing and Munro (2013), Derwing, Munro, Foote, Waugh, and Fleming (2014), and Galante and Thomson (2017). These past studies specifically focused on the raters’ perceptions of fluency in terms of the flow and smoothness of speech rather than overall proficiency.



How has fluency been measured in previous L2 studies? Lennon (1990), Riggensbach (1991), Eijzenberg (1992), and Wennerstrom (2000) used trained raters' perceptions of the speech in L2 English with a scalar judgment to measure perceived fluency. By scalar judgment, we refer here to a numerical rating scale to measure a variable, such as fluency. This scale was given to the raters to assess their perceptions of fluency. Besides, Cucchiarini, Strik, and Boves (2002) employed ratings of phoneticians and other highly trained listeners to judge the perceived fluency of L2 Dutch speech with a scalar judgment as well. However, studies from Derwing et al. (2004), Derwing, Thomson, and Munro (2006), Derwing, Munro, and Thomson (2008), Derwing et al. (2009), Derwing and Munro (2013), Derwing et al. (2014), and Galante and Thomson (2017), successfully used untrained raters' perceptions of the speech with a scalar judgment to measure perceived fluency.

Following the example of Derwing et al. (2004), in the present study, we will consider L2 fluency to be a perceptual phenomenon. In order to measure *perceived fluency*, we first need to review the previous related studies and analyze the reliability of fluency judgments and compare trained and untrained listeners.

As we have described above, research studies showed that perceived fluency could be evaluated by using untrained raters and a scalar judgment score (Derwing & Munro, 2013; Derwing, Munro & Thomson, 2008; Derwing, Thomson, & Munro, 2006; Derwing et al., 2004; Derwing et al., 2009; Derwing et al., 2014; Galante & Thomson, 2017). They determined that the ratings from phonetically unsophisticated listeners were reliable and valid. Additionally, they told listeners/raters/judges to focus on “the flow of the language”— whether the speaker has problems finding words, using many *ums* and *ahs* or pauses, or whether the words come quickly. Raters were told not to worry about grammatical mistakes, as that was not relevant because they

do not measure proficiency or accuracy. Therefore, someone would be perceived as very fluent if the words just flow with no struggle. On the contrary, someone who is not perceived as fluent would have difficulty expressing their ideas or communicating effectively. We will use the same methodology to measure perceived fluency in our study.

### ***3.2.3 Measuring comprehensibility***

Research highlights the importance of L2 learners being in a conversation (Abercrombie, 1949; Gilbert, 1980). The term “comprehensibility” has been used in many different ways. For instance, Varonis and Gass (1982) define comprehensibility as “ease of interpretation” (p. 127). However, it is also important to point out that Smith (1992) introduced the concept of intelligibility (how understandable L2 speech is) and clarified that comprehensibility and intelligibility are two different concepts and regards the first one as being at a higher level of understanding. Smith’s view is shared by Munro and Derwing (1995a, 1995b).

As mentioned above, the present study will focus on perceived comprehensibility. We will follow Munro and Dewing’s (1995a) definition of perceived comprehensibility as to how much effort the listeners have to employ to process or understand speech stimuli. Moreover, Munro and Derwing (1995b) highlighted the idea of comprehensibility as how easy L2 speech is for a listener to understand. Later, Derwing and Munro (1997) defined perceived comprehensibility as “judgments on a rating scale of how difficult or easy an utterance is to understand” (p. 2). In addition, Derwing, Munro, and Thomson (2008) added, “comprehensibility is the ease or difficulty with which a listener understands L2 accented speech” (p. 360). All these authors agree that the concept of comprehensibility is different from intelligibility. Therefore, in our study, we follow the definitions stated by Munro and

Derwing (1995b), Derwing and Munro (1997), and Derwing, Munro, and Thomson (2008).

We will now introduce several comprehensibility measurements used in previous L2 studies. Varonis and Gass (1982) measured comprehensibility using judgments from raters and a Likert scale. They argued that the “main factor involved in judgments of pronunciation was overall comprehensibility or ease of interpretation” (p. 127). Previous research has investigated other factors that influenced comprehensibility, such as grammatical errors (Ensz, 1982), phonology (Gynan, 1985), and non-native patterns in pronunciation (Fayer & Krasinski, 1987).

Munro and Derwing (1995b) operationalized comprehensibility by asking untrained raters to listen to speech stimuli and assign perceived comprehensibility judgments using a 9-point Likert scale, in which 1 = extremely easy to understand, and 9 = impossible to understand (p. 79). Other numerous studies, mostly from the same research group (Derwing & Munro 1997; 2013; Derwing, Munro, & Thomson, 2008; Derwing et al., 2004; Galante & Thomson, 2017; Munro & Derwing 1995c; Munro & Derwing, 1999) have followed this methodology for measuring perceived comprehensibility and have shown that using a Likert rating scale to evaluate comprehensibility produced reliable scores. This methodology of measuring perceived comprehensibility “reflects the perceptions of ordinary listeners,” and, therefore, “comprehensibility ratings are useful for tracing L2 learners’ progress and in assessing the effects of pedagogical interventions” (Derwing, Munro, & Thomson, 2008, p. 360).

The conclusion from these studies was that there is a direct relationship between a speaker’s improvement in the performance of a randomized listening task and the perceived improvement by the raters in the L2 learner’s comprehensibility.

These previous studies show that perceived comprehensibility can be assessed using untrained raters and a scalar judgment score. They also determined that the ratings obtained from phonetically unsophisticated listeners were reliable and valid. As Derwing, Munro, and Thomson (2008) claim, “assessing this aspect of speech via a Likert rating scale yields reliable ratings that correlate well with intelligibility and processing time” (p. 360). The raters focused on perceived comprehensibility and concentrated on how easy or difficult the sample is to understand on a 9-point scale. The researchers asked the raters to pay attention to the effort it requires them to understand the speech. Therefore, in our study, we will follow the same methodology.

#### ***3.2.4 Measuring accent***

Having an accent is a typical consequence of L2 learning, especially when most learners start acquiring the L2 after early childhood (Piske, MacKay, & Flege, 2001). Research shows that listeners can detect an L2 accent even in short samples of speech of a few seconds long (Flege, 1984) or just by listening to a single word (Munro, Derwing, & Burgess, 2003). Therefore, we can assume that the L2 accent is relatively easy to detect. Moreover, several authors also argue that a foreign accent for most L2 learners is almost inevitable (Flege, Munro, & Mackay, 1995; Moyer, 2004). Consequently, many authors believe that eliminating foreign accent should not be the primary goal of instruction in L2. Instead, the main purpose of a language classroom would be to help learners become easier to understand in a conversation (Derwing, Munro, & Wiebe, 1998; Thomson, 1991, 2015).

Munro and Derwing (1995b) define foreign accent as “speech that differs in some noticeable respects from native speaker pronunciation norms” (p. 289). Derwing and Munro (2005) point out that accent is also a “complex aspect of language that affects speakers and listeners in both perception and production and, consequently, in

social interaction” (p. 379). To simplify, in our study, we follow the definition of accent in Munro and Derwing’s (1995b) study, as to how different an L2 speaker’s productions are from a local variety. In our study, the standard for a “local variety” we use is standard Mandarin Chinese accent.

We will now introduce several accent measurements used in previous L2 studies. Some past studies considered several factors affecting the degree of foreign accent in an L2, such as the influence of L1, aptitude for oral mimicry, length of time in the L2 environment, and strength of concern for pronunciation accuracy (Purcell & Suter, 1980); also considered were the age, gender, and other factors (Flege, Munro, & MacKay, 1995; Thomson, 1991).

Additionally, another group of researchers (Derwing & Munro, 1997; Derwing et al., 2004; Derwing, Thomson & Munro, 2006; Derwing & Munro, 2013; Derwing et al., 2014; Galante & Thomson, 2017; Munro & Derwing, 1995b; Munro & Derwing, 1999) found that untrained raters could reliably assess features of non-native speaker (NNS) speech, such as accent because the researchers obtained statistical evidence of a high degree of reliability across groups of listeners. In these studies, the raters had to evaluate accent using 9-point Likert scales (1 = no foreign accent and 9 = very strong foreign accent).

In other studies, Munro and Derwing (1995b, 1999) carried out a series of experiments in which they established a correlation between accent and comprehensibility; however, these two variables are also somewhat independent. Specifically, they pointed out that the term of comprehensibility is related to how easy a listener understands a speech. Therefore, it has a subjective component. Regarding accent, the Munro and Derwing (1995b, 1999) stress the importance of analyzing the degree of variation of the speakers’ output when compared to a target variety accent.

Nevertheless, accent and comprehensibility are in some measure different since Munro and Derwing (1995b) had also pointed out that “it is possible for a speaker to be heavily accented, while still being comprehensible” (Galante & Thomson, 2017, p. 118).

Derwing and Munro (1997) and Munro and Derwing (1999) found evidence in their research that raters regularly judged accent more severely than comprehensibility. It is interesting to point out that “even though all difficult to understand speech samples were rated as having a strong accent, many of those heavily accented samples were considered by untrained judges to be relatively easy to understand” (Munro & Derwing, 1999, p. 74). Therefore, having a strong accent is not an indicator that speech is hard to understand, according to Munro and Derwing (1995b):

A strong foreign accent does not necessarily interfere with intelligibility, although NSs (Native Speakers) may require extra processing time to understand NNS (Non-Native Speakers) speech, which may lead to lower perceived comprehensibility ratings. (p. 74)

Consequently, an accent is of less communicative value than comprehensibility because speakers may be highly comprehensible despite having strong foreign accents (Munro & Derwing, 1999). To summarize, Munro and Derwing do not state that the degree of a foreign accent never matters; what Munro and Derwing stress is the fact that having an accent in an L2 does not necessarily mean that the speaker will be difficult to understand.

In line with previous studies where listeners were asked to assess the degree of accent using rating scales, we will follow the procedures of Derwing et al. (2004) and Galante and Thomson (2017) by recruiting native, untrained raters to make accent assessments. We will also use 9-point Likert rating scales and ask raters to focus on evaluating how different the speakers’ accents are from a standard Chinese Mandarin accent. Raters will be reminded that accent is different from comprehensibility and that they might be able to understand somebody easily despite a heavy accent.

Once we have defined the three constructs that will be measured in our study (oral fluency, comprehensibility, and accent), the next section will review previous relevant experimental research that has focused on those three constructs.

### **3.3. Relevant empirical studies of L2 fluency, comprehensibility, and accent**

Our research follows several previous studies that have measured fluency, comprehensibility, and accent using untrained raters and a Likert scale for measurement. In this section, we will introduce and summarize those studies because of their importance since they are often referenced in this dissertation.

**Munro and Derwing (1995a)** studied the impact that foreign accent had on the time required to process speech. The participants were ten native speakers of Mandarin Chinese (five male and five female). They had studied English after puberty, had a TOEFL score of 500 or more, and had spent a minimum of one year in Canada. The researchers provided the participants with cartoons that “illustrated an amusing story and asked each participant/speaker to use language and describe what happened in the cartoons” (Munro & Derwing, 1995a, p. 78). Munro and Derwing confirmed that a Likert scale numbered from 1 (highest) to 9 (lowest) was effective for eliciting judgments of non-native speech. It was pioneer work in the field as it was the first study that used untrained raters combined with a 9-point Likert scale to assess foreign accent and comprehensibility. They demonstrated that untrained raters were reliable in their accent and comprehensibility judgments. They stressed that their methodology of using a 9-point Likert scale allows a more appropriate comparison between different data sets. Munro and Derwing (1995a) also examined how listeners perceived the speech of L2 learners regarding the variables of accent and comprehensibility. They

concluded that the Mandarin speech samples took longer to evaluate than utterances produced by the native speakers of English. Nevertheless, the authors did not find a link showing that a higher degree of accent had a connection to longer processing time.

**Munro and Derwing (1995b)** investigated the similarities and differences among accent, perceived comprehensibility, and intelligibility in the speech of L2 learners. This study was novel compared to Munro and Derwing's (1995a), as it included a new variable, intelligibility, and the use of new task types to measure the participants' oral skills. It is important to note that Munro and Dewing's (1995b) study was the first to make "a tripartite distinction among accent (how different an L2 speaker's productions are from a local variety), intelligibility (how understandable L2 speech is), and comprehensibility (how easy L2 speech is for a listener to understand)" (Thomson & Derwing, 2014, p. 2). The participants were ten native speakers of Mandarin Chinese (five male and five female), L1 Mandarin Chinese (the same as in Munro & Derwing, 1995a). They used an orthographic transcription task to measure intelligibility and a picture-description task of a page of cartoons that illustrated an amusing story to measure comprehensibility and accent. Following Munro and Derwing (1995a), they also used the same Likert scales to measure accent and perceived comprehensibility. Although intelligibility is another aspect of interest that affects pronunciation, because of the multiple factors and high degree of complexity of task design, other studies in the past had not investigated it with listener-based numerical scales. Unlike many other studies, Munro and Derwing (1995b) utilized spontaneous utterances rather than excerpts from reading passages. Therefore, they were able to investigate accent, comprehensibility, and intelligibility more directly. Theirs was the first experimental study demonstrating that "although the strength of foreign accent is indeed correlated with comprehensibility and intelligibility, a strong



foreign accent does not necessarily cause L2 speech to be low in comprehensibility or intelligibility” (Munro & Derwing, 1995b, p. 74). According to the authors, it is possible for a speech sample to be heavily accented while simultaneously being perfectly intelligible and highly comprehensible. Therefore, results suggest that the role of comprehensibility in accent judgments varies from listener to listener. Consequently, accent scores are not reliable indicators for perceived comprehensibility or intelligibility; thus, we should see accent as a secondary concern in language instruction. This paper had a significant impact on the field.

**Derwing and Munro (1997)** studied the variables of perceived comprehensibility and accent. In past studies by Munro and Derwing (1995a, 1995b), there was a small number of participants, mostly from similar backgrounds (L1: Mandarin Chinese). Those studies had only one variety of accent (Chinese Mandarin) and samples produced by participants who were all proficient in English. The novelty of Derwing and Munro (1997) was the increase in the number of participants, the variety of accents, and L1 backgrounds. In this study, there were 48 ESL students, 12 speakers from each of four language backgrounds: Cantonese, Japanese, Polish, and Spanish. Besides, the number of raters for this study was also higher than the previous ones. They used a picture-description task similar to the one in Munro and Derwing (1995b) and the same procedure for rating perceived comprehensibility and accent. However, this study featured a methodology improvement from past research because it had a language identification task where the authors asked the raters to recognize the L1 backgrounds of the speakers and classify them into one of the four language categories mentioned above. They had to circle which accent they thought the speaker had (Cantonese, Japanese, Polish, or Spanish) and then provide information about their familiarity with those accents.

The authors reported, from lower to higher ratings: accent < perceived comprehensibility < intelligibility scores. Besides, the outcomes of the study showed that there was a strong relationship among those three variables that seemed not to be affected by the speakers' proficiency level. Derwing and Munro carried out statistical correlational analyses and confirmed that these three dimensions are related but not equivalent. The results corroborated that accent does not always interfere with intelligibility. Also, the participants found Cantonese the most straightforward language to identify (62.5%), followed by Spanish (52.9%), Polish (49.6%), and Japanese (41%). Moreover, familiarity with a foreign language influenced the ability the raters had to identify the speakers' L1 and facilitated comprehension.

**Derwing, Rossiter, Munro, and Thomson (2004)**, compared to previous research, included the novelty of measuring the variable of fluency together with comprehensibility and accents. Moreover, the authors concluded that their ratings were reliable. Since this is a key study that has inspired the current work, we will describe it in detail.

The speakers were twenty high-beginner Mandarin-speaking ESL students (seven male and thirteen female). Their ages ranged from 26 to 38 years ( $M = 33.4$  years). Before arriving in Canada, they had previously worked in a professional job in their country. They had been living in Canada for more than six months, and they were all taking full-time English courses. Task 1 was an eight-frame picture narrative. Task 2 was a 2-minute monologue in which "the participants talked about the happiest moment in their lives" (Derwing et al., 2004, p. 663). Finally, task 3 was a dialogue, where the participant took part in a conversation with one of the researchers. In this last task, the non-native speaker had to "ask questions to the researcher about the

researcher's happiest moment" (Derwing et al., 2004, p. 663). Then, data were collected from three different tasks.

The raters were twenty-eight native speakers of English (six male and twenty-two female). All were undergraduate students in an ESL course at the Faculty of Education of the University of Alberta. Their age ranged from 21 to 52 ( $M=28.6$ ), and they all reported having normal hearing. None of the native English speakers had exposure to Mandarin Chinese language or accent. The rating procedure consisted of several steps. First, the listeners judged the fluency, comprehensibility, and accent using the 9-point Likert scale from previous studies (Derwing & Munro, 1997; Munro & Derwing, 1999). Score results showed that the participants performed worst on the picture description, while they had better scores in the monological and dialogical tasks.

Results for fluency ratings confirmed cross-task variation in the perception of L2 speakers' fluency. The raters assigned lower fluency scores to the learners' production in the picture-description task while the ratings for the monologue or the dialogue were significantly higher. One possible explanation was that the picture narrative was more constrained than the other two tasks because the participants had to describe the story that appeared in the cartoons. They had less freedom to use familiar vocabulary or structures. However, in the monologue and dialogue, students had more control of the content, and they could rely on previous experience and the other speaker for the conversation. In addition, the authors also found that fluency judgments for the monologue were similar to those in the dialogue. According to the authors, this latter finding was not surprising because both tasks had the same topic (talking about the happiest moment in life). Besides, the content of the story could be

the same or very similar in both tasks. Also, the participants could relate to their life experiences (birth of a baby, love, family, friends, etc.).

Results of the study confirmed that “comprehensibility and fluency ratings were highly correlated; fluency was more strongly related to comprehensibility than to accent” (Derwing et al., 2004, p.656).

**Derwing and Munro (2013)** evaluated oral skills in ESL adult immigrant learners. The novelty of the research was that it was a longitudinal study that lasted for seven years, the longest compared to the other studies. Another innovation was that it investigated comprehensibility, fluency, and accent in two different sets of participants: L1 Mandarin and L1 Slavic language speakers. There were twenty-two speakers: eleven Mandarin (five male and six female, age range 35 to 47 at Year 7, M = 42), and eleven Slavic language speakers (seven Russians and four Ukrainians, five male, and six female, age range 27 to 56 at Year 7, M = 45.8). The design of the study required several test points for data gathering (2 months into the study, and the 2-year and 7-year points). The task was a picture description, and the participants had to describe a cartoon story composed of 8 frames. It was a story about a man and a woman who mistakenly switched suitcases (the ‘suitcase narrative’) used in previous studies, such as in Derwing et al. (2004), for example.

The rating procedure was the same as that followed in previous studies of the speech dimensions summarized above (Derwing & Munro, 1997; Munro & Derwing, 1999). The main difference was the larger amount of data that was gathered throughout seven years. Moreover, this was the first study of this kind that had two sets of listeners (native and highly proficient non-native). Thus, it was the first time that non-native English raters participated in this type of research with the role of untrained judges. There were 44 raters: 34 native English listeners from Canada (12 male, 22 female)

and another 10 non-native Speakers but high proficiency L2 speakers of English (2 Mandarin, 2 Cantonese, and 1 each of Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese; 1 male, 9 female).

The main results of the study showed no changes in any of the variables for the Mandarin L1 speakers. Simultaneously, there was a notable improvement in fluency and comprehensibility in the Slavic language L1 speakers' group. Moreover, regarding the Slavic speakers, progress in accent only happened during the first two years. One possible explanation of these results would be the combination of different factors, such as willingness to talk in English, the influence of L1, the different ages, etc. Finally, nonnative English raters performed similarly to the native ones.

More recently, **Derwing, Munro, Foote, Waugh, & Fleming (2014)** carried out a pronunciation-training program conducted in a workplace setting with L1 Vietnamese immigrant workers. There were 7 participants (5 male and 2 female). Six of them had Vietnamese as L1 and the other one Khmer as L1. This study was different from previous research carried out by these authors mainly because of the participants, the environment, and the variables and tasks. The study used a pre-test–intervention–post-test design. To measure improvement in perception from pre-test to post-test, the researchers designed five tasks: cloze task, sentence dictation task, oddity task, word stress perception in a sentence context task, and word stress recognition task. We will comment here only on the L2 production tasks as they are the ones we will focus on in our study. The participants completed three production tasks at both the pre-test and post-test sessions:

Task 1: Picture description narrative task (“the green suitcase”): the participants viewed a set of eight cartoons and then recounted the story (monologue).

Task 2: Monologue task (“safety talk”): L2 speakers paraphrased the safety talk from their factory in their own words, with the opportunity to glance down at the points on the page (monologue).

Task 3: Sentence-reading task: read a list of 28 true/false sentences (Munro & Derwing, 1995c) for the intelligibility assessment.

Overall, the results of this study suggested that pronunciation instruction was beneficial for the participants. Another crucial key feature relevant to our current research is that this study used rater evaluations to investigate the changes in the participants’ L2 productions. Results show an improvement in comprehensibility. The raters indicated that both Task 1 (picture description monologue) and Task 2 (monologue) were easier to understand at the post-test than the excerpts from the pre-test. The NS raters observed no significant fluency variations on Task 1 or Task 2 and also found no evidence to prove that changes in fluency scores were caused by improvements in comprehensibility.

Regarding accent, there were mixed results: accent did not improve for Task 1 (picture description), but it improved for Task 2 (monologue). The raters gave higher comprehensibility scores for the suitcase task at the post-test; however, accent raters were lower. In Task 2, the safety talk monologue, the speakers’ performance on accent improved; nevertheless, at post-test, the raters assigned low accent scores even though comprehensibility had higher scores.

The final study reviewed in-depth is particularly relevant to this dissertation because **Galante and Thomson (2017)** used quantitative data and raters to assess the results of a PLT intervention. The study was the first of its kind in the field. Although this study was already briefly reviewed in Chapter 2, we must analyze it in more detail. The geographical context was the city of Sao Paulo, Brazil. The researchers used

schools of the same language institution and selected two classes at each school for four courses. The English level of the learners was pre-intermediate. The participants were 24 teenaged Brazilian EFL students (11 females, 13 males; L1: Portuguese, L2: English). Table 4 illustrates specific demographic information about the learners.

Treatment group: Drama-based EFL program	Comparison group: Traditional EFL program
Class 1: 5 m <i>M</i> age = 13.8 (range = 13–14)	Class 3: 2 f; 3 m <i>M</i> age = 13.6 (range = 13–15)
Class 2: 4 f, 4 m <i>M</i> age = 14.6 (range = 13–16)	Class 4: 5 f; 1 m <i>M</i> age = 13.3 (range = 12–15)

Table 4. Learners’ demographics from Galante and Thomson (2017).

The raters were thirty untrained Canadian English speakers. They were students at a Canadian university (29 undergraduates and one graduate). Twenty-seven of the evaluators were female, and three were male. Their ages ranged from 18 to 46 (*M* = 22.2 years). All were native English speakers except for one rater whose L1 was French but was a fluent English speaker from an early age.

Four different teachers taught one of the classes. Their ages ranged from 26 to 38 years old. All the teachers were females. They were all from Sao Paulo, Brazil; therefore, they were non-native English speakers, but they had several years of experience as English teachers. Moreover, the two teachers in charge of teaching the PLT program (i.e., the treatment group) lacked extensive experience in theater or drama. However, they had taught the non-PLT EFL program four times before this study and were confident and comfortable with the contents of the curriculum. The other two teachers were assigned to teach the comparison group based on their previous experience conducting oral presentation projects in other programs. The PLT

program (treatment) and EFL course (control) classes lasted for four months (74 hours total). Granger's (2004) Creative English 4 textbook was used for all groups.

The treatment group in Galante and Thomson (2017) used PLT activities that were created by one of the authors of the research. There were different types of drama games, including scripted, role-play, traditional theater, some performances and also Improvisation, Process Drama, etc. Each lesson was two hours long, and the teachers blended PLT with regular EFL activities. Furthermore, the students had to prepare a final theater performance at the end of the program. PLT techniques were used during 50% of class time, and there was a traditional format for the rest of the class time.

Regarding the control group, students did not take part in any PLT activities. Although both groups shared similar teaching materials, the teaching methodology was different. For example, with the traditional group, there were no performances and no explicit focus on the interaction in meaningful contexts. Instead of completing a final drama project like the PLT group, students in the traditional classes completed a final oral presentation. 50% of class time was used to help learners for their final oral class presentation.

Their research aimed to examine the impact of PLT instruction on participants' oral skills, comparing the improvements in the treatment and control groups. Specifically, the researchers studied the effect of PLT on fluency, comprehensibility, and accent, and whether there was a variation of fluency across different speaking tasks. To measure the variables mentioned above, the researchers used a pre-test and post-test design and five tasks that were exactly the same at Time 1 (T1) and Time 2 (T2). Task 1 consisted of a picture story of a young man who was not on time for the class. The participants had to describe this task in the first or third person. In Task 2,



the students were asked to watch a short video and then tell the story again. The content was about a little boy and a boy who were friends.

Task 3 was an improvised dialogue. The role of one of the researchers was an international student who just arrived at the school, and the student had to welcome this new classmate. Task 4 was a monologue. Each student had the same topic; they had to talk about the most unforgettable journey in their lives. The last task, Task 5, was identical to Task 1, but the students had to tell the same story using the other grammatical person they had not employed in Task 1. For example, if a student used the first person in Task 1, then the participant had to use the third person in Task 5. Therefore, the researchers made sure that every participant had used the first person to narrate one task and also the third person in the other task. Once all the speech samples were collected, they were assessed by the thirty raters who followed the scales and procedures employed in past studies (Derwing & Munro, 1997; Munro & Derwing, 1999).

Galante and Thomson (2017) found that the results for fluency showed that the traditional EFL group had significantly fewer improvements in fluency than the treatment group. Descriptive statistics showed that the treatment group performed best on fluency in Task 1 (first-person picture narration), but worst in Task 3 (role-play) at both T1 and T2. The control group performed best on Task 4 (monologue) at T1 and Task 5 (third-person picture narration) on T2 and performed worst on Task 5 (third-person picture narration) at T1 and Task 3 (role-play) at T2.

Second, results for comprehensibility suggested that the treatment group improved more had more gains than the control group. However, this impact had a much smaller effect compared to fluency. Descriptive statistics showed that the treatment group performed best at Task 4 (monologue) at T1 and Task 1 (first-person

picture narration) at T2, and worst at Task 3 (role-play) at both T1 and T2. The control group had the best scores in Task 1 (first-person picture narration) at T1 and in Task 5 (third-person picture narration) at T2; and the worst scores in Task 2 (Video narration) at T1 and Task 3 (role-play) at T2.

Finally, outcomes for the accent variable showed that both groups had very little improvement; moreover, both groups improved equally; therefore, the PLT intervention did not seem to have an impact on accent. Accent scores on descriptive statistics showed that, in general, there was no significant variation in the scores across all tasks. Both the treatment and the comparison group obtained the worst accent scores in Task 3 (role-play) at T1 and T2.

However, after a detailed statistical analysis, Galante and Thomson (2017) found that the differences in fluency, comprehensibility, and accent scores across the five tasks were not statistically significant.

To summarize, PLT had a more significant impact on fluency and a smaller effect on comprehensibility; however, neither the control group nor the treatment group improved accent significantly.

Table 5 below summarizes the following studies: Munro and Derwing (1995a, 1995b); Derwing and Munro (1997); Derwing et al. (2004); Derwing and Munro (2013); Derwing et al. (2014); and Galante and Thomson (2017).

	<b>Participants (Speakers)</b>	<b>Listeners (Raters)</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Target features</b>	<b>Scales</b>
<b>Munro &amp; Derwing (1995a)</b>	10 (5 male, 5 female) native speakers of Mandarin and 10 (5 m, 5 f) native speakers of English Age: 25 -41	20 untrained Native Speakers (NSs) of English (11 male, 9 female). Age: 19 – 45.	Assigning true/false judgments to a list of 25 true and 25 false sentences	Comprehensibility, and Accent	9-point scale 1=extremely easy to understand and 9=impossible to understand. 1=no foreign accent and 9=very strong foreign accent.
<b>Munro &amp; Derwing (1995b)</b>	10 Mandarin NSs (5 m, 5 f)	18 untrained native speakers (NSs) of English	Task 1: Transcription of utterance. Task 2: Description of a page of cartoons that illustrated an amusing story (not specified)	Comprehensibility, intelligibility, and Accent	9-point scale 1=extremely easy to understand and 9=impossible to understand. 1=no foreign accent and 9=very strong foreign accent.
<b>Derwing &amp; Munro (1997)</b>	48 ESL students. 12 speakers from each of four language backgrounds: Cantonese, Japanese, Polish, and Spanish. (18 m, 30 f). Age: 19 - 64 years (mean=29).	26 untrained native English listeners (6 m, 20 f). Age: 18-48 years (M=24.7)	Task 1: Description of a series of cartoons that depicted an amusing story about a “hunting trip.” Task 2: orthographic transcription of the recorded utterances	Comprehensibility, intelligibility, and Accent	9-point scale 1=extremely easy to understand and 9=impossible to understand. 1=no foreign accent and 9=very strong foreign accent
<b>Derwing, Rossiter, Munro &amp; Thomson (2004)</b>	20 high-beginner Mandarin-speaking ESL students (7 m, 13 f). Age 26 - 38 years (mean =33.4)	28 untrained English NSs (6 m, 22 f)	Task 1: eight-frame picture narrative “green suitcase” story. Task 2: monologue Task 3: a conversation with one of the researchers	Fluency, Comprehensibility, and Accent	9-point scale <b>Fluency</b> 1 = extremely fluent to 9 = extremely dysfluent. <b>Comprehensibility</b> 1=extremely easy to understand and 9=impossible to understand. <b>Accent</b> 1=no foreign accent and 9=very strong foreign accent.
<b>Derwing &amp; Munro (2013)</b>	22 participants 11 Mandarin (5 m, 6 f) and 11 Slavic language speakers (7 Russians and 4 Ukrainians, 5 m, 6 f)	44 raters. 34 native English listeners from Canada (12 m, 22 f) and another 10 nonnative speakers but high proficiency L2 speakers of English (2 Mandarin, 2 Cantonese, and 1 each of Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Ukrainian, and	Picture narrations (the “suitcase narrative”)	Oral fluency, Comprehensibility, and Accent	9-point scales <b>Fluency</b> 1 = extremely fluent to 9 = extremely dysfluent. <b>Comprehensibility</b> 1=extremely easy to understand and 9=impossible to understand. <b>Accent</b> 1=no foreign accent and 9=very strong foreign accent.

		Vietnamese; 1 m, 9 f)			
<b>Derwing, Munro, Foote, Waugh, &amp; Fleming (2014)</b>	7 participants (5 m, 2 f). Six of them had Vietnamese as L1 and the other one Khmer as L1.	28 English NSs from Canada (10 m, 18 f)	Pre-test and post-test design A) Perception: five tasks, B) Speaker production. 3 tasks: Task 1 the “suitcase narrative,” Task 2 a safety talk, Task 3 a true/false sentence-reading task	Oral fluency, Comprehensibility, and Accent	9-point scales <b>Fluency</b> 1 = extremely fluent to 9 = extremely dysfluent. <b>Comprehensibility</b> 1=extremely easy to understand and 9=impossible to understand. <b>Accent</b> 1=no foreign accent and 9=very strong foreign accent
<b>Galante &amp; Thomson (2017)</b>	24 pre-intermediate Portuguese speakers from Brazil (13 m, 11 f).	30 English NSs from Canada (3 m, 27 f)	Task 1 picture-description task of a boy who arrives late for class (either in 1 <sup>st</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup> person). Task 2: watch a short video and retell the story. Task 3. Improvised dialogue role-play with one of the researchers. Task 4: monologue Task 5: Repeat the first picture story task using the opposite grammatical person (first or third)	Oral fluency, Comprehensibility, and Accent	9-point scales <b>Fluency</b> 1 = extremely fluent to 9 = extremely dysfluent. <b>Comprehensibility</b> 1=extremely easy to understand and 9=impossible to understand. <b>Accent</b> 1=no foreign accent and 9=very strong foreign accent.

Table 5. Comparison of Munro and Derwing (1995a, 1995b); Derwing and Munro (1997); Derwing, Rossiter, Munro, and Thomson (2004); Derwing and Munro (2013); Derwing, Munro, Foote, Waugh, and Fleming (2014); and Galante and Thomson (2017).

### 3.4 The importance of tasks in SLA

Tasks have become central to L2 acquisition research and pedagogy. Researchers can manipulate different variables to test specific theoretical claims, and teachers can employ them and promote L2 acquisition and use (García Mayo, 2007; Ellis, Skehan, Li, Shintani, & Lambert 2020). This section will provide a brief overview of how tasks have been categorized in SLA, present the main characteristics of the tasks that will be used in our study and review previous research that has shown that task characteristics have an impact on L2 oral performance.

### ***3.4.1 Task definition and categorization***

Numerous definitions of the term “task” have proliferated over the years (Bygate, Skehan, & Swain, 2001; Ellis, 2009; García Mayo, 2007; Long, 1985b; Mackey, 2007; Nunan, 1989; Prabhu, 1987; and Willis, 1996). More recently, Ellis and Shintani (2014) established that tasks have to satisfy the following conditions:

1. The primary focus is on meaning.
2. There is some kind of gap that creates a need to convey information.
3. Learners need to rely on their existing linguistic resources (L1, L2) and their non-linguistic resources (body language, gestures, facial expressions, etc.) to generate output and understand the input.
4. There is a clearly defined communicative outcome of the task.

Ellis et al. (2020) agree with Ellis and Shintani (2014) and hold the view that the task should “create a context for the communicative use of the L2” (p. 10), and they stress the importance of tasks for L2 development.

There is extensive research that shows that tasks are essential for L2 development (Ellis, 2003; Long, 2015; Skehan, 2003, 2018; and Van den Branden, Bygate, & Norris 2009). Moreover, as tasks promote interaction, they generate more language learning opportunities. Tasks “prioritize meaning but do not neglect form” (Ellis et al., 2020, p. 12).

Several authors (Long, 1985b; Pica, Kanagy, & Falodun, 1993; Prabhu, 1987; and Richards & Rodgers, 1986) have classified tasks in different ways depending on the criteria used. Recently, Ellis et al. (2020) present the classification displayed in Table 6 below:

<b>Task type</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>One way vs. two way</b>	In a one – way information gap task, one participant has all the information and acts as a communicator for the other person, the passive receiver. In a two-way task, the information is divided into the participants, and therefore, they both have the roles of providers and receivers and take turns to communicate.
<b>Monologic vs. dialogic</b>	In a monologic task, one single speaker has to perform, and thus it usually involves a long, uninterrupted turn. A dialogic task is interactive, and therefore it requires the active participation of two or more speakers and typically results in shorter turns.
<b>Closed vs. open</b>	It can also be called single vs. multiple outcomes (or solutions). In a closed task, there is an individual (or a very limited set of results), and in an open task, there are several different possible solutions.
<b>Convergent vs. divergent</b>	A convergent task means that there is an agreed solution for the task; that is, the participants need to converge on an outcome. A divergent task allows participants to draw their individual solutions.
<b>Rhetorical mode</b>	The task involves describing, narrating, instructing, reporting, or arguing.
<b>Real-world vs. pedagogic</b>	Real-world tasks have an authentic situational context take from real life. Pedagogic tasks, instead, are designed in a classroom context.
<b>Input based vs. output based</b>	Input-based tasks require learners to understand oral or written information, whereas output-based need the student to speak or write to achieve the task goal.
<b>Focused vs. unfocused</b>	A focused task is created to make learners use a specific linguistic feature. On the other hand, an unfocused task is designed to elicit general samples of the language (Ellis, 2003).
<b>Collaborative vs. competitive</b>	A collaborative task requires participants to join efforts to have a common goal as if they were a football team plays together to win. On the other hand, a competitive task fosters a situation where there are winners and losers.
<b>Concrete or abstract language</b>	If the language used to complete the task refers to intangible qualities, ideas, and concepts, it is an abstract-language task. On the other hand, if the language employed in the task is more specific and can be related to tangible objects, people, or locations, then it is a concrete-language task.
<b>Simple or complex processing</b>	As opposed to simple processing, complex cognitive processing requires storing acquired knowledge in the long-term memory and then accessing that storage later. Examples of complex processes include concept learning, problem-solving, metacognition, critical thinking, and transfer.
<b>Simple or complex language</b>	The concept of simple or complex language here refers to the degree of difficulty that the linguistic demands of the task (phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, etc.).

Table 6. Features of different tasks, based on Ellis et al. (2020, pp. 11 - 12) and Richards and Rodgers (1986, pp. 234 - 235).

Table 7 below summarizes information about different tasks used by Derwing and colleagues in the research studies on fluency, comprehensibility, and accent reviewed above.

<b>Speaking Task Name</b>	<b>Task description</b>	<b>Task type</b>	<b>Author (s)</b>
<b>Dialogue</b>	Ask questions to the researcher about the researcher's happiest moment.	Two way, dialogic, open, divergent, rhetorical mode: arguing/descriptive/narrative, real world, opinion exchange, and unfocused.	Derwing, Rossiter, Munro, and Thomson (2004).
<b>Dialogue (Improved role-play)</b>	Perform a role-play with the first author in which you welcome an international student into your country	Two way, dialogic, open, divergent, rhetorical mode: arguing/descriptive/narrative, real world, opinion exchange, and unfocused.	Galante and Thomson (2017).
<b>Monologue</b>	Talk about the happiest moment in your life.	One way, monologic, closed, Rhetorical mode: descriptive / narrative, real world, and unfocused.	Derwing, Rossiter, Munro, and Thomson (2004).
<b>Monologue</b>	Perform a monologue about the best trip you have taken in your life	One way, monologic, closed, Rhetorical mode: descriptive / narrative, real world, and unfocused.	Galante and Thomson (2017).
<b>Picture description</b>	Describe a page of cartoons that illustrated an amusing story (not specified)	One way, monologic, closed, convergent, rhetorical mode: descriptive/narrative, output-based, pedagogic, and unfocused.	Munro and Derwing (1995b); Munro and Derwing (1999).
<b>Picture description ("hunting trip")</b>	Describe a series of cartoons that depicted an amusing story about two men who go on a hunting trip but who end up taking photographs of deer instead of shooting them.	One way, monologic, closed, convergent, rhetorical mode: descriptive/narrative, output-based, pedagogic, and unfocused.	Derwing and Munro (1997).
<b>Picture description (the "suitcase narrative")</b>	Describe a story from an eight-frame cartoon about a man and a woman who bump into each other and accidentally switch suitcases.	One way, monologic, closed, convergent, rhetorical mode: descriptive/narrative, output-based, pedagogic, and unfocused.	Derwing, Rossiter, Munro, and Thomson (2004); Derwing, Thomson, and Munro (2006); Derwing, Munro, and Thomson (2008); Derwing, Munro, Thomson, and Rossiter (2009); Derwing and Munro

			(2013); Derwing, Munro, Foote, Waugh, and Fleming (2014).
<b>Picture-description task (in first person and third person)</b>	Describe a picture story of a boy who was late to class, using either first or third person.	One way, monologic, closed, convergent, rhetorical mode: descriptive / narrative, output-based, pedagogic, and unfocused.	Galante and Thomson (2017).
<b>Safety talk (Monologue)</b>	L2 speakers have to give a safety talk by paraphrasing the safety talk from their factory in their own words, with the opportunity to glance down at the points on the page.	One way, monologic, closed, Rhetorical mode: reporting / descriptive, convergent Real world (team leaders and supervisors have to give a safety talk to their staff at the beginning of every shift)	Derwing, Munro, Foote, Waugh, and Fleming (2014).
<b>True/false sentence-reading task</b>	Read a list of 28 true/false sentences (Munro & Derwing, 1995c) Each sentence was constructed with simple vocabulary and grammar and obvious truth value, for example, “ <i>Many people like to drink coffee. Space ships use hot dogs for fuel</i> ”.	One way, monologic, closed, convergent, output-based, pedagogic, and unfocused	Derwing, Munro, Foote, Waugh, and Fleming (2014).
<b>Video retell</b>	Watch a short video about a friendship between a bird and a boy and retell the story.	One way, monologic, closed, convergent, pedagogic, unfocused Both Input-based (watching the video) and output based (retell the story), rhetorical mode: descriptive / narrative.	Galante and Thomson (2017).

Table 7. Detailed task type classification of speaking tasks used in several past studies.

We will now review the relevant literature related to how task type affects L2 speech production. Then we will analyze the tasks from past pertinent studies that we just introduced in Table 5, and finally, we will decide which speaking tasks we choose for our current study.



### ***3.4.2 Task characteristics and L2 oral production***

Research on tasks has examined different variables that have an impact on L2 oral performance. Various studies have shown that the lexical and structural complexity, fluency, and accuracy of learners' output can be influenced if different task design features are manipulated. Thus, researchers have studied the effects of planning time (Ellis, 2005), task familiarity (Samuda & Bygate, 2008), task complexity (Gilbert, 2005), and interaction (Mackey & Goo, 2007) on learners' oral production. In what follows, some studies relevant for our research will be summarized, and their main findings highlighted.

Foster and Skehan (1996) analyzed the oral performance of 32 18 to 30-year-old pre-intermediate ESL learners from different L1 backgrounds. The variables they measured were accuracy, fluency, and complexity. They asked the participants to finish three tasks with additional constraints (planned in detail, planned but not in detail, and not planned). The tasks, which were completed in dyads, consisted of a personal information exchange task, a picture description narrative task, and a decision-making task. The study showed a clear and direct impact of planning on the variable of fluency. The participants were less fluent in the dialogue (decision-making task) than in the monologue (personal exchange task); this is probably because the topic of the dialogue involved a higher cognitive load than the monologue. They found that planning increases output complexity. Nevertheless, planning and accuracy had the most interesting connection; the participants who had planned with fewer details produced the most accurate output. The researchers noticed that the narrative and decision-making tasks benefited more from planning than the dialogical personal information task.

In another study, Skehan and Foster (1999) used a narrative task to study the influence of processing conditions and task structure on accuracy, fluency, and complexity. The participants were 47 young adults with a variety of L1s. Their English level was low-intermediate. There were two tasks and four performance conditions. Each task was a video episode of Mr. Bean that was different from the other in terms of story structure. Task 1 was a video of Mr. Bean at a restaurant (a more structured narrative), and Task 2 was a video of Mr. Bean at a golf course (a less structured narrative). Thus, Task 2 had a higher degree of unpredictability than Task 1. In addition, there were four conditions for the participants: (1) they watch the video and tell the story at the same time; (2) they were told the plot of the story before having to narrate what they saw in the video; (3) students were allowed to watch the video one time, and later they tell the story while watching the video one more time; (4) participants watched the video, and after they had to retell the information of the story in their own time. The researchers discovered that the more structured the task was, the more fluent the output. In addition, they found that processing load had a direct influence on the complexity of language. Finally, the results of the study indicated that the variable of accuracy was related to the mutual impact that processing load and task structure had.

Skehan's more recent research led him to the *limited attention capacity* (LAC) model and the *trade-off hypothesis* (2015). The researcher claimed that, to foresee different outcomes related to performance, not only should task complexity be studied but also the different variations of specific task characteristics and conditions. Skehan (2015) stressed the concept of competition for attention, which is a limited resource. This concept generates a compromise between accuracy and complexity. If students are given time to plan before the task, the competition decreases.

Robinson (2007, 2011) formulated the Cognition Hypothesis of adult L2 acquisition, which is another key theoretical framework for assessing the influence of task demands on L2 production. Robinson (2007, 2011) proposed that students need to have the pedagogic tasks adjusted in terms of cognitive complexity to match the requests of real-world tasks progressively. Robinson (2003) argued that expanding the cognitive demands of tasks will help the students achieve a higher level of L2 complexity and accuracy, increase attention and memory, foster interaction, and impact learners' individual differences, which are key to task-difficulty perception.

Within that framework, Gilabert (2007) also studied L2 oral tasks, and specifically how changes in cognitive complexity can impact production. He noticed that when speakers correct themselves during the speech, they are focusing on accuracy as well as form. In the study, there were 42 participants (L1: Spanish) who studied English and had a lower intermediate level. The design consisted of three tasks: narration, instruction-giving, and decision-making tasks. For the study, each task had two different options for complexity: for the narration (with or without here-and-now), for the decision task (with or without reasoning demands), and the instruction task (with or without elements). In Task 1, the narration task, the participants had to look at two comic strips and narrate the story in both present and past tense. For Task 2, the instruction – giving task, the students used two city maps; they had to leave a message in a friend's voice mail giving them several different instructions (how to get to a specific location, pick up a pet from the veterinary clinic, buy flowers at a shop, buy food at a supermarket, etc.). In Task 3, the decision-making task, participants faced a situation where a building was on fire, and they had to make important and difficult decisions about the people they needed to rescue.

The results indicated that task complexity had an impact on self-repair behavior in L2 oral tasks. The participants produced more errors in Task 1, the narration, than in Task 3, the decision-making task in its simple version, or Task 2, instruction-giving in its complex version. However, Gilabert (2007) pointed out that the participants produced the highest number and frequency of self-repairs during the narration compared to the rest of the tasks. The author also acknowledged that, in the study, the participants did not have planning time before the tasks; therefore, they could have been busy keeping a fluent discourse and using the right structures and might not have had time to focus on monitoring for errors.

Levkina and Gilabert (2012) investigated the impact of task complexity on L2 production. In their study, they used four tasks (decision-making type) combined with four different conditions that presented a different degree of complexity in the cognitive sense. The outcomes of the research showed that there was a direct relationship between the elements of a task and lexical complexity but an inverse relationship with fluency. However, in their study, the previous changes in the task did not affect syntactic complexity or accuracy. A more recent study from Santos (2018) studied the task complexity and oral performance of Chinese learners of European Portuguese. The findings pointed to a clear link between the number of elements in a task and greater accuracy, lexical diversity, and longer clause length.

Mora and Valls-Ferrer (2012) compared the influence on oral skills of formal instruction (FI) in their home country and a study abroad (SA) in another country. The participants were 40 undergraduate Spanish EFL learners from the Catalonia region. 30 EFL learners ( $M = 18.36$  years old) were part of the treatment group. Their English level was advanced. In addition, 10 English native speakers ( $M = 20$ ) who were studying at another university in Spain were the control group. The researchers elicited

speech samples using interviews that happened three times over two years. Then, they assessed the data quantitatively for fluency, accuracy, and complexity. The outcomes of the study showed great fluency improvement during the SA period, moderate gains in accuracy, and no advances in complexity. However, results also revealed that during FI, there were no developments in any of the variables. Besides, they observed that “fluency and accuracy are enhanced through task features such as dialogic (as opposed to monologic) speech” (Mora & Valls-Ferrer, 2012, p. 615).

In another recent study, Hu (2018) investigated the influence of task type, task-type repetition, and performance conditions on oral L2 production. The participants were 144 EFL students (L1: Chinese). There were two tasks: to describe a map and to narrate a picture story. There was a control group and a treatment group. The participants were randomly split into pairs to do one of the tasks. After a week, they repeated the task via a different condition. Then, the researchers divided the treatment group between high and low-performance groups. These groups were called high criterion (HC) and low criterion (LC). The researchers told the participants of both groups that they would have to complete an extra requirement after finishing the task. The participants in the HC group had to perform a more complicated post-task activity than those in the LC group. The speakers in the control group did not have to take part in any post-task activity.

Results showed a clear impact of task type on oral production (complexity, accuracy, and fluency). Task repetition produced higher accuracy scores. The HC group showed an increase in fluency and phrasal complexity on all tasks; however, on the picture-narration task, data revealed a decrease in complexity. The author explained the results using Skehan’s (2015) LAC model.

As we will explain in detail in the following chapter, this study will use four different tasks: first-person picture narration, third-person picture narration, monologue, and role-play. Following Munro and Derwing (1995b), we did not ask participants to read passages or sentence stimuli aloud; instead, we chose to use tasks in which the participants had to produce spontaneous speech closer to real life. Reading-aloud tasks are not suitable for our study because these tasks “are not necessarily representative of learners’ productions when they must retrieve vocabulary and grammar” and “productions in a word list or sentences may not generalize to spontaneous speech” (Thomson & Derwing, 2014, p. 11). However, tasks such as picture descriptions, monologues, and improvised role-play dialogues are indeed suitable because they produce speech that better reflects naturally occurring output, and, therefore, allow us to examine the oral speaking skills under more realistic circumstances.

In what follows, we provide some general characteristics of the tasks used in our study.

### ***Picture-description task***

As seen above (Table 5), picture-description tasks have been widely used in past research studies that have measured oral production. Picture-description tasks have proved to be effective to elicit output speech from participants in many studies (Derwing & Munro, 1997; Derwing & Munro, 2013; Derwing, Munro, & Thomson, 2008; Derwing, Thomson, & Munro, 2006; Derwing, Munro, Thomson, & Rossiter, 2009; Derwing et al., 2004; Derwing et al., 2014; Galante & Thomson, 2017; Munro & Derwing, 1995b; Munro & Derwing, 1999). The raters had copies of the

pictures/cartoons so they could look at the visual stimuli while listening to the participants' recorded speech and make judgments.

In addition, Thomson and Derwing (2014) reviewed seventy-five L2 pronunciation studies and particularly their methods, tasks, and results. Several task types were used in those studies: naming words related to pictures without context (White, 2006), creating sentences based on a visual cue (Saito & Lyster, 2012), and picture-description tasks (Derwing, Munro, & Wiebe, 1998; Parlak, 2010). Compared to naming words or creating sentences from just a visual cue, the most effective task was the picture-narrative task because participants produced longer spontaneous outputs when describing a sequence of pictures. The production of unrehearsed, extemporaneous speech improved in studies where picture descriptions were used (Hardison, 2005; Perlmutter, 1989).

We find the approach to picture-description tasks in Galante and Thomson (2017) fascinating. These researchers asked students to perform two different picture descriptions, one using the first person and the other using the third person. In their study, the order of first and third-person narrations was counterbalanced across learners. As Kole (2011) describes:

When you're writing in the first person, you are immediately inside your character's head, heart, and body. When you're in the third person, even if you're in a very close third, you're on the outside of the body, seeing it from a bit of a bird-eye view (p. 1).

Research in visual imagery and social cognition suggests that people relive emotions more from the first-person perspective (McIsaac & Eich, 2004). On the other hand, third-person pictures represent events from a more distant perspective, in a more abstract way (Libby & Eibach, 2011, 2013). Therefore, using third-person instead of

first-person to picture and event “causes people to understand that event abstractly in terms of their general self-knowledge rather than specific details” (Carlston, 2013, p. 161).

Some studies on memory relevant for first- and third-person narration tasks distinguish between episodic versus semantic memory (Tulving, 1972). Episodic memory “involves representing the experience of a specific event” (p. 385); when we use the first person in a picture narrative, we are accessing episodic memory. On the contrary, “semantic memory involves representing abstract knowledge, apart from the experience of the event in which it was acquired” (p. 162), which means that when speakers narrate a story using the third person, they are accessing semantic memory (Carlston, 2013).

Therefore, following Galante and Thomson (2017) and based on the suggestions about research on visual imagery, social cognition, and memory, we think it will be beneficial to have two different picture-description tasks in our study. One that requires participants to use the first person and another that asks them to use the third person. This way, participants, depending on which person they will use to describe the picture, will have to use different structures to be more specific or abstract. They will have to access two different types of memory: episodic and semantic.

### ***Monologue task***

Monologue tasks have also been extensively used in previous studies. Perlmutter (1989) asked participants to read a passage from a text first and then do a one-minute oral discussion. Besides, Henderson (2008) asked learners to talk about a short story from their everyday lives. Thomson and Derwing (2014) reviewed several examples of monologic tasks employed by previous researchers. Derwing et al. (2014)



introduced a type of monologue that they called “the safety talk task.” It was designed specifically for that study and for the participants’ context because they were factory workers. We do not find “the safety talk task” useful since the context of our school and our participants are entirely different. Galante and Thomson (2017) employed another type of monologue task called the “video retell” task. In this task, students had to watch a video and then tell the story. We did not select this task because it would be difficult to find a video in Chinese that would be culturally transferable to western culture, and it could cause misunderstandings. We also preferred another type of monologue to ask the participants a question about a familiar topic. Therefore, we chose not to use a video retell task.

Derwing et al. (2004) compared learners’ fluency when they were telling a personal story (monologue) and when they were describing a picture. They concluded that their participants were more fluent in the former task than in the latter. Derwing et al.’s (2004) monologue task asked students to talk about the happiest moment in their life. Galante and Thomson (2017) told learners to perform a monologue about the best trip they had taken in their life. In our study, we have also decided to use a monologue task and ask students to describe their favorite city. This choice was related to one lesson from the curriculum, where they had to talk about the topic (see Chapter 4).

### ***Dialogue task***

The literature shows that opinion-exchange tasks (dialogues) engage learners in discussing ideas (Ur, 1981, 1984). A conversation is a two-way task, unlike picture descriptions or monologues, which are one-way tasks. Foster and Skehan (1996) analyzed learners’ performance after they completed a personal information exchange

(dialogue) and a picture story description (monologue). Their findings showed that the dialogic task led to more fluent speech compared to the picture description. Ejzenberg (2000) also reported that L2 learners' speech was less fluent when they performed a monologue and more fluent if they engaged in a conversation with a native speaker because they can relate to the language the native speaker produced in the dialogue. Moreover, Ejzenberg (2000) argued that the cognitive demands and difficulty are greater in monologic tasks, which could have a negative impact on fluency on fluency. Mora and Valls-Ferrer's (2012) study also pointed out that fluency and accuracy were better in dialogic tasks than in monologic tasks.

In previous studies that measured oral skills constructs, dialogues were used in two important studies, namely, Derwing et al. (2004) and Galante and Thomson (2017). In Derwing et al. (2004), the authors told participants to ask the researcher questions about the happiest moment in his/her life. In this case, both the student and the researcher were themselves; that is, there was no associated role. Galante and Thomson (2017) asked participants to perform a role-play with the first author, where one of them welcomes an international student into their country. In this case, there is a role-play; the role is a "foreign student" who comes into your country. We decided to follow Galante and Thomson (2017) and use an improvised role-play in our study. The task will include welcoming an international student from China to Spain (the author played this role). The participants will help the student answer his/her questions (see Chapter 4 for more details).

### 3.5 Conclusions

**“Wonder is the foundation of all philosophy,  
research is the means of all learning,  
and ignorance is the end.”**

**Lord Michel Eyquem de Montaigne (1533-1592).  
French Renaissance Writer, Moralist and Essayist.**

This chapter has provided information about relevant topics in adult L2 acquisition as the participants in our study are all adult learners. We dealt with issues related to explicit and implicit knowledge, the learning context, and humanistic perspectives on adult L2 acquisition.

The second part of the chapter was devoted to the importance of oral production in an L2 and to the definition of the three main constructs that we will analyze in this dissertation, namely, fluency, comprehensibility, and accent. We reviewed several experimental studies in which one or more of these constructs were measured, and we provided indications about the way they were assessed. The final part of the chapter focused on the important construct of the task, its definition, and possible categorization; most importantly, it focused on how task characteristics impact oral production. After reviewing the relevant literature, we also explained the choices of the tasks used in our study.

## SUMMARY OF PART I

Part I of this dissertation consists of three chapters. In Chapter 1, we described the importance of China and the Chinese language and highlighted the tremendous worldwide rise in the number of learners of Chinese and the number of schools that offer Chinese courses. We also mentioned the role of the Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms and analyzed the situation of Chinese learning and teaching in the world, specifically in Spain. We introduced the EOI in Spain, and the context and the status of foreign language teaching at EOI, focusing on the Chinese language.

In Chapter 2, we provided a summary of the two thousand years of history of the Chinese theatrical tradition and theater in western civilization. The differences between drama and theater were explained, and the concept of PLT was introduced. Several forms of PLT were also presented: Improvisation, Process Drama, and the Glottodrama method. We linked the emphasis on collaboration in PLT to the claims made by cognitive-interactionist and socio-cultural approaches in SLA. In addition, we emphasized the benefits of collaboration from a neuroscientific perspective and reviewed several studies that show that collaborative engagement through PLT positively influences students' learning. We also reviewed specific research on the multiple benefits of the use of PLT in the language classroom, which pointed to the fact that most studies have been carried out in ESL contexts, and there are very few documented research studies using PLT in the Chinese language classroom. Moreover, those few studies have methodological shortcomings, such as the lack of reliable and well-designed research instruments.

The chapter concluded with a call for more quantitative and rigorous research studies that could establish a sound link between PLT instruction and the learning of CFL.

Chapter 3 provided information about relevant topics in adult L2 acquisition since the participants in our study are all adult learners. We discussed issues relating to explicit and implicit knowledge, the learning context, and humanistic perspectives on adult L2 acquisition. The second part of the chapter was devoted to the importance of oral production in an L2 and to the definition of the three main constructs that will be analyzed in this dissertation: fluency, comprehensibility, and accent. Several experimental studies in which one or more of those constructs were measured were reviewed, and indications about the methods of assessment were provided. The final part of the chapter focused on the important concept of task, its definition, possible categorization, and, most importantly, how its characteristics affect oral production. After reviewing the relevant literature, we have also explained our choice of tasks used in our study.

## **PART II THE PRESENT STUDY**

## **CHAPTER 4. THE PRESENT STUDY**

**“Measure what is measurable  
and make measurable what is not so.”  
Galileo Galilei (1564- 1642).  
Italian Scientist.**

This chapter explains the rationale for the present study and the reasons we believe the research reported here will help to fill a gap in the literature on learning CFL. The chapter presents the research questions with their corresponding hypotheses, the setting, participants, and materials used, and the procedure followed during data collection. Because this research relied on information technology, we will go step-by-step, explaining procedures such as data collection, audio file processing, audio file uploading, online form design, data processing, rating procedures, integration of Jotform with Google Drive and Email (Gmail and Hotmail), and exportation of data first to Microsoft Excel and then to Stata statistical software.

### **4.1 Rationale for our study**

The current research aims to contribute to filling a gap in the literature. In recent years, due to the rise of China as a superpower, we can see a global increase in the number of learners of Chinese at all educational levels and ages. It is interesting to see that not only Confucius Institutes but also universities, public and private schools, and institutions around the world have started to offer Chinese courses in response to the increasing demand to learn about Chinese language and culture.

As we have seen in Chapter 1, in the last fifteen years, Spain has seen a tremendous increase in demand for Chinese language learning and teaching. Nevertheless, there are several problems related to the quality of Chinese language teaching, such as the lack of trained teachers and adequate engaging materials. One of

the main issues is the teaching pedagogy and methodology. Traditional Chinese teaching methods rely heavily on memorization and repetition, lacking communicative value. Most of the time, the materials used are not suitable for the learning styles of other countries.

Therefore, there is a need to develop a modern and more effective methodology for Chinese language teaching and learning. Specifically, students of the Chinese language need a more collaborative and engaging approach to help them improve their oral proficiency skills.

While numerous studies have been previously conducted to examine the benefits of PLT in language learning and teaching, this topic is far from being exhausted as a research area. As seen in previous chapters, Stern (1980), Kao (1994), Podlozny (2000), Catterall (2002), Ryan-Scheutz and Colangelo (2004), Stinson and Freebody (2006), the DICE Consortium (2010), Aliakbari and Behroz (2010), Torico (2015), Hui et al. (2015), Chérrez Sacoto (2017), and Galante and Thomson (2017) confirm that there is overwhelming evidence indicating that PLT fosters language learning. PLT also facilitates student interaction and collaboration and helps learners learn the culture along with the target language in a meaningful and enjoyable context. In addition, the students and the teacher collaboratively co-create new content using the target language.

However, the vast majority of research on the use of PLT in the classroom has been carried out with English as the target language. There are few documented research studies and experiences with PLT in Chinese language classrooms (Corderi Novoa, 2015, 2019; Meng & Wan, 2013; Wang, 2009; Wen, 2015; Zhang, 2013, 2017). A selection of these papers was reviewed in Chapter 2, but most of them lacked



reliable and well-designed research instruments. Many of their results were merely based on subjective answers from simple questionnaires.

Consequently, there is a need for studies with more rigorous experimental designs so that a link can be established between PLT instruction in the Chinese classroom and learners' L2 development. No study to date has used quantitative research methods to examine the effects of PLT on oral skills in CFL classrooms. The current dissertation tries to fill that research gap by carrying out a quantitative study on the impact of PLT on the oral skills (fluency, comprehensibility, and accent) of a group of Spanish learners of CFL.

## 4.2 Research questions and hypotheses

The specific research questions that we aim to answer in this study are the following:

- **Research question (RQ1):** Do learners in a PLT Chinese-as-a-foreign-language program experience greater gains in their oral performance than learners in a non-PLT Chinese course? Specifically, do they experience more significant gains in fluency, comprehensibility, and accent?
- **Research question (RQ2):** Do fluency, comprehensibility, and accent vary across different speaking tasks before and after the treatment (PLT program)?

Before the experiment was conducted, we developed the following hypotheses in anticipation of the aforementioned research questions. Specifically, the study will entertain two main hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1:** Following a PLT program will improve the learners' general oral skills in Chinese.

Based on the studies that we have reviewed before, we expect an overall better oral performance in the treatment group compared with the control group. We also expect more improvement in fluency than in comprehensibility. Accent might be the least affected construct (Derwing et al., 2004; Derwing & Munro, 2013; Galante & Thomson, 2017).

**Hypothesis 2:** There will be cross-task variation in oral performance.

Several past studies showed that there were lower fluency scores in the learners' production in the picture-description task compared with the monologue or the dialogue (Derwing et al., 2004). Also, Mora and Valls-Ferrer (2012) observed that fluency scores were better at dialogic tasks compared to monologic speech.

However, other studies obtained different results. For example, in Foster and Skehan (1996), fluency scores were lower in the conversation task than in the monologue. Also, Galante and Thomson's (2017) study, the treatment group performed best on fluency on the first-person picture narration task and the control group in the third-person picture narration task. Regarding comprehensibility and accent, in Galante and Thomson's (2017) study, both the treatment and control group performed best on the first-person picture narration task and the monologue task. Both the treatment and the comparison group obtained the worst comprehensibility and accent scores in the role-play task at T1 and T2. In another study, Derwing et al. (2014) indicated that the raters gave higher comprehensibility scores for the picture narration task and higher accent scores for the monologue task.

Some studies, like Derwing et al. (2004), showed that fluency ratings confirmed cross-task variation in the perception of L2 speakers' fluency.

However, in Derwing et al. (2014), the raters observed no significant fluency variations on Task 1 or Task 2. Besides, Galante and Thomson (2017) found that the differences in fluency, comprehensibility, and accent scores across the five tasks were not statistically significant. Consequently, based on the previous research, it is difficult to predict now the results for Hypotheses 2 of our research.

### **4.3 Setting and participants**

#### ***4.3.1 Location of the study***

Even though laboratory research can be informative, we agree with Thomson and Derwing (2014) in the following: “[...] regarding ecological validity, the ideal study should be conducted in a classroom” (p. 2). The current study was conducted in the metropolitan city of Vigo, Galicia (Spain), a town that has a population of over 300,000 people. The research was carried out at the EOI Vigo, which was built in 1988. It is well established and recognized by society and offers courses in German, Chinese, Japanese, Italian, French, English, Portuguese, Spanish as a foreign language, and Galician. In 2018, there were 6502 students and 102 language teachers. The Chinese department had approximately 100 enrolled students and three teachers.

#### ***4.3.2 Participants***

##### ***A) Students***

The sixteen participants of the study are the students of two different classes at Intermediate 2 (B1.2) level at the EOI in two different school years (2016–2017 and 2017–2018). The number of participants might seem very low at first, but it is necessary to understand the context of the study and Chinese teaching at EOI in Vigo.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the language courses offered at EOI schools in Spain are not compulsory. The minimum enrollment age is fourteen, and students who want to learn languages at a much-reduced fee in a government school can choose to study there. The number of students depends on the language and the city. The trend in recent years has been that EOI schools are losing students every year. Unfortunately, the EOI in Vigo is not an exception. The decrease in the number of students of all languages at the EOIs in Galicia has been a critical problem (La Voz de Galicia, 2016). For example, at EOI Vigo, the total number of students dropped from 6480 students in October 2016 to 5950 students in October 2018 (Atlántico, 2018; Faro de Vigo, 2016).

Graph 2 below illustrates the decline of students at EOI in the region of Galicia from 2014 to 2016.



Graph 2. Number of students at Official Languages Schools in Galicia.

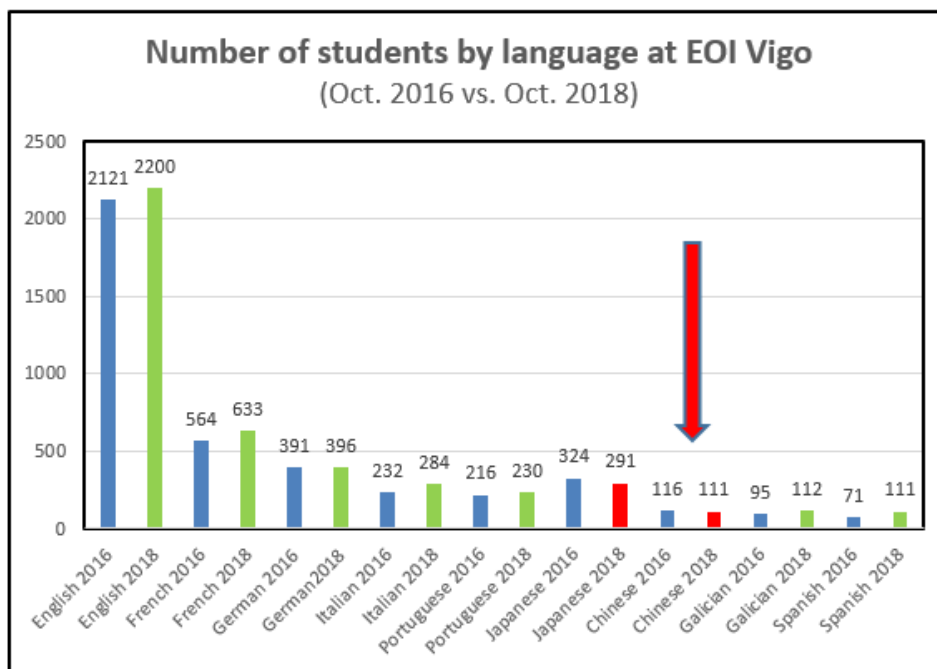
There seem to be several reasons for this trend. When the unemployment rate in Spain was high in 2010–2012, people had more free time and decided to study a new language in order to find a better job in the future; they, therefore, attended EOIs.

However, in recent years, 2014–2020, there have been fewer and fewer students. Also, there is a high percentage of students who enroll in a language course

and then quit after several weeks or months. Most of the students are adults and sometimes do not have enough time to commit three or four hours a week to attending school as they usually have work and family-related responsibilities. In some cases, the students do not like the methodology used by their teacher. Sometimes they cannot find a suitable parking space near the school, or they simply lack the motivation to continue studying. In summary, there are several reasons for this decline, and it is hard to find a solution (La Voz de Galicia, 2018).

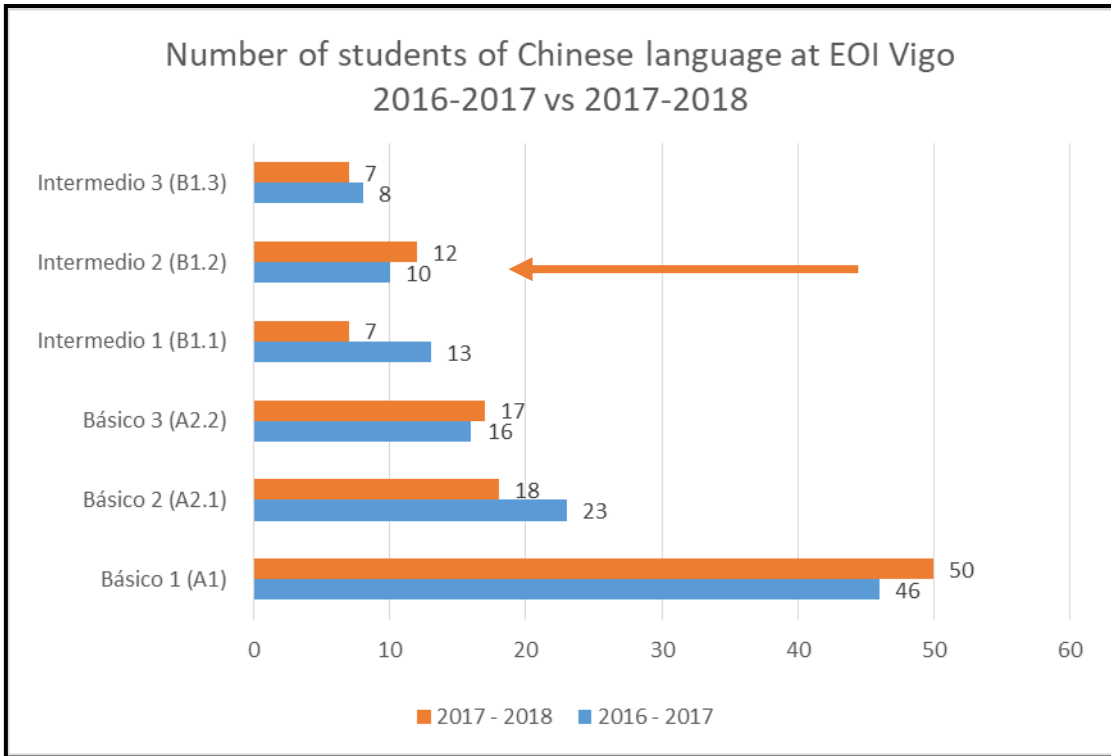
In addition, if we compare the number of students enrolled in each language at the EOI Vigo, we can see that more than 64% of the school’s students are enrolled in English, followed by French and German (Atlántico, 2018). The remainder of the languages, such as Chinese, Japanese, and Galician, are at a clear disadvantage. Therefore, there are only a few students who decide to study the Chinese language at the EOI, making it extremely hard to find a large number of participants for any research study involving this language.

Graph 3 below illustrates the number of students by language at the EOI Vigo.



Graph 3. Number of students at EOI Vigo (Oct. 2016 vs. Oct 2018).

Above, Graph 3 features the total number of students at all levels, from beginner to advanced level. However, as seen in Graph 4 below, if we analyze the number of students at the Chinese department at the EOI Vigo, around 80% of the students are beginners: *básico 1* (A1), *básico 2* (A2.1) or *básico 3* (A2.2), according to the levels described in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001). Moreover, the Chinese language has the additional challenge of requiring the learning of an entirely new set of characters; there is no alphabet. Hence, the learning curve for the first two or three years is steeper. Although it would have been possible to use some simple PLT games in Chinese at the beginner level (A1 and A2), these would have been very hard to design and apply, and the learner's output would have been too simple to be used in our current study. At the beginner level, it is difficult for the students to use improvisational techniques that require storytelling or descriptions. Therefore, for this study, we decided to choose an intermediate level group, *Intermedio 2* (B1.2). In fact, very few students make it to this level. From Sep 2016–June 2017, there were only ten students, and from Sep 2017–June 2018, there were only twelve students. Therefore, of the 10 to 12 students that make the whole learner's population for B1.2 level at EOI Vigo, we successfully managed to recruit eight students from each year, which represents approximately 80% of the entire student population. Graph 4 below illustrates the number of students of the Chinese language at EOI Vigo in 2016, 2017, and 2018. An academic year at EOI runs from September to June. Therefore, we compare September 2016 to June 2017 with September 2017 to June 2018.



Graph 4. Number of students of Chinese language at EOI Vigo (2016, 2017, and 2018).

In addition, if we compare the numbers of participants and raters in previous key studies in the field, we can clearly see that the trend in this line of research is to have a relatively small number of participants. Therefore, our research is no exception, and the number of participants can be considered as average.

However, as we will describe in detail below, we decided to recruit 75 raters, a remarkably higher number compared with previous studies, in order to obtain more accurate information about the outcomes. Table 8 displays a comparison of previous studies with the current research regarding participants and raters.

<b>Study</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Raters</b>
<b>Munro &amp; Derwing (1995b)</b>	10	18
<b>Derwing &amp; Munro (1997)</b>	48	26
<b>Munro &amp; Derwing (1999)</b>	10	18
<b>Derwing, Rossiter, Munro, &amp; Thomson (2004)</b>	20	28
<b>Derwing, Munro &amp; Thomson (2008)</b>	32	33
<b>Derwing, Munro, Thomson, &amp; Rossiter (2009)</b>	32	16
<b>Derwing &amp; Munro (2013)</b>	22	44
<b>Derwing, Munro, Foote, Waugh, &amp; Fleming (2014)</b>	7	28
<b>Galante &amp; Thomson (2017)</b>	24	30
<b>Current study: Corderi Novoa (2020)</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>75</b>

Table 8. Comparison of the number of participants.

Once we had decided to choose level B1.2, we asked the students whether they would like to participate in the study and those that agreed all signed a consent form.

Table 9 below presents information about the traditional and the treatment groups.

	<b>The control group (Traditional CFL program)</b>	<b>The treatment group (PLT CFL program.)</b>
<b>Number of students</b>	8 students; 3 f, 5 m.	8 students; 5 f, 3 m
<b>Average age</b>	<b>41.5 years</b> (range=28–53)	<b>38 years</b> (range = 27–54)
<b>GPA (Grade Point Average in Chinese language proficiency) of B1.1 level</b>	<b>8.86</b> (range 8-10) (highest grade: 10)	<b>9</b> (range 7-10) (highest grade: 10)
<b>Time of intervention</b>	From January 2017 to May 2017	From January 2018 to May 2018

Table 9. Participants in the control group vs. the treatment group.

The learner’s age range was 27–54. This kind of age group is the most common for learners of Chinese at EOIs. It is important to note that we were lucky to have two groups with the same number of participants, and similar average ages and grade point average (GPA). We understand that this is a positive feature of this study.



Both groups comprised fifth-year learners with an intermediate proficiency level in Chinese. This level is equivalent to B1.2 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The learners had already completed four years of prior study of the language at the school. Furthermore, to better compare both groups' language proficiency levels, students were asked to provide the final mean scores of their previous B1.1 level course. Their GPA mean scores in Chinese at the EOI were calculated. The results showed that both groups had very similar GPA scores before the start of the study. Here GPA refers to the students' official final score in Chinese in the previous academic year at level B1.1 that was registered in their academic transcript at EOI Vigo. The comparison group (traditional CFL program) had a GPA of 8.86 (range 8–10; highest grade: 10). The treatment group (PLT CFL program) had a GPA of 9 (range 7–10; highest grade: 10). Therefore, both groups had similar average GPAs before the PLT treatment started, this being very important if any improvement is to be attributed to the new methodology. As will be seen in Chapter 5, statistical tests also corroborated that both groups were similar regarding their grades in Chinese.

### ***B) Teacher***

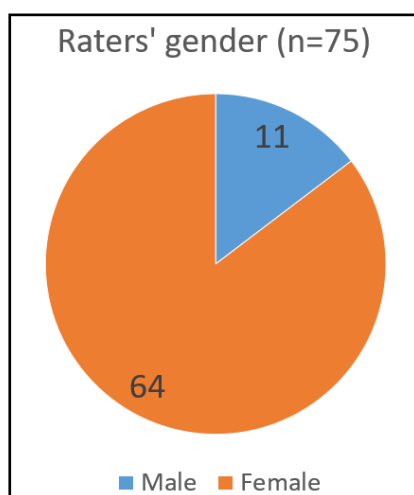
The same teacher, the author of the study, taught both groups for two academic courses (2016–2017 and 2017–2018). Thus, improvement in either the treatment or the comparison group could not be attributable to a change of teacher. For more information about the teacher and their experience in Chinese teaching and PLT, please refer to Appendix A.

### ***C) Raters***

For the study, we contacted 75 untrained raters to rate the speech samples generated by the participants. All of these were native Chinese speakers and were familiar with the Spanish accent. All had normal hearing. Due to the technological constraints of this study, and the limitations that the Internet has for Chinese users inside China, where the Chinese government blocks some software, we decided to contact only raters who were outside of China.

The 75 raters were all Chinese nationals who live and work outside of China. The author of the study met the raters at different conferences, academic events, and teacher training sessions in the USA and Spain during 2015 and 2018 (see Appendix B for details). The raters were all contacted by WeChat software (the Chinese equivalent to WhatsApp) and were asked to participate in the study using their cell phones. The raters were not paid for their participation in the study. As we have highlighted above, the number of raters in the current study was much larger than in previous studies in the field.

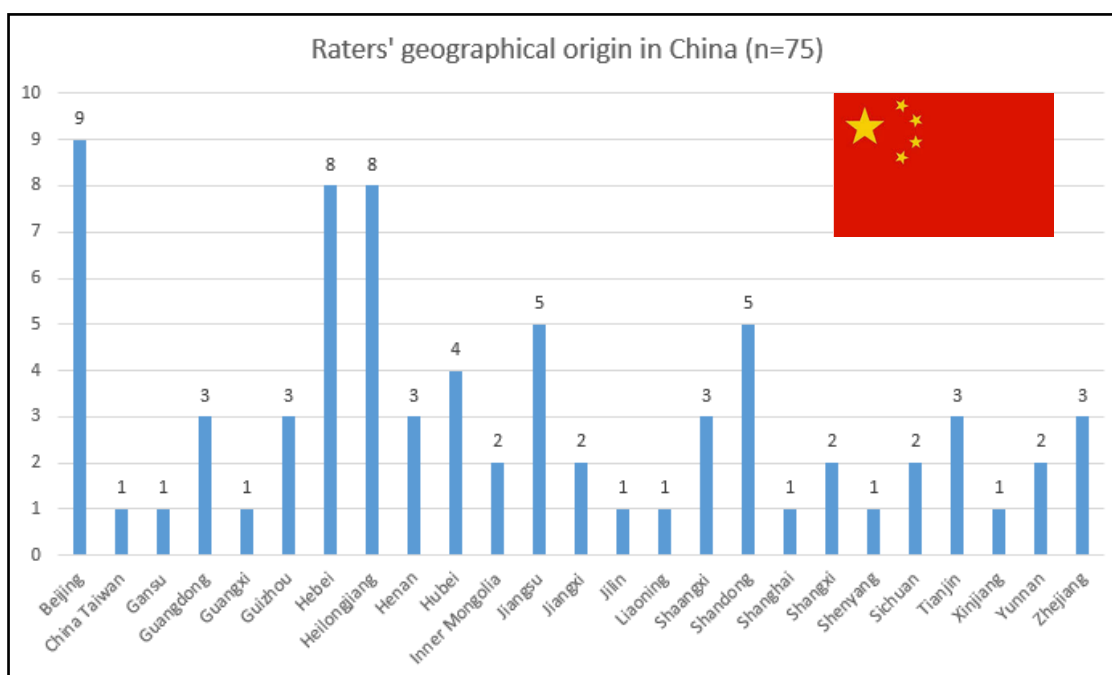
As for gender, there were 64 female raters (85.33%), and 11 male raters (14.67%). Graph 5 below provides information about the raters' gender:



Graph 5. Raters' gender.



The top five locations of the raters' origins in China were: Beijing (9 raters), Hebei (8 raters), Heilongjiang (8 raters), Jiangsu (5 raters), and Shandong (5 raters). They were all native speakers of Mandarin, and some of them spoke other Chinese dialects. Graph 7 below illustrates the different geographical locations of the raters' origins.



Graph 7. Raters' geographical locations of the raters' origins in China.

Regarding the raters' current location, 50.67% lived in Spain, 29.33% in Portugal, and 20% were located in the USA. The raters who were located in Spain spoke English (at least a B1 level) and also reported speaking Spanish (at least a B2 level), have been living in Spain for at least six months. The remainder of the raters (49.33%) were located outside of Spain. They all reported speaking English (at least a B1 level), and 20% of them were able to speak some Portuguese at the beginner level (A1–A2). The raters who were located outside of Spain were not able to speak Spanish and had never lived in a Spanish-speaking environment; none reported extensive

exposure to Spanish-accented Mandarin speech. In cases where the raters were living outside Spain, they had been living in their current locations for at least six months.

Regarding the raters' profession, 62 (67%) were Chinese language teachers, and 25 (33%) were graduate students in linguistics. Therefore, 88% of the raters have direct connections with Chinese language teaching and learning. The remaining 12% had other types of jobs. All of them were native Chinese speakers living outside of China. Table 10 below provides detailed information relating to gender, age, origin, and profession of the 75 raters.

1.	Male	31	Jiangsu	Chinese teacher (university)
2.	Female	22	Heilongjiang	Graduate student (university)
3.	Female	31	Shangxi	Interior designer
4.	Female	37	Beijing	Chinese teacher (UN)
5.	Female	49	Beijing	Editor
6.	Female	33	Jiangsu	Chinese teacher (university)
7.	Female	32	Shandong	Ph.D. student (linguistics)
8.	Female	48	Heilongjiang	Chinese teacher (university)
9.	Female	25	Xinjiang	Graduate student (linguistics)
10.	Female	42	Beijing	Chinese teacher (university)
11.	Male	51	Hebei	IT specialist
12.	Female	48	Beijing	Chinese teacher (university)
13.	Female	24	Hebei	Graduate student (linguistics)
14.	Female	40	Hebei	Chinese teacher (university)
15.	Female	52	Hubei	Chinese teacher (university)
16.	Female	26	Hebei	Chinese teacher (Hanban)
17.	Female	31	Guangdong	Chinese teacher (University)
18.	Female	50	Hebei	Chinese teacher (University)
19.	Female	39	Beijing	Chinese teacher (university)
20.	Female	37	Liaoning	Chinese teacher (university)
21.	Male	30	Jiangxi	Ph.D. student (linguistics)
22.	Female	28	Shangxi	Chinese teacher (private school)
23.	Female	28	Heilongjiang	Chinese teacher (university)
24.	Female	33	Zhejiang	Chinese teacher (private school)
25.	Female	28	Shandong	Chinese teacher (private school)
26.	Female	32	China Taiwan	Chinese teacher (primary and middle school)
27.	Female	50	Guizhou	Chinese teacher (university)
28.	Female	40	Jiangsu	Chinese teacher

29.	Female	23	Sichuan	Graduate student (Linguistics)
30.	Male	48	Hebei	Chinese teacher (high school)
31.	Female	28	Shandong	Ph.D. student linguistics
32.	Female	28	Guangdong	Post Doc student linguistics
33.	Female	27	Heilongjiang	Ph.D. student linguistics
34.	Female	50	Beijing	Chinese teacher (university)
35.	Female	29	Zhejiang	Chinese teacher (primary and secondary)
36.	Female	25	Guangxi	Chinese teacher (primary and secondary)
37.	Female	28	Inner Mongolia	International education company.
38.	Female	26	Guangdong	Chinese teacher (university)
39.	Female	31	Jiangxi	Chinese teacher (university)
40.	Female	25	Gansu	Graduate student (linguistics)
41.	Female	28	Yunnan	Chinese teacher (primary and middle school)
42.	Male	35	Guizhou	Chinese teacher (university)
43.	Female	26	Shandong	Ph.D. student (linguistics)
44.	Male	30	Henan	Chinese teacher (university) and Ph.D. student
45.	Male	37	Jilin	Chinese teacher (primary and middle school)
46.	Female	26	Hubei	Chinese teacher (University)
47.	Female	21	Shaanxi	University student. linguistics
48.	Female	30	Henan	Chinese teacher (University)
49.	Female	29	Guizhou	Chinese Ph.D. student (linguistics)
50.	Female	27	Heilongjiang	Graduate student in linguistics
51.	Female	33	Tianjin	Chinese teacher (Confucius)
52.	Female	27	Yunnan	Chinese teacher (university)
53.	Female	42	Zhejiang	Chinese teacher
54.	Female	33	Hubei	Chinese teacher (university)
55.	Female	24	Inner Mongolia	Graduate student (linguistics)
56.	Female	55	Beijing	Head of school- Chinese department (university)
57.	Female	32	Hebei	Chinese teacher (middle school)
58.	Female	46	Hubei	Chinese teacher (private school)
59.	Female	24	Tianjin	Ph.D. student (linguistics)
60.	Female	28	Beijing	Chinese teacher (university)
61.	Female	37	Shaanxi	Chinese teacher (university)
62.	Female	31	Tianjin	Postdoc student (linguistics)
63.	Male	25	Sichuan	Chinese teacher (primary and middle school)
64.	Female	26	Henan	Chinese teacher (primary school)
65.	Female	28	Heilongjiang	Digital marketing (Chinese)

66.	Female	42	Hebei	Chinese teacher (middle school)
67.	Female	24	Shandong	Graduate student (linguistics)
68.	Male	27	Shenyang	Teacher (dance)
69.	Male	29	Beijing	Hotel manager
70.	Female	24	Heilongjiang	Chinese teacher (middle school)
71.	Female	27	Shanghai	Fortune 500 company
72.	Female	23	Shaanxi	Chinese teacher (middle school)
73.	Male	26	Jiangsu	Host of events
74.	Female	25	Heilongjiang	Chinese teacher
75.	Female	30	Jiangsu	Ph.D. student (linguistics)

Table 10. Information about the 75 raters.

#### 4.4 Speaking tasks

As discussed in Chapter 3, previous research investigating the oral dimensions in L2A used picture story narration, dialogue, and monologue tasks to elicit speech samples (Derwing, Munro, & Thomson, 2008). Therefore, following two key studies: namely, Derwing et al. (2004), and Galante and Thomson (2017), we created the following speaking tasks similar to some of their previous designs:

Task 1. First-person picture narration of a boy who is playing soccer with friends and is injured.

Task 2. Third-person picture narration of a boy who goes back home to eat with his parents.

Task 3. Monologue about describing their favorite city.

Task 4. Improvised role-play dialogue with the teacher (the author of the study) in which the student welcomes a foreign Chinese learner into the country played by the teacher.

Learners performed the first three tasks individually. Each student was given a paper with each task and instructions on how to do it. As we will see below, the study had a pre and post-test experimental design. The same task was given to the

participants twice, one for the pre-test and another for the post-test. The author of this research (who was also the teacher) recorded the students' oral production. Participants produced output speech individually in Tasks 1, 2, and 3. However, in Task 4, learners have to interact with the author in a dialogue. Although the measurement did not include interaction for Tasks 1, 2, and 3, the intervention and teaching methodology of the treatment group included PLT activities that foster interaction and collaboration. The main argument we want to put forward in this dissertation is that PLT would help the treatment group improve oral skills and that improvement would be reflected in the findings from the post-test. Therefore, we expect that the four-month training in PLT of the treatment group will benefit the students both in the monologic and the dialogic tasks. In what follows, the four tasks will be described in detail.

#### ***4.4.1 TASK 1 First-person picture narration***

Task 1 was one-way, monologic, closed, convergent, descriptive/narrative (rhetorical mode), output-based, pedagogic, and unfocused. In this task, students had to look at four pictures that were part of a short story. They were asked to use the first person to describe the story; for example: "One day I was playing soccer with my friends when...". They were told that they could choose some of the characters from the story and talk about what had happened to them. These directions ensured that the participants used the first person in their speech.

The four pictures were organized in chronological order, with picture 1 being on the top left, as the beginning of the story, and picture 4 as the end of the story. The pictures for the story were adapted from a website with open materials. We decided to use drawings instead of real pictures because they were similar to the ones the students had in each lesson of their Chinese textbook. In addition, by using drawings, we wanted to avoid possible racial or cultural misunderstandings with the participants.



In picture 1, four children are playing soccer outside. There are some trees in the background. Two children are wearing what seems to be a soccer team's t-shirt, and the other two children are wearing a different t-shirt, suggesting that the children are from two different teams. There is also a soccer ball. Picture 1 would therefore generate speech of a more descriptive nature, and there could be some actions.

In picture 2, the two main characters who were playing soccer in Picture 1 happen to come into physical contact, which could be interpreted as the cause or reason for pictures 3 and 4. According to the rules of soccer, it is not allowable for one player to do something illegal to hurt the other player; however, the accident could have happened by chance and not on purpose. The students have to decide what happened in picture 2. Thus, picture 2 precipitates the expression of actions and stories.

In picture 3, one of the soccer players is down on the field and might be hurt or injured. Next to him, there is another player from the rival team. Therefore, picture 3 represents a turning point for the story. Students are expected to decide what happened according to the pictures.

In picture 4, we see two men carrying the injured soccer player off the field in a hammock. In the background, we see another player from the same team as the injured one who goes onto the field to replace the injured soccer player. There is also a referee in the background. This picture is the ending of the short story.

To summarize, with Task 1, we wanted the students to focus on orally describing stories, people, actions, and the connectors to link different parts of the story. Figure 6 below illustrates the pictures for Task 1.

**Please pick one of the characters in the picture  
and tell the story using the first person.**

**Preparation time: 1 minute.  
Speaking time: 1 minute.**



Figure 6. Task 1 (adapted from <http://www.screenr.com/4BM7>).

#### ***4.4.2 TASK 2 Third-person picture narration***

Task 2 is one-way, monologic, closed, convergent, descriptive/narrative (rhetorical mode), output-based, pedagogic, and unfocused. In this task, students had to look at four pictures that are part of a short story. They were asked to use the third person to tell the story, for example: “A mother and her son are talking on the phone. The son is at work. The mother is at home...” The participants were told to use the third person in their speech. The pictures’ chronological order, the origin of the picture, and the reason why we decided to use drawings were similar to Task 1, explained above.

In picture 1, we can see two different characters. A woman is talking on the phone. She looks old. Then, there is a young man also talking on the phone. He looks as if he is at work in an office or a company. Therefore, picture 1 is of a more descriptive nature, and there could be some actions. Also, students are free to describe the content of the conversation, which was not given.

In picture 2, the young man is wearing a coat and carrying two cases. He is walking towards a door that has several typical Chinese New Year ornaments. We can assume that in picture 1 he was talking to his mother and that he is coming back home to visit his parents during the Chinese New Year Holiday (similar to “coming home for Christmas” in Western cultures, but more complex as it is part of a long, ancient and rich tradition in China). Here, there is a cultural component to the task. Thus, picture 2 is key to expressing actions and stories.

In picture 3, we can see the mother and her son smiling. The son seems to have some kind of gift or present in his hand. Therefore, picture 3 is also a confirmation of the story: the boy was coming home for the Chinese New Year.

In picture 4, we see a family dinner: the mother, the son, and the father. The father is a new character who has not previously appeared in the other pictures. Thus, this picture represents the ending of the short story.

Consequently, with Task 2, using the third person, we wanted the students to focus on orally describing stories, people, and actions while using the right connectors. Figure 7 illustrates Task 2.

Please look at the following picture and tell the story using the third person.

Preparation time: 1 minute.

Speaking time: 1 minute.

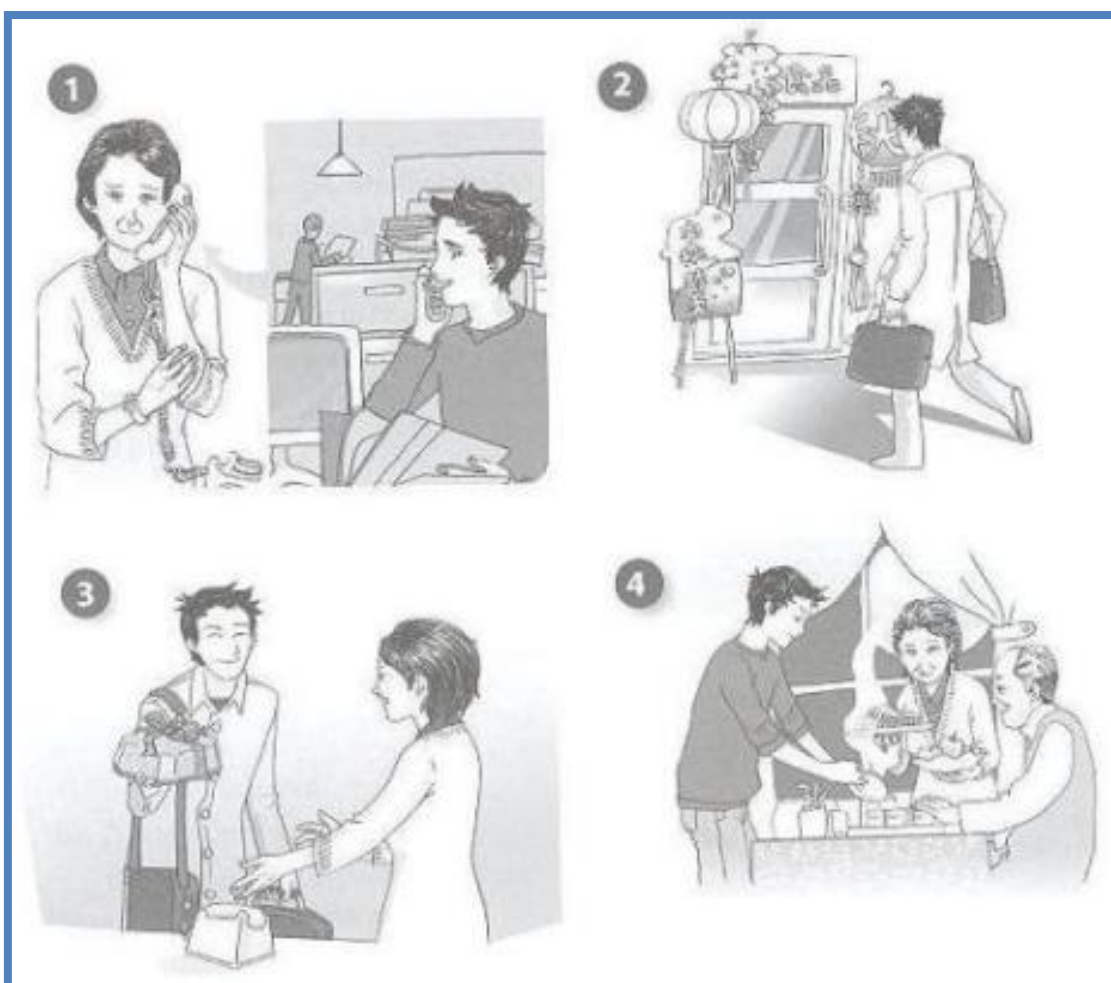


Figure 7. Task 2 (adapted from <http://shschinesefan.weebly.com/story-narration/first-post>).

#### 4.4.3 TASK 3 Monologue

Task 3 is one-way, monologic, closed, rhetorical mode: descriptive/narrative, real-world, and unfocused. In Task 3, participants have to produce a 1-minute monologue that describes a place (city) that they like. This topic was consistent with the syllabus for their level. Figure 8 below illustrates Task 3.

**Please introduce one city that you like and present it in Chinese.**

**Preparation time: 1 minute**

**Speaking time: 1 minute.**

**TASK 3 Monologue**



Please introduce one city that you like and present it in Chinese.

请您用中文介绍一下您喜欢的一个城市。

Figure 8. Task 3 (adapted from [https://www.freepik.es/vector-gratis/puntos-referencia-coloridos-todo-mundo\\_6598529.htm](https://www.freepik.es/vector-gratis/puntos-referencia-coloridos-todo-mundo_6598529.htm)).

#### ***4.4.4 TASK 4 Role-play – improvised role-play dialogue***

Task 4 is two-way, dialogic, open, divergent, in rhetorical mode: arguing/descriptive/narrative, real-world, involving opinion exchange, and unfocused. In Task 4, students had to produce an improvised role-play dialogue with the teacher. The teacher plays the role of a Chinese exchange student who just arrived in the city of Vigo. The student plays himself/herself. Since they do not know each other, the dialogue usually starts with the Chinese exchange student initiating the conversation, often involving a question about the city or public transportation. The exchange of personal information in the dialogue is also expected. Figure 9 below illustrates Task 4.

**No preparation time.**

**Speaking time: 1 – 2 min**

**Task 4 Improvised roleplay dialogue**



The teacher and the students engage in a role-play simulation. The teacher portrays the role of a Chinese University student who just arrived at Vigo in Spain and the student plays as himself.

老师和西班牙学生的角色表演。老师是一个刚到西班牙维戈市的一个中国留学生。西班牙学生演得是自己。

Figure 9. Task 4 (adapted from <https://tinycards.duolingo.com/decks/5ndtzt9y/asking-directions-ic-lesson-13-vocab>).

## 4.5 Methodology

The study had a pre-test, treatment, and post-test design with a treatment group using PLT techniques for four months and a control group that followed a traditional method also for four months. For both groups, classes were held three times a week; each class lasted 90 minutes. In total, each group had 72 hours of instruction.

### 4.5.1 *The traditional comparison program (control group)*

The traditional classes were taught from January 2017 to May 2017. The textbook was the *New Practical Chinese Reader 3* (Liu X., 2003). This book follows the Chinese traditional teaching methods: the focus was on forms, with memorization of grammatical structures and lists of new words. There were frequent reading exercises, as well as listening to texts. In addition, the textbook contains many

exercises to practice grammar structures, such as filling in the blanks. Some multimedia videos and songs were played to the students. In the classroom, frequent drilling exercises were used to help students with their tone and pronunciation.

#### ***4.5.2 The experimental PLT program (treatment group)***

The PLT classes were taught from January to May 2018. Some of the PLT activities were created by the author or adapted from other PLT workshops. Common PLT activities were: simulation, role-play, Improvisation, Glottodrama, etc. In most classes, students were asked to perform in front of their classmates using Chinese. The focus was on oral communication and interaction. Usually, there was a warm-up with the use of words and physical movement/games to engage students at the beginning of the class. Later, there were also multimedia videos of commercials, short films, TV shows, etc., used as a pretext to create a context for students to act in Chinese. In the second part of the class, students were exposed to several improvised PLT activities. The classroom atmosphere was relaxed and encouraging.

#### ***4.5.3 Comparing the control group versus the treatment group***

The syllabus at the EOI Vigo for *Intermedio 2* level (B1.2) for the 2016–2017 and the 2017–2018 academic years consisted of eight units that were studied from September until May. The intervention in the current study was from January 2017 to May 2017 for the control group, and from January 2018 to May 2018 for the treatment group. We will describe and summarize Units 5–8, which were taught in the classroom with each group.

In the following, we will describe the teaching methodologies used in both groups in those last four units. Our goal is not to provide the reader with detailed lesson

plans but to describe selected activities that show the different pedagogical approaches used in the control and treatment groups. In the syllabus, units are matched to lessons from the textbook. As mentioned above, the official book for this course was *The New Practical Chinese Reader 3* (NPCR 3) (Liu X., 2003), published by the Beijing Language and Culture University Language Press. The theoretical syllabus plan is the concept of pedagogical units, and the concept of each lesson is the actual corresponding part of the textbook. Therefore, in the explanation of the methodological pedagogies used in our study, we will refer to *lessons* as the specific implementations of the objectives, goals, and requirements of the different *units*.

The syllabus and textbook were the same for the 2016–2017 and the 2017–2018 academic years, and, therefore, the content was the same for both groups. As mentioned above, the teacher was also the same for both groups, and the only difference was the methodological approach. Table 11 displays the units, topics, and corresponding lessons in the textbook and the timing.

<b>Unit and topic</b>	<b>Lesson from the (NPCR 3) textbook</b>	<b>Time</b>
<b>Unit 1: Food</b>	Lesson 28	September – October
<b>Unit 2: Leisure time</b>	Lesson 30	October – November
<b>Unit 3: Description of a place</b>	Lesson 31	November - December
<b>Unit 4: Personal information</b>	Lesson 32	December
<b>Unit 5: Nature and environment</b>	Lesson 33	January – February
<b>Unit 6: Travel and Health</b>	Lesson 34	March
<b>Unit 7: Work and business</b>	Lesson 35	April
<b>Unit 8: Climate and weather</b>	Lesson 36	April – May
<b>Review</b>		May

Table 11. Summary of the units taught in Intermedio 2 level (B1.2) at EOI of Vigo for the 2016-2017 and the 2017-2018 academic years. Source: <http://www.eoidevigo.org/seccion/106/Programacions.html>



## **PLT activities**

The author of the study created some of these PLT activities. Others were adapted from Improvisation and drama workshops, courses, shows, and masterclasses from Beijing Improv, Beijing BIG Bilingual, Washington Improv Troupe WIT, The Momento Impro Santiago, Akira Valero, Alfonso Rivera, Omar Ferrín, Encarni Tarumba, Nuria Badía, the Jamming Show and Improv School Madrid, Omar Argentino, Calambur Teatro Madrid, Miguel Ángel Moreno, El Club de la Impro Madrid, Edgar, Emilio Méndez, Manfred Schewe, Tomás Motos, Erika Piazzoli, Stefanie Giebert, Eva Göksel and other actors, improvisers, books, videos, and resources. PLT activities are meant to be shared and to benefit all potential users.

## **Unit 5: Nature and environment (Lesson 33) - Syllabus**

### **Main objectives**

Be able to talk about nature and the environment.

Be able to search the Internet and find related information.

### **Functional Objectives**

Express possibility.

Express worry.

Take part in a conversation.

### **Lexical and semantic objectives**

Nature.

The environment.

Activities to protect nature and the environment.

## Grammatical objectives

The verb 到 (arrive) with the meaning of 达到 (arrive at). The structure (不 not).

到 (arrive) + number + measure word.

How to express an action that is happening now with the structure: 正/在/正在 +

Verb+ 呢 (Present continuous -ing).

The potential complement (PC): V + 得/不 + PC (了/下/到/动/上/着).

To express that something or somebody appeared or emerged: V + 出来.

The reduplication of nouns, measure words, and numeral-measure word phrases.

Conjunctions: 既...又..., used to denote two concurrent qualities or situations.

Compound Complement of Direction 复合趋向补语 (review from B1.1).

## Idiomatic expressions

你可能不知道 (perhaps you don't know) // 看得出来 (...once can tell/see (that)...

it is evident (that)...) // 想不到 (it's unexpected (that)...) // 跟 + Noun + (没) 有关

系. ((doesn't) has/have something to do with...) // 说得很对 (You are correct).

## Text types

Read a newspaper article.

Debate about the problem with the environment.

Write a script.

Read a simple poll.

## Sociocultural aspects

Chinese New Year.

Protecting the Panda bears.

Table 12 below summarizes and compares the two different approaches for Unit 5, Lesson 33.

Unit 5, Lesson 33.	Control group. Traditional.	Treatment group. PLT
<b>Teach the 2 Texts from the lesson</b>	Preview the text individually at home before the text. Read the text in the classroom by different classmates. Explain new words from the text.	Learn the text in a performative way: using the YouTube video version. Dubbing, performing of the text, students reflect on the location, the characters, the relationship, and their objectives. Use of Glottodrama techniques.
<b>Teach 38 New words and 13 supplementary words</b>	Drilling of new words. Repetition and explanation of new words (PowerPoint and images)	Improvised short games where the students are asked to incorporate the new words. PLT activity: “007 ! .”
<b>How to express an action that is happening at the moment with the structure: 正/在/正在 + Verb+ 呢 . (Present continuous tense)</b>	Describe pictures using grammar structures Read the book, grammar section of the lesson. PowerPoint presentation with a list of examples. Videos. Grammar exercises: fill in the gaps, sentence pattern drilling.	PLT activity: “What are you doing?”
<b>The potential complement (PC): V + 得/不 + PC (了/下/到/动/上/着).</b>	Idem as above.	PLT activity: “Improvised scenes (songs).”
<b>To express that something or somebody</b>	Idem as above.	PLT activity: “I am a tree.”

appeared or emerged: V + 出来		
Write about the environment.	Write a composition in Chinese about the topic.	Ask students to write a script and make a video a Ex. Mount A <i>Guía</i> Vigo.
Chinese New Year.	Videos about Chinese New Year	“180 tai DV” and Process Drama

Table 12. Selected examples. Compared methodology control vs. treatment for Lesson 33.

### Lesson 33 – Traditional control group. Teaching methodology.

There are two Texts, with 38 new words and 13 supplementary words.

Students have to preview the text individually at home before coming to class.

During the class, several students have to read the text in the classroom. Figure 10 illustrates an example of the Chinese text form the lesson.

王小云：没问题，我们一步一步地往上爬吧。

宋 华：你们可能不知道，灵山是北京最高的地方。有位女科学家发现，这儿的自然环境跟西藏高原差不多。

林 娜：好啊，今天我们来参观灵山的藏趣园，就可以欣赏一下西藏的高原景色了。

马大为：藏趣园是不是国家公园？

王小云：不是。藏趣园是那位女科学家建立的一个植物园，年年都有很多中小学生在来这儿过夏令营。<sup>①</sup> 学生们在这样的环境里，既能欣赏自然景色，又能接受保护环境的教育。

Figure 10. Example of text one. NPCR 3. Lesson 33. Topic; nature and environment.

The teacher explains new words from the text, using drilling, sometimes also PowerPoint presentations, and images. Students are asked to repeat the new words.

Consider an example of those words in Figure 11 below.

生词		New Words	
1. 保护	V	bǎohù	to protect 保护小孩,保护老人,保护字画
2. 环境	N	huánjìng	environment 保护环境,生活环境,学习环境,城市环境
3. 空气	N	kōngqì	air 空气好,空气不好
4. 步	N	bù	step 一步一步地,两步,走一步
5. 科学家	N	kēxuéjiā	scientist 女科学家,重要的科学家
科学	N	kēxué	science 学习科学,科学工作,科学活动
6. 高原	N	gāoyuán	plateau, highland 高原景色,西藏高原
7. 建立	V	jiànli	to build, to establish 建立学校,建立医院,建立博物馆,建立剧团,建立国家公园

Figure 11. Example of new words. NPCR 3. Lesson 33.

Students have to practice pattern drills about the Grammar point: the complement of result. Figure 12 below illustrates the pattern drill exercise.

(1) 他 <u>看得懂</u> 这篇文章吗? 他 <u>看得懂</u> 。	看 见 山上的松树
	听 懂 这个故事
	借 到 那本小说
	记 住 这么多的生词

Figure 12. Example of grammar pattern substitution exercise NPCR 3. Lesson 33.

Students had to listen to extracts from the texts.

Classroom activities: 1. One student provides a word, and other students use the “gen + N/Pr + you / mei guan xi” pattern to construct a sentence.

2. One student provides a word, and other students use the “ji..., you...” pattern to construct a sentence.

Figure 13 below illustrates the exercise of describing pictures using grammar structures.



Figure 13. Example of two pictures for description NPCR 3 Lesson 33.

Students had to do extra reading comprehension of a text. Then, the teacher explains the essential Grammar points. Besides, students must read the text and grammar section of the lesson. The teacher uses drilling, reading aloud the book, and using a PowerPoint presentation with a list of examples. Students have to do several exercises such as fill in the gaps and sentence pattern drilling.

**Lesson 33 Treatment group. Performative Language Teaching. Teaching methodology.**

To practice new words, we used the following PLT activity. See Table 13 below for a detailed description of the PLT activity:

<b>PLT ACTIVITY FILE</b>	<b>Name:</b> 007!
<b>Duration:</b> 10-15 minutes	<b>Language level:</b> All language levels and is suitable for beginners
<b>Number of participants:</b> All the students and the teacher	<b>Difficulty level:</b> Easy
<p>This game is a good warm-up game, and it is useful for practicing new words and pronunciation.</p> <p>The teacher and the students create a circle. The teacher stands in the middle of the circle. A word that was studied in the text is chosen. Ideally, the word should have two or three syllables; for example, it could be Lesson 33 Text one new word number five: <i>kē xué jiā</i> (scientist). This word has three syllables, namely <i>kē / xué / jiā</i>. Everyone practices this word's pronunciation. Then, the students are told the first rule of the game.</p> <p><b>Rule 1:</b> The person in the middle of the circle has to pick someone from the circle, look at that person, use their hand to point to them, and, at the same time, say the word aloud. In this example, the word is <i>kē xué jiā</i>. If the person in the middle of the circle says the word faster than the person selected, then the person in the middle “wins” and leaves the middle of the circle, taking the place of the other person in the circle. The other person who “lost” goes into the middle of the circle, and the activity starts again. Another person in the circle will be picked, and they will try to say the chosen word faster than their opponent.</p> <p><b>Rule 2:</b> If the person in the middle of the circle says the last syllable of the three-syllable word, for example, they say, “<i>(Kē xué) jiā!</i>” and the person in the circle must remain silent and cannot make any sound; they cannot even laugh. If the person selected in the circle says anything or makes a sound, then they lose and have to replace the person in the middle.</p>	

**Rule 3:** If the person in the middle of the circle points at somebody in the circle and says “007!” and the person who has been selected by the student in the center of the circle must use their body and pretend to hold a gun in a cool way as if they were James Bond. In addition, the two students who are located to the right and to the left of 007 must move their arms towards 007 in a show of adoration and say, “Oh, James! Oh, James!” If the person selected to be 007 or either of the students to their left or right is too slow or makes a mistake, then they replace the person in the middle.

**Rule 4:** If the person in the middle of the circle points at somebody in the circle and says, “Kebab!” and the person who has been selected by the student in the center must use their body and pretend to be a kebab, putting their arms up and turning in a circle while staying in one place. In addition, the two students who are located to the right and to the left of the kebab must move their arms towards the kebab as if they were cutting it while making the “zzz shh!” noise of a blade. If the person who has been selected to be the kebab or either of the students to their left or right is too slow or makes a mistake, then they replace the person in the middle.

**Rule 5:** If the person in the middle of the circle points at somebody in the circle and says, “Toaster!” and the person who has been selected by the student in the center must use their body and pretend to be a piece of bread that has just been toasted in a toaster, jumping up once or twice. In addition, the two students who are located to the right and to the left of the slice of toast must stretch their arms out towards the toast as if they were the toaster. If the person selected to be the slice of toast or either of the students to their left or right is too slow or makes a mistake, then they replace the person in the middle.



The person in the middle can choose to implement any of the rules at any given time.

The teacher should encourage the students to create their own new rules and movements and to tell their classmates about them.

Table 13. PLT activity: "007!"

To better learn the text, we worked with the Youtube video version of the lesson.

The characters from the book are described in Table 14 below:

Name	Gender	Age	Nationality	Profession	Notes
<b>Ding Libo</b> (丁力波 <i>dīng libō</i> )	Male	Early twenties	Canadian (Chinese born)	University student	Lesson 33, L36 Ma Dawei's friend.
<b>Ma Dawei</b> (马大为 <i>mǎ dāwéi</i> ) David March	Male	Early twenties	United States	University student	L33, L34, L36 Ding Libo's friend.
<b>Lin Na</b> (林娜 <i>lín nà</i> ) Natalie Lynn	Female	Early twenties	The U.K.	University student	L 33.
<b>Wang Xiaoyun</b> (王小云 <i>wáng xiǎoyún</i> )	Female	Early twenties	Chinese	University student	L33, L35, L36
<b>Mother of Wang Xiaoyun</b>	Female	Early fifties	Chinese	Unknown	L35
<b>Song Hua</b> (宋华 <i>sòng huá</i> )	Male	Early twenties	Chinese	University student	L33
<b>Lu Yuping</b> (陆雨平 <i>lù yǔpíng</i> )	Male	Early thirties	Chinese	Reporter	L33
<b>Xiao Yanzi</b> (小燕子 <i>xiǎo yànzi</i> )	Female	Early twenties	Chinese	Tour guide	L34, L36

Table 14. Characters from the New Practical Chinese Reader 3.

The background story for Lesson 33 that is given before text 1 at the beginning of each lesson, according to the textbook *New Practical Chinese Reader 3*, Liu, X. (2003):

Lin Na, Wang Xiaoyun, and their friends go to the suburbs of Beijing to tour Mount Ling. They appreciate the scenery, which is similar to that of the Tibetan Plateau. Then they visit the Tibetan Botanical Garden, which was developed by a female scientist, and they discuss many environmental issues (p. 104).

We selected four scenes from Lesson 33, text 1. In chronological order: 33-1A (Lesson 33, text 1, part A), 33-1B (Lesson 33, text 1, part B), 33-1C (Lesson 33, text 1, part C), 33-1D (Lesson 33, text 1, part D).

Location: suburbs of Beijing, near Mount Ling in China.

Figure 14 below displays the four scenes:



Figure 14. *New Practical Chinese Reader 3*, Lesson 33. Text 1.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J16znTLj\\_wo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J16znTLj_wo)

In order to help students better understand the lesson's text, we used the following PLT activity: "Video dubbing and creating a new script from a video." See Table 15 below for a detailed description of the PLT activity.

<b>PLT ACTIVITY FILE</b>	<b>Name:</b> Video dubbing and creating a new script from a video (Glottodrama)
<b>Duration:</b> 20-45 mins.	<b>Language level:</b> Intermediate
<b>Number of participants:</b> The entire class	<b>Difficulty level:</b> Medium
<p>The teacher asks the students to watch the video without sound. Then they assign each character to a student and get them to dub the video to foster students' imagination and creativity. The first dubbing is done in the students' mother tongue. The ideas generated from this dubbing provide input for the new script, which is written by the students in small groups.</p> <p>Afterward, the text is reviewed together. Each student who has been assigned a role reads their corresponding line from the text. Several scenes are selected, and the students are asked to continue the story in small groups. They are allowed to change it. They are given time to rehearse, and then they perform it for the rest of the class.</p> <p>Following the Glottodrama method (see Chapter 2), students are asked to perform the text. The class reflects on the location, space, and the characters and their relationships and objectives. When watching the video, things like the actors' movements, tone of voice, and body language are closely scrutinized.</p>	

Table 15. PLT activity: "Video dubbing and creating a new script from a video."

As with Lesson 33, text 1, we selected four scenes: 33-2A, 33-2B, 33-2C and 33-2D.

Figure 15 below shows them:

Location: Hotel lobby.

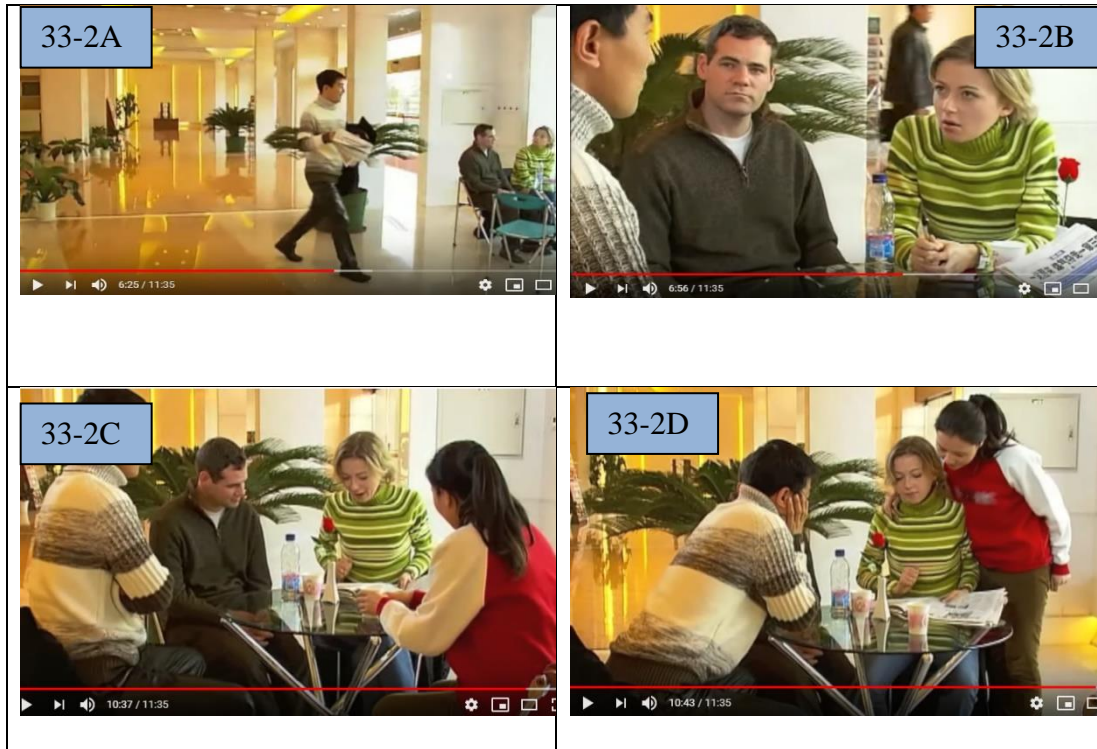


Figure 15. New Practical Chinese Reader 3, Lesson 33. Text 2.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J16znTLj\\_wo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J16znTLj_wo)

In order to help students better understand the text and vocabulary from the lesson, we used the following PLT activity: “Video dubbing & interpreting from a video.” See Table 16 below for a detailed description of the PLT activity.

<b>PLT ACTIVITY FILE</b>	<b>Name:</b> Performing and dubbing a video (Glottodrama)
<b>Duration:</b> 20-45 mins.	<b>Language level:</b> Intermediate
<b>Number of participants:</b> Minimum of six	<b>Difficulty level:</b> Medium
Several groups of students are created. The video from the textbook is played with no sound. One group will put on a performance, in which they try to replicate the actors’ movements, body language, and so on, but without talking or making any sounds. They will pretend to speak by just moving their lips. Another group of	

students is assigned to dub them in Chinese (if the video is from a textbook, the students can follow the exact lines in the textbook), with a third group saying the words in Spanish (consecutive translating).

After the performance, the text and new words are reviewed, pronunciation is practiced, and several key lines from the text are rehearsed together. Some of these steps have been taken from the Glottodrama method, which is discussed in Chapter 2.

Table 16. PLT activity: "Video dubbing and interpreting from a video."

Both PLT activities used to learn text 1 and 2, and the new words of Lesson 33 have some common points with the Glottodrama method (explained in Chapter 2). First, Lesson 33 has a functional goal with the use of a specific grammar point and vocabulary. Second, we used the following dramatic styles: role-play, dialogues, dubbing, and improv based on the input text. We used the texts in lesson 33 as input (dialogue). The actors in the video first played it; then, students were asked to perform with the help of the teacher. In Glottodrama, there are two teachers (one language teacher and one PLT teacher); however, in our case, there is only one teacher (a language teacher with training in acting and PLT). In addition, in the Glottodrama method, the students were recorded in a video. In our case, due to strict regulations from the school, we couldn't record a video of the students. We also had a step of "linguistic reflection" and language corner, where the whole text was explained in terms of grammar and meaning. Depending on how much time we have left, we could perform the script from the text again.

In order to practice and learn grammar: “How to express an action that is happening at the moment with the structure: 正/在/正在 + Verb+ 呢. (Present continuous tense)”. See Table 17 below for a detailed description of the PLT activity.

<b>PLT ACTIVITY FILE</b>	<b>Name:</b> What are you doing?
<b>Duration:</b> 5-15 mins.	<b>Language level:</b> Easy
<b>Number of participants:</b> The entire class	<b>Difficulty level:</b> Easy
<p>The students are divided into pairs. In their teams, student A asks student B, “What are you doing?” Then, student B says one action using the correct grammar structure. For example, B says, “I am swimming.” Then, student A using gestures and mime to perform the action that student B said. In this example, it is swimming. Then, student B asks student A, “What are you doing?” Student A, while continuing to perform the action of swimming, answers with a different action, for example, “I am cooking.” Then, student B has to perform the action of cooking. The process is repeated.</p> <p>Another way to play this game is to have one student perform an action in front of the class, and the rest of the class has to guess what action they are performing. Once it is guessed correctly, a new student takes on the role of the performer.</p>	

Table 17. PLT activity: "What are you doing?"

In order to practice and learn grammar: The potential complement (PC): V + 得/不 + PC (了/下/到/动/上/着). See Table 18 below for a detailed description of the PLT activity.

<b>PLT ACTIVITY FILE</b>	<b>Name:</b> Improvised scenes (song)
<b>Duration:</b> 20-35 mins.	<b>Language level:</b> All levels
<b>Number of participants:</b> The entire class	<b>Difficulty level:</b> Medium
<p>The teacher plays a song, and one student performs a scene. The student must remain silent, but they can use their body to act out a location, a specific character, and an action. The song lasts for 40 to 60 seconds. When the teacher stops playing the song, the student must stop moving and remain frozen. Then, another student comes up and describes the scene as if they are a narrator that is talking to an audience and ‘breaking the fourth wall.’ This technique of talking directly to the camera is used in several American TV shows, for example, <i>House of Cards</i>, <i>Modern Family</i>, <i>How I Met Your Mother</i>, <i>The Office</i>, <i>Clarissa Explains It All</i>, and <i>The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air</i>. In this PLT activity, one student becomes the narrator and talks to their classmates in the audience. The narrator describes the scene when the music stops. They should use at least one potential complement (a Chinese grammar rule in the syllabus) when describing the scene. The story should be based on the feelings created by the combination of the actor’s movements and the emotional impact of the music. An example is: “He is Alan, a high school student from California. He works as a part-time Uber driver. Today, it is raining. He cannot see well (this is the potential complement). What Alan doesn’t know is that tonight he will meet an exceptional person.” Then, a second narrator, i.e., another student, tells their version of the story. After two or three stories, the entire class is asked to vote for the one they liked the best. The story that wins is the one that is performed. It is important to remember that potential complements should be used in every performance.</p>	

Table 18. PLT activity: "Improvised scenes (song)."

In order to practice and learn grammar: “To express that something or somebody appeared or emerged: V + 出来,” we employed the following PLT activity named “I am a tree.” See Table 19 below for a detailed description of the PTL activity.

<b>PLT ACTIVITY FILE</b>	<b>Name:</b> I am a tree
<b>Duration:</b> 10-15 mins.	<b>Language level:</b> All levels
<b>Number of participants:</b> The entire class	<b>Difficulty level:</b> Easy
<p>The entire class participates in this game. A maximum of three actors are chosen to perform. The first actor goes up and says, “I am a tree” and pretends to be a tree. Then, a second actor joins the first actor. They say something else, for example, “I am a bird” and stay standing next to the first actor as if they were standing for a portrait. Next, a third actor enters the scene and says something else; for example, they say, “I am the sun.” Once all three actors are together in the scene, the first one, who in this example is the tree, decides which one of the other two actors will leave the scene with them. For example, the tree may say, “I will take the bird.” This would lead to the tree and the bird leaving the scene. Only one actor remains, which in this case is the sun, and they start a new scene by repeating what they previously said, which would be “I am the sun” in this example. They then wait for another two classmates to come up and create a different scene; for example, another student could say, “I am a cloud,” and another one could say, “I am an airplane.” This game fosters students’ creativity and imagination and builds their listening and teamwork skills. It is also a way for them to practice one of the most challenging parts of</p>	



Chinese grammar for foreigners, namely the use of measure words between a number and a noun.
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Table 19. PLT activity: "I am a tree."

For the other objective from Lesson 33: “writing about the environment,” we asked students to write a script and make a short video of a natural area of their city in Vigo, in the North West region of Galicia, in Spain. Students first had to write the script and, with the help of the teacher, prepare a final corrected version. Then they made the video. One example is one student that made a video about *Mount Guía* in Vigo. [https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B\\_DQuiJgdW6idXdNa3NqR0M0VHc](https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B_DQuiJgdW6idXdNa3NqR0M0VHc)

Another cultural topic from Lesson 33 was Chinese New Year. We created a Process Drama story based on a documentary directed by famous Chinese director Zhāng Yīmóu. The documentary was about the lives of children of migrant workers. These children usually stay in the countryside with their grandparents or other relatives while their parents go to big cities in China to work in low skilled jobs during the year. When Chinese New Year arrives, the parents travel back to their hometowns in the countryside. Therefore, these children might have only one chance a year to see their parents. In this documentary, a foundation gave Digital Video (DV) cameras to the teachers and the children. They received training on how to use them. Then they asked them to record their everyday life for some time. With all the footage from the children, they selected 40 mins. and made the documentary, called “The stories of 180 DV” 《180 台 DV 的 故 事 》 by director Zhang Yimou 张 艺 谋 <http://v.163.com/static/3/VA60AU56G.html> First, we showed parts of the documentary. Then we created the characters for the Process Drama. For example, the teacher was a teacher from a small town who was giving DV cameras to their students.

Some students played the role of the children, some of the grandparents, and the others were the parents who worked in big cities. The dramatic tension was created when the teacher reminded the students that Chinese New Year was very close. We performed several scenes from different points of view. Our goal was to recreate the lives of everyday rural children in China.

## **Unit 6: Travel and Health (Lesson 34) – Syllabus.**

### **Main objectives**

Be able to talk about their health.

Apologize for not wanting to do something.

Be able to talk about traveling.

Be able to talk with the emergency response doctors.

### **Functional Objectives**

Add additional comments.

Stress a point in a conversation.

Tell a story.

Complain about food/meals.

Complain about health problems.

Talk about traveling and organizing a trip.

Ask for emergency health help.

### **Lexical and semantic objectives**

Means of transport.

Trips.

Emergency services.

Health.

## Grammatical objectives

The conjunction 再说 (and also).

The adverb 可 in front of a verb to express “truly” or “in fact.”

The adverb 又 to express the transition of two contradictory situations.

The prepositional phrase “为 + Noun Phrase/Verb Phrase” as a modifier of an adverb to express the object of service or denote a reason or purpose.

Sentences with a subject-predicate phrase as the predicate. Subject 1 + Predicate 1 (Subject 2 + Predicate 2).

Interrogative pronouns of indefinite denotation 你应该吃点儿什么 (You should eat something), 我知道放在那儿了 (I know where to put it), 谁都没来 (Nobody came).

着 and 住 as the resultative complements.

The subjectless sentence 下雨了 it rains.

The structure 连...也/都... Even...also/all...

## Idiomatic expressions

别提了 (Don't mention it) // 你又来了 (Here you come again) // 一会儿就好了

(I will be fine in a minute) // 很久很久以前 (A long, long time ago).

## Text types

Descriptive text.

Dialogue.

Medicine leaflet.

Table 20 below summarizes and compares the two different approaches for Unit 6, Lesson 34.

Unit 6, Lesson 34.	Control group. Traditional.	Treatment group. PLT
<b>Teach the 2 Texts from the lesson</b>	Preview the text individually at home before the test. Read the text in the classroom by different classmates. Explain new words from the text.	Learn the text in a performative way: using the YouTube video version. PLT activity: "Create new characters for the story." PLT activity: "Back to the future."
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Means of transport</li> <li>• Ask for emergency health help</li> <li>• Stress a point in a conversation</li> </ul>		PLT activity: "Titanic Process Drama."
<b>Teach 38 New words and 17 supplementary words</b>	Drilling of new words. Repetition and explanation of new words (PPT and images)	Improvised short games where the students are asked to incorporate the new words. PLT activity: "Telepathy."
<b>Be able to talk about their health</b>	Describe pictures using grammar structures Read the book, grammar section of the lesson. PowerPoint presentation with a list of examples. Videos. Grammar exercises: fill in the gaps, sentence pattern drilling.	PLT activity: "Doctor, is it serious?"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be able to talk about traveling.</li> <li>• Add additional comments.</li> <li>• Stress a point in a conversation</li> <li>• Tell a story.</li> <li>• Complain about food/meals.</li> <li>• Complain about health problems.</li> </ul>	Idem as above.	PLT activity: "Telling a trip."

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Talk about traveling and organizing a trip</b></li> </ul>		
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Table 20. Selected examples. Compared methodology control vs. treatment for Lesson 34.

### Lesson 34 Traditional. Teaching methodology.

There are two Texts, with 38 new words and 17 supplementary words.

The students are asked to preview the text individually at home before coming to class.


During the class, several students have to read the text in the classroom. Figure 16 below illustrates an example of the text in Lesson 34.

马大为：三峡实在是太美了！李白的一首诗我记住了两句：  
“两岸猿声啼不住，轻舟已过万重山。”

小燕子：我看应该说“大为头晕止不住，游船已过万重山”。

马大为：小燕子，你又开玩笑。我们一起来欣赏三峡景色吧。

小燕子：三峡有很多传说，最感人的  
是神女峰的传说。



马大为：你说说。

小燕子：神女峰是三峡最有名、最美的山峰。很久很久以前，  
西王母让她美丽的女儿来三峡，为来往的大船小船指  
路。<sup>⑦</sup>她日日夜夜地站在那儿，后来就成了神女峰。

马大为：三峡的景色真像是一幅中国山水画。坐船游三峡，真

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Figure 16. Example of text two. NPCR 3. Lesson 34. Topic: health and traveling.

The teacher explains new words from the text: using drilling, also PowerPoint presentations, and images. Students are asked to repeat the new words. Figure 17 below shows an example of the text.

生词		New Words	
1. 传说	N	chuánshuō	legend 三峡的传说,神女峰的传说
2. 晕	V	yūn	to feel dizzy 头晕,觉得头晕,有点儿晕
3. 再说	Conj	zàishuō	what's more
4. 船	N	chuán	boat; ship 坐船,上船,开船,在船上,船上的菜
5. 辣	A	là	hot; spicy 辣的菜,不辣的菜,喜欢辣,个个都辣
6. 可	Adv	kě	really; truly; indeed 可吃不下去,可别出去

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Figure 17. Example of new words. NPCR 3. Lesson 34.

Figure 18 below displays an example of the pattern drills of this lesson.

(6) 你看得懂英文小说吗?  
看不懂,我连一句英文也没有学过。

会书法	不会	汉字	写不好
认识小燕子	不认识	这个名字	没有听说过
参观过兵马俑	没有	西安	没去过
常去网吧	没去过	电脑	不会用

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Figure 18. Example of grammar pattern substitution exercise NPCR 3. Lesson 34

Students have to do a listening activity of extracts from the texts.

**Classroom activity:** A student says a sentence. Another student uses “又” to express a transition and the opposite situation.

**Conversation exercise:** the students have to read the examples from the textbook and write sentences individually using those patterns. Topics: making additional remarks, stressing a point, telling a story.

Figure 26 illustrates an example of a picture description exercise using grammar structures from the text.



Figure 26. Example of two pictures for description NPCR 3 Lesson 34.

In addition, the teacher explains the grammar structures to the students; then, the students have to read and summarize the grammar section in their books. To conclude, students have to do an extra reading comprehension of a text.

### **Lesson 34 Performative language teaching. Teaching methodology.**

The background story for Lesson 34 is given before text 1 at the beginning of each lesson at the textbook *New Practical Chinese Reader 3*, Liu, X. (2003):

When on a boat tour of the Three Gorges of the Yangtze River, Ma Dawei felt a bit dizzy and lost his appetite. Xiao Yanzi took good care of him. The next day, either because he had a good night's sleep, or owing to Xiao Yanzi's care, Ma Dawei recovered and was able to enjoy the scenery of the "Goddess Peak" (p. 121).

Four scenes in chronological order: 34-1A, 34-1B, 34-1C and 34-1D

PLT activity: Create new characters for the story. Figure 19 below shows the scenes.

Location: Cruise boat room.



Figure 19. New Practical Chinese Reader 3 Lesson 34 text 1  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zm0RnHqxgv0>

To help students better understand the text and vocabulary, we used the following PLT activity, “Create new characters for the story.” See Table 21 below for a detailed description of the PLT activity.

<b>PLT ACTIVITY FILE</b>	<b>Name:</b> Create new characters for a story
<b>Duration:</b> 20-45 mins.	<b>Language level:</b> Intermediate
<b>Number of participants:</b> The entire class	<b>Difficulty level:</b> Medium



The video for the lesson is watched on YouTube, and then, the class is divided into pairs. The students are told to create different roles or characters. These should be very different from the ones in the textbook (the original script for Lesson 34 text one concerns two friends on a river cruise, and the male character gets sick, and the female character helps him). For example, one group could come up with the idea that they are a couple who have problems with their marriage, and the man has asked for a divorce, and another group could decide that they are fugitives running from the law. It is important to tell the students that they can change the characters in the story, but they can't change the plot of the story itself, only the characters.

Table 21. PLT activity: "Create new characters for the story."

However, for text two, we had a different approach. The difference is that we selected four different scenes from the video, but instead of watching the video from the beginning, we started from the last scene

Location: Cruise boat (outside and inside)

Note: In this case, the four scenes are arranged in reverse chronological order. In the story, 34-2A is the last scene, and 34-2D is the first one. This strategy is done on purpose because the PLT activity requires so. Figure 20 below depicts the four scenes from the story.



Figure 20. New Practical Chinese Reader 3 Lesson 34 text 2  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zm0RnHqvgv0>

To practice storytelling and help students understand the text from the book Lesson 34, we used the PLT activity named “Back to the future.” See Table 22 below for a detailed description of the PLT activity.

<b>PLT ACTIVITY FILE</b>	<b>Name:</b> Back to the future
<b>Duration:</b> 30-45 mins.	<b>Language level:</b> Intermediate
<b>Number of participants:</b> The entire class	<b>Difficulty level:</b> Medium

Scene 34-2A, which is chronologically at the end of the story, is played first. Students are then asked to get into groups, think about what happened before the scene, and then create a short play to perform in Chinese. At the start of the play, those acting it out must have the same body posture and be performing the same gestures as the still image of the scene, and then, they must begin acting out what occurred beforehand. Some groups act out the scene they have created in front of the class. Afterward, the video is watched to find out what really happened beforehand. However, the video is paused after scene 34-2A; so, scene 34-2B is not seen. The same process is then repeated with that scene, and this is done for all the remaining scenes (34-2C and 34-2D). Then, in the end, the similarities and differences between the script they created and the original video are discussed in the classroom.

Table 22. PLT activity: "Back to the future."

To teach the vocabulary of means of transport, the function of asking for emergency health help, and stressing a point in a conversation, we used the PLT activity "Titanic Process Drama." See Table 23 below for a detailed description of the PLT activity.

<b>PLT ACTIVITY FILE</b>	<b>Name:</b> Titanic process drama
<b>Duration:</b> 20-30 mins.	<b>Language level:</b> Intermediate
<b>Number of participants:</b> The entire class	<b>Difficulty level:</b> Easy
In Lesson 34, the characters, Ma Dawei and Xiao Yanzi, go on a cruise. A process drama activity that can be done involves everyone in the classroom pretending that they are also on the boat. The class is split into groups of three. The teacher is the	

captain of the boat (teacher in role). The teacher creates dramatic tension by providing key information and instructions at important moments during the process drama. All of the students are asked to write on the blackboard the things that they would take with them on the boat, for example, a mobile phone, water, food, clothes, book, dog, and so on. The teacher writes the words: mirror, CD/DVD, whistle, and flashlight on the blackboard. The students are then asked to try to write words they learned in previous lessons. The teacher announces that the boat has encountered several mechanical problems and tells the students that they have two minutes before they have to leave the ship. Every group of three can only take two objects from the list on the blackboard with them in the small rescue boats.

The students choose the objects from the list and tell their classmates which items they have chosen and why. After every student has spoken, they are given a chance to trade their selected objects for another group's objects if both groups agree. Afterward, the captain, i.e., the teacher, tells them that, according to the U.S. Navy, in this situation, the essential objects to take are those that would help them to be found, and not only food and water. Therefore, the most important objects to take are the mirror or CD/DVD, as they can reflect light during the day, the whistle, as the sound it makes can help others find the rescue boat, and the flashlight, which will make the rescue boat easier to see at night.

Table 23. PLT activity: "Titanic - Process Drama."

To practice new words, we used the following PLT activity named "Telepathy." See Table 24 below for a detailed description of the PLT activity.

<b>PLT ACTIVITY FILE</b>	<b>Name:</b> Telepathy
<b>Duration:</b> Varies (usually 2-10 mins.)	<b>Language level:</b> All levels
<b>Number of participants:</b> The entire class	<b>Difficulty level:</b> Easy
<p>The entire class stands up and forms a circle. The teacher asks everybody to think of one word. When a student is ready to share their word, they raise their hand and say, “One!” Then, everyone waits until another student says, “Two!” When these two students are ready, they both count to three simultaneously, and then, they both say the word they were thinking at the same time; for example, student A might say the word car, while student B might say the word electric. The process is repeated. However, the second time, everyone has to think of a word that is related to both the previous words, for instance, in this example, the words car and electric. In this instance, after another student has said, “One!” and another has said, “Two!” and they have both counted to three together, both students C and D may simultaneously say, “Tesla!” When this happens, the two students have telepathy, and the game finishes.</p> <p>Ideally, two students say the same word at the same time the first time. This situation usually takes a bit longer, though. The point of this game is to practice and review vocabulary in a fun way. In the example given, students can think of any word. However, they could be asked to use the new words they learned in a particular lesson, such as Lesson 33, for example. Alternatively, it could be used to review semantic fields, such as food, means of transport, animals, and so on.</p>	

Table 24. PLT activity: "Telepathy."

To help students practice one of the lesson’s main objectives, to be able to talk about health, we used the PLT activity named “Doctor, is it serious?” See Table 25 below for a detailed description of the PLT activity.

<b>PLT ACTIVITY FILE</b>	<b>Name:</b> Doctor, is it serious?
<b>Duration:</b> 10-20 mins.	<b>Language level:</b> Intermediate
<b>Number of participants:</b> The entire class	<b>Difficulty level:</b> Medium to hard
<p>For this activity, eight small slips of paper are prepared for each student. Students are asked first to write four sentences related to health and doctors that they learned in the lesson. These should be slips of paper with sentences that patients and doctors would use in a hospital or clinic, such as “I am sick,” “I have a headache,” “I have backache,” “doctor, is it serious?,” “Please come in,” “say: <i>aaaah!</i>” and so on.</p> <p>In addition, students are also asked to write four sentences that are not related to health but mention something that has been studied previously, such as “I love chocolate,” “I am your father,” “let’s go dancing,” and so on.</p> <p>A scene that takes place inside a hospital or clinic is recreated. First, a table and two chairs are prepared. One student pretends to be the doctor, and another pretends to be a patient. Another student can play the role of a nurse that welcomes the patient and helps them if desired.</p> <p>All of the paper slips are placed in a hat or bowl. They are mixed up, and the students are told to start acting out the scene. The teacher has a bell that they ring from time to time during the dialogue between the doctor and the patient, and the nurse if they are part of the scene. When the bell rings, one actor will choose one slip of paper from the hat or bowl and read it out aloud. Then, the actors have to incorporate the</p>	

sentence into the dialogue and continue the scene. After one to two minutes, the teacher asks the next patient to join the scene, and the previous patient will leave the scene. The activity is finished when all of the students have taken part.

Table 25. PLT activity: "Doctor, is it serious?"

Some of the lesson’s primary objectives were “be able to talk about traveling, add additional comments, stress a point in a conversation, tell a story, complain about food/meals, complain about health problems, and talk about traveling and organizing a trip.” To help the student’s practice, we used the PLT activity named “Telling a trip.” See Table 26 below for a detailed description of the PLT activity.

<b>PLT ACTIVITY FILE</b>	<b>Name:</b> Talking about a trip
<b>Duration:</b> 10-15 mins.	<b>Language level:</b> Intermediate
<b>Number of participants:</b> Two	<b>Difficulty level:</b> Intermediate
<p>Two empty chairs are placed out, and two students go up. They act as if they have just come back from a long trip. The rest of the students act as their friends, and they suggest possible countries the two travelers could have visited on their recent trip, for example, Madagascar, Japan, Chile, and so on. The two travelers choose one of the suggested locations. Then as a group, the class has to decide what the relationship between the two actors is. For instance, they could be boss and employee, father and mother, brother and sister, neighbors, or a couple. An important rule of this game is that the two travelers cannot look at each other during the activity; they must always look at the other students to force them to listen more carefully to what the other person is saying. In addition, they must have a different point of view about what they did on the trip.</p>	

Consequently, although they both did the same things on the trip, their opinions about these activities differ. They must complain about the things they didn't like about the journey, for example, they may have both climbed the Great Wall of China, and one of them loved it while the other did not enjoy it at all. Once the location and relationship have been set, the group starts asking them questions about the trip, focusing on what happened. Examples of questions are: "tell us about your hotel room; was it good?", "What happened at the airport?", "how was the local food?", "tell us something you don't like about traveling with your travel partner," and so on.

This activity is very useful for practicing the narration and description of past events and the Chinese particles *guo* 过 and *le* 了, among other structures.

Table 26. PLT activity: "Telling a trip."

## **Unit 7: Work and business (Lesson 35) – Syllabus.**

### **Main objectives**

- Be able to read and write a CV.
- Be able to read and write a cover letter.
- Be able to understand job offers.
- Be able to talk about work experience.
- Be able to explain the reasons to ask for a loan.

### **Functional Objectives**

- Understand a CV.
- Read and understand a cover letter.
- Understand job offers.
- Talk about work experience.



Reproaching and questioning.

Refusing.

Making an explanation.

### **Lexical and semantic objectives**

Work and business.

### **Grammatical content**

Interrogative pronouns of general denotation: 你想去哪儿就去哪儿 (Go wherever you want).

Fractions, percentages, and multiples.

The construction 一 ...也/都 + 没/不 ... (...not even one).

The construction: 就是 ...也... (Even if...).

The use of 都 ...了 with the meaning of 已经 (already).

The structure: 等 + SV/S-Predicate (+ 的时候 / 以后). (When...then).

### **Idiomatic expressions**

您听我说 (Let me explain it) // 这您就不动了 (This is something you don't understand) // 你别管 (Don't bother) // 绝对不行 (Absolutely not).

### **Text types**

The CV.

Cover letter.

Job interview.

Dialogues.

Table 27 below summarizes and compares the two different approaches for Unit 7, Lesson 35.

<b>Unit 7, Lesson 35.</b>	<b>Control group. Traditional.</b>	<b>Treatment group. PLT</b>
<b>Teach the 2 Texts + vocabulary from the lesson</b>	Preview the text individually at home before the text. Read the text in the classroom by different classmates. Explain new words from the text.	Learn the text in a performative way: using the YouTube video version. PLT activity: “Emotional rollercoaster.” PLT activity: “What I really think!”.
<b>Vocabulary about jobs Reproaching and questioning Making an explanation Talk about past experience</b>		PLT activity: “Murder Mystery.”
<b>Understand job offers Talk about work experience Reproaching and questioning Refusing Making an explanation</b>	Describe pictures using grammar structures Read the book, grammar section of the lesson. PowerPoint presentation with a list of examples. Videos. Grammar exercises: fill in the gaps, sentence pattern drilling.	PLT activity: “The job interview.”

Table 27. Selected examples. Compared methodology control vs. treatment for Lesson 35.

### **Lesson 35 Traditional. Teaching methodology.**

There are 2 Texts, with 38 new words and 11 supplementary words

Students are asked to preview the text individually at home before coming to class.

During the class, several students have to read the text in the classroom. Figure 21 below illustrates an example of a text from this lesson.

王小云：妈，开始工作以后，我就要买汽车。

母亲：什么？你现在还没开始工作，就想买汽车？真不知道你每天都在想些什么？

王小云：这跟工作没关系。

母亲：怎么没关系？年轻人骑着自行车上班，不是挺好的吗？既锻炼了身体，又节约了钱。你爸爸一辈子都这样。为什么你就

【责备和质问】  
Reproaching and questioning

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Figure 21. Example of text one. NPCR 3. Lesson 35. Topic: work and business.

The teacher explains new words from the text and uses drilling, PowerPoint presentations, and images. Students have to repeat new words and write them down.

Figure 22 below displays an example of the new words from the lesson.

生词		New Words	
1. 挺	Adv	tǐng	(Coll.) very; quite 挺好, 挺辣, 挺清楚 挺自然
2. 节约	V	jiéyuē	to save; to economize 节约钱, 节约水, 节约纸, 节约时间
3. 一辈子	N	yībèizi	for all/throughout one's life; lifetime 一辈子谦虚, 一辈子辛苦, 一辈子都这

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Figure 22. Example of new words. NPCR 3. Lesson 35.

Figure 23 shows an example of a pattern drills exercise about the Grammar point.

(1) 你什么时候买车?		
什么时候挣够了钱就什么时候买车。		
我	来找你	你有时间
我们	吃饭	做好饭
你们	结婚	合适
他们	买房子	能向银行贷款

Figure 23. Example of grammar pattern substitution exercise NPCR 3. Lesson 35.

Learners have to listen to extracts from the texts.

**Classroom activity:** 1. Students have to do several mathematic problems in Chinese with their classmates. One student asks a question, and another student answers.

E.g., five times three is... / 25% of 80 is... / The English department has 800 students, and the Chinese department has 25% of students.

2. A student says a sentence. Another student uses “you” to express a transition and the opposite situation.

### Conversation exercises

Students read the examples from the textbook and write sentences individually using those patterns. Topics: reproaching and questioning, refusing, making, and explanation.

Learners describe pictures using grammar structures from the text. Figure 24 below displays an example of the cartoons from the exercise.

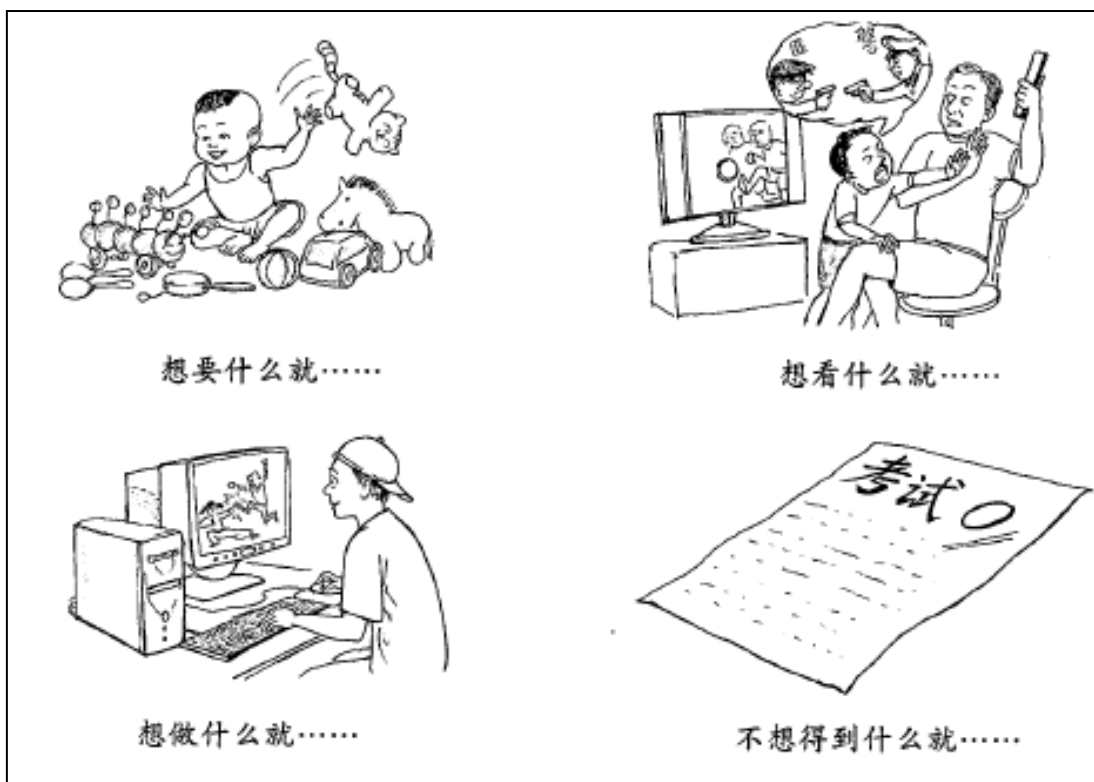


Figure 24. Example of two pictures for description NPCR 3 Lesson 35.

The students begin by doing a reading comprehension exercise. Then they have to read the grammar section of the textbook before the teacher explains the grammar of the lesson.

**Communication activity.** In pairs. Reflect on the topics from the text.

1. Discuss with your classmates whether we should support Wang Xiaoyun or her mother concerning the idea of consumption.
2. Tell your classmates whether there is a “generation gap” between you and your parents (or the older generation) about the issue of working and saving money.

After the students finish their small oral presentation in pairs, ask them to write down the main points that they had discussed.

### Lesson 35 Performative language teaching. Teaching methodology.

The background story for Lesson 35 is given before text 1 at the beginning of the lesson in *New Practical Chinese Reader 3*. Liu, X. (2003):

Wang Xiaoyun is talking with her mother about buying a car. They argue because of their different ideas on consumption. This lesson will give you an idea of the “generation gap” between them. (p. 138).

4 scenes in chronological order: 35-1A, 35-1B, 35-1C and 35-1D

Location: at home. Figure 25 below shows the scenes.



Figure 25. New Practical Chinese Reader 3 Lesson 35 text 1  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pezS34U6J8>

To help students better understand the text and learn vocabulary from Lesson 35, we used the following PLT activity, called “Emotional rollercoaster.” See Table 28 below for a detailed description of the PLT activity.

<b>PLT ACTIVITY FILE</b>	<b>Name:</b> Emotional rollercoaster
<b>Duration:</b> 20-45 mins.	<b>Language level:</b> Easy
<b>Number of participants:</b> Minimum of two	<b>Difficulty level:</b> Medium
<p>The teacher asks the students to read some lines of text in small groups. Then, one group is selected to perform them in front of the class. Afterward, the scene is acted out again; however, the second time, an emotion, such as happiness, sadness, fear, anger, surprise, and so on, is selected. This emotion has to be shown when repeating the scene. In addition, there are three degrees of emotion: level one, level two, and level three. Level three is the most extreme. Before starting the scene, the students are asked to think about how they will portray and show that emotion. It could be through the tone and pitch of their voice or using non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions and gestures. It is essential to tell the students that they will act out the scene again, keeping the content the same, but showing a different emotion. The same feeling is selected for all of the students.</p>	

Table 28. PLT activity: "Emotional Rollercoaster."

The next story consists of 4 scenes in chronological order: 35-2A, 35-2B, 35-2C, and 35-2D.

Location: at home. Figure 26 shows all the different scenes.

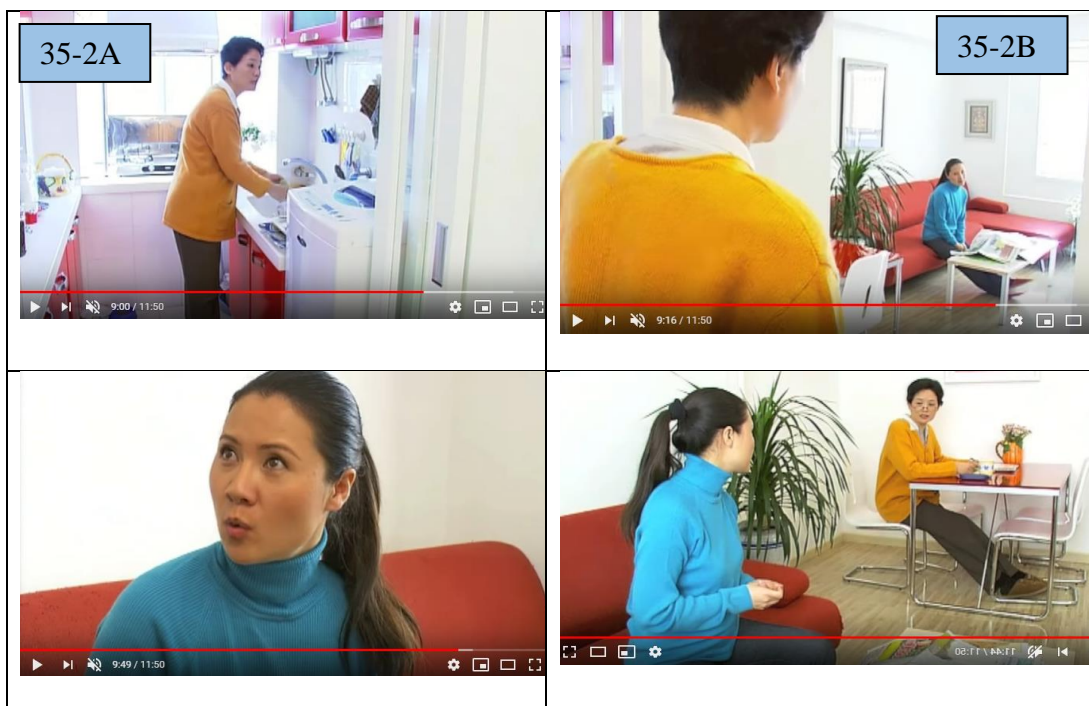


Figure 26. New Practical Chinese Reader 3 Lesson 35 text 2  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pezS34U6J8>

In order to help students better understand the second text and learn vocabulary from Lesson 35, we used the following PLT activity, called “Typewriter.” See Table 29 below for a detailed description of the PLT activity.

<b>PLT ACTIVITY FILE</b>	<b>Name:</b> What I really think!
<b>Duration:</b> 20-30 mins.	<b>Language level:</b> Intermediate
<b>Number of participants:</b> The entire class	<b>Difficulty level:</b> Easy
Two students (student A and student B) are picked to play the two characters from Lesson 36, text two. The rest of the class is split into two groups. Students A and B begin reading the lines of text. Student A reads the first line. Then, a classmate from group A replaces student A and says what they really think (this should be relevant to the spoken line and the conversation). Then, student B reads one line from the text, and a student from group B replaces student B and says what they really think.	



For example, the conversation could go as follows:

Student A: “Mum, I want to buy a car.” (A line from the text)

Student replacing student A: “Mum, I am tired of living with you in the same house!” (What A really thinks)

Student B: “Buy a car? That is very expensive.” (A line from the text)

Student replacing student B: “Hahaha, you don’t even have enough money to buy a new phone.” (What B really thinks)

Table 29. PLT activity: "What I really think!"

In order to help students practice several objectives of lesson 35, such as “vocabulary about jobs, reproaching and questioning, making an explanation, talking about the past experience” and others, we used the following PLT activity, called “Murder Mystery,” see Table 30 below for a detailed description of the PLT activity.

<b>PLT ACTIVITY FILE</b>	<b>Name:</b> Murder mystery
<b>Duration:</b> 60-90 mins.	<b>Language level:</b> All levels
<b>Number of participants:</b> The entire class	<b>Difficulty level:</b> Medium
<p>The students are asked to watch a YouTube video (<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p09bMSZ8pRY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p09bMSZ8pRY</a>) containing a murder mystery scene, in which an English Lord has been found dead in his mansion. His corpse is lying on the floor. In the scene, there are also a detective, a police officer, and the three suspects: a young house cleaner, the butler, and the Lord’s wife. The three suspects are each holding an object that the detective suspects could have used as the murder weapon.</p>	

The video is played up until the point where the three suspects finish answering the questions posed by the detective.

### **Part I: Three-headed people**

There are a total of five characters. Five groups of three students are created (the teacher can be in the group of detectives, for example). The students in the groups stay close to each other as if they were one person. They are told that they have to speak one word at a time, one by one, starting from the classmate on the left. This exercise requires them to listen to their classmates and use the correct grammar structures and words to create sentences together that would form part of a dialogue in a police interrogation in the context of the murder.

For example, the dialogue could go as follows:

**Police officer (composed of students one, two and three):** 我 (student one) / 需要 (student two) / 问 (student three) / 你 (student one) / 一 (student two) / 些 (student three) / 问题 (student one).

English translation: I (student one) / need (student two) / to (student three) / interrogate (student one) / you (student two).

**Butler (composed of students four, five and six):** 好 (student four) / 但是 (student five) / 是 (student six) / 好 (student four) / 人 (student five).

English translation: Ok (student four) / but (student five) / I (student six) / am (student four) / innocent (student five).

**Detective (composed of students seven, eight, and nine):** 你 (student seven) / 昨

天 (student eight) / 3.34 点 (student nine) / 在 (student seven) / 哪里? (student eight).

English translation: Where (student seven) / were (student eight) / you (student nine) / yesterday (student seven) / at (student eight) / 3:34 pm (student nine)?

The goal of this activity is to create the story of the murder together. The students create it on the spot following the above rules. The detective asks the three suspects questions to gather information. All of the dialogue is improvised.

### **Part II: The 21 changes**

After the interrogation dialogue, the teacher plays the video again from the beginning. The video reveals that the wife is the killer. Nevertheless, what is important is that there are a total of 21 changes in the video. The students are not told about those changes; therefore, the students will probably pay attention only to the dialogue and the story taking place between the detective and the suspects, with most people not noticing the changes in the murder scene.

The last part of the video, where the changes are made visible, is played. In the same groups of three, the students are asked to write down the changes they saw in the video. Then, all the changes are revealed.

### **Part III: Changes in the classroom**

The class is split into two groups. One group has to leave the classroom, but they have 10 seconds to look around and remember the position of objects in the classroom before leaving. They are told that when they come back, they have to find five things in the classroom that have changed. After they have left the classroom,

the second group changes five things in the classroom. They make the changes together, and everyone must agree on what to change. When the changes have been made, the first group is called to come back in, and they guess what has been changed.

#### **Part IV: Murder mystery mime**

Three students are asked to volunteer to leave the classroom, and one student is asked to volunteer to pretend to be a dead person by lying on the floor or slumped in a chair or over a table. The rest of the class decides three things together with the teacher: the location of the murder, the profession of the killer, and the murder weapon; for example, in a hot spring, dentist, and a hat. The three students that went outside come back inside one by one. The teacher explains to them that when they come back inside the classroom, they will see a dead body and must shout, and then, they must ask the witnesses in the classroom about the location of the murder, the profession of the killer, and the murder weapon. However, the witnesses cannot speak; they can only use gestures to reveal the three things. Once the first student thinks that they have the information, the second student enters and questions the first student, who has to use gestures to try to explain the three things to the second student. Once the second student has finished asking questions, the third student comes in, and the second student uses gestures to explain what happened to the third student. Once all three students finish, they are asked what they think the three things are.

Table 30. PLT activity: "Murder Mystery."

To help students practice several objectives of lesson 35, such as “understand job offers, talk about work experience, reproaching and questioning, refusing, making

an explanation” and others, we used the following PLT activity, called “Job interview.” See Table 31 below for a detailed description of the PLT activity.

<b>PLT ACTIVITY FILE</b>	<b>Name:</b> Job interview
<b>Duration:</b> 20-30 mins.	<b>Language level:</b> Intermediate
<b>Number of participants:</b> The entire class	<b>Difficulty level:</b> Medium
<p>First, students are asked to choose a famous person or superhero to pretend to be, for example, Batman, The Joker, Winston Churchill, Confucius, Columbus, Jack Sparrow, Barbie Doll, Iron Man, Lebron James, and so on. They are then asked to write a fictional CV for them, bearing in mind their strengths and abilities. Then, they are asked to write a job offer with a short description of a famous company, for instance, Coca Cola, Disney, Amazon, Google, Boeing, Huawei, and so on.</p> <p>Next, the chairs in the classroom are placed in two lines facing each other as if they were being arranged for a speed dating event. Then, the students get into pairs, with one being the interviewer and the other being the job applicant. The interviewer has five minutes to interview the job applicant, after which a bell is rung, and then, the job applicants have to move to the next seat.</p>	

Table 31. PLT activity: "Job interview."

**Unit 8: Climate and weather (Lesson 36) – Syllabus.**

**Main objectives**

To be able to talk about the climate and the weather.

To be able to compare the climate from different places.

Understand a weather forecast.

## **Functional Objectives**

Talking about the climate and the weather.

Compare the climate from different places.

Making a suggestion.

Expressing a possibility.

## **Lexical and semantic objectives**

Climate and weather.

## **Grammatical content**

Potential complement V + 得/不 + 了 (part II).

Extended use of V + 起来 indicating the beginning or extension of motion, an action, or a condition.

The construction 一 + V ..., 就... (As soon as...then...).

The construction 除了 ... 以外, 还/都/也 ... (In addition, ...).

The construction: 各 + Measure Word + N.

The use of 像 to cite examples.

## **Idiomatic expressions**

没错儿 (It's sure that...) // 就是 (That's right) // 应该说 (One ought to say...).

## **Text types**

Descriptive text.

Search and find information about the weather and climate on the Internet.

Dialogues.

## Sociocultural aspects

Chinese festival – 清明节 Tomb Sweeping Day /Qingming Festival.

Table 32 below summarizes and compares the two different approaches for Unit 8, Lesson 36.

Unit 8, Lesson 36.	Control group. Traditional.	Treatment group. PLT
<b>Teach the 2 Texts + vocabulary from the lesson</b>	Preview the text individually at home before the text. Read the text in the classroom by different classmates. Explain new words from the text.	Learn the text in a performative way: using the YouTube video version. PLT activity: “Perform and complete the text with your classmates.” PLT activity: “Typewriter.”
<b>Talking about the climate and the weather. Compare the climate from different places. Making a suggestion. Expressing a possibility. The construction 除了 ... 以外, 还/都/也 ... (in addition) The use of 像 to cite examples Idiomatic expressions 没错儿 (It’s sure that...) // 就是 (That’s right) // 应该说 (One ought to say...)</b>	Describe pictures using grammar structures Read the book, grammar section of the lesson. PowerPoint presentation with a list of examples. Videos. Grammar exercises: fill in the gaps, sentence pattern drilling.	PLT activity: “Experts and interpreters.”
<b>Concentration, warm-up, review of the Chinese tones.</b>	Drilling exercises. Listening to tones and fill in the gaps tasks.	PLT activity: “Tone twister.”

Table 32. Selected examples. Compared methodology control vs. treatment for Lesson 36.

### Lesson 36 Traditional. Teaching methodology.

There are 2 Texts, with 37 new words and 12 supplementary words.

Students are asked to preview the text individually at home before coming to class.

During the class, several students have to read the text in the classroom. Figure 27 below illustrates an example of the text.

马大为：小燕子，我有个朋友要来中国旅游，他问我，什么季节来比较好。中国这么大，气候一定很复杂吧？

小燕子：没错儿。从热带到寒带，各种气候中国差不多都有。<sup>①</sup>

马大为：北京的气候有什么特点？

小燕子：一年有春、夏、秋、冬四个季节，非常清楚。

马大为：可是我觉得这儿只有冬天，好像没有春天。

【谈气候】  
Talking about the climate

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Figure 27. Example of text one. NPCR 3. Lesson 36. Topic: climate.



The teacher explains new words from the text, employing different techniques, such as drilling, PowerPoint presentations, and images. Students are asked to repeat the new words that appear in the textbook.

See Figure 28 below for an example of those new words.

生词		New Words		
1. 季节	N	jìjié	season	一年有四个季节,最好的季节,别的季节
季	N	jì	season	一年四季,春季,夏季,秋季,冬季
2. 气候	N	qìhòu	climate	中国的气候,北京的气候,气候条件
3. 复杂	A	fùzá	complicated	复杂的气候,复杂的情况,复杂的问题,复杂的动作,复杂的办法
4. 热带	N	rèdài	torrid zone; the tropics	热带气候,热带水果,热带植物

Figure 28. Example of new words. NPCR 3. Lesson 36.

See Figure 29 for an example of an exercise where students have to practice pattern drills about the grammar structures.

(5) 北京 <u>夏天</u> 的气候怎么样?	冬天	11月	冷
北京一到 <u>5月</u> 就 <u>热</u> 起来了。	秋天	9月	凉
	快春天	3月	刮(风)
	夏天	6月	下(雨)

Figure 29. Example of grammar pattern substitution exercise NPCR 3. Lesson 36.

Besides, students have to listen to extracts from the texts.

**Classroom activity:** 1 One student makes a suggestion, then another student uses “最好” (you’d better) to add further details to the idea.

2. Use “一... 就 ...” (as soon as...) to indicate that two events happen in close succession.

### Conversation exercises

Students read the examples from the textbook and write sentences individually using those patterns. Topics: “talking about the climate, making a suggestion, and expressing a possibility.”

Learners describe pictures using grammar structures from the text. Figure 30 illustrates examples of those pictures.

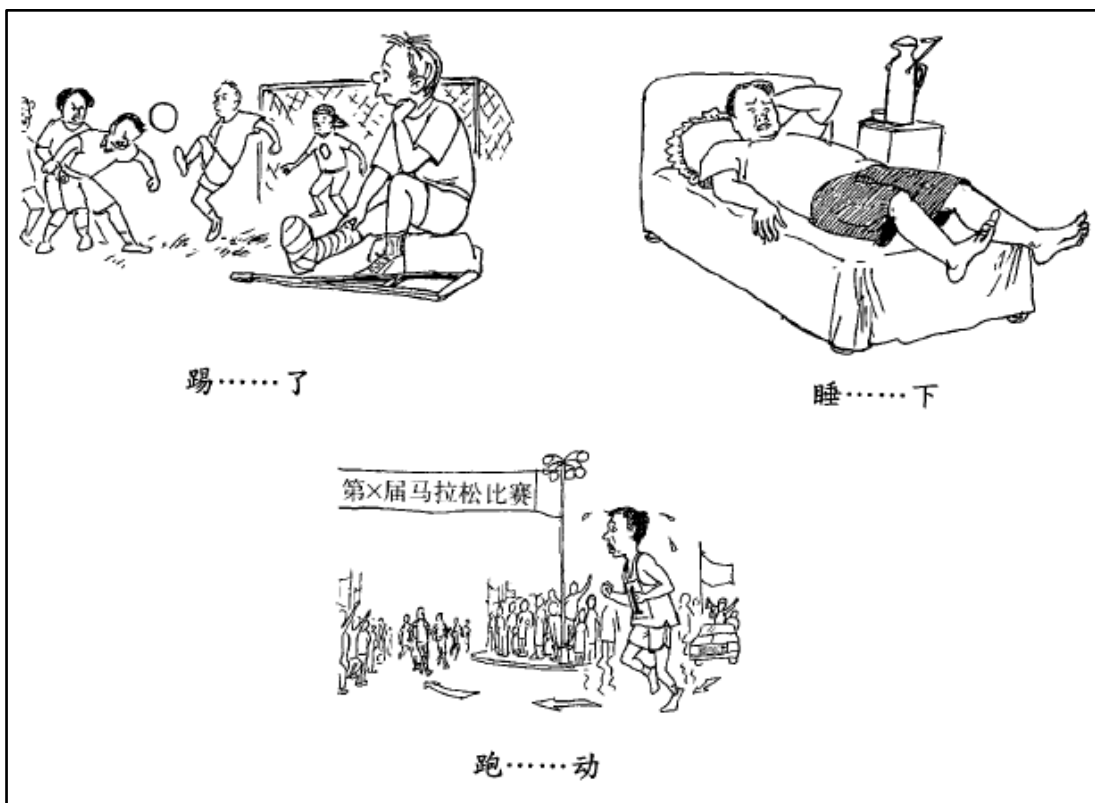


Figure 30. Example of two pictures for description NPCR 3 Lesson 36.

Students have to read the book, specifically the grammar section. Then they have to complete an extra reading comprehension of a text. To end with, the teacher will explain the grammatical structures.

### Communication practice – Monologues

1. Describe the climate of your country or your city
2. Describe a good place to visit in your country during the summer.

After you have made your oral response, write it down.

### Lesson 36 Performative Language Teaching. Teaching methodology.

The background story for Lesson 36 is given before text 1 at the beginning of the lesson at *New Practical Chinese Reader 3*. Liu, X. (2003):

Climate is important for travelers. China is such a big country that the climate of each region is quite distinct. Xiao Yanzi, who works as a tour guide, says there are good itineraries for each season of the year. Let's see how she explains this. (p.155).

Four scenes in chronological order: 36-1A, 36-1B, 36-1C and 36-1D.

Location: University. See Figure 31 below for the four scenes.



Figure 31. New Practical Chinese Reader 3 Lesson 36 text 1  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j05Nr8\\_ZWds](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j05Nr8_ZWds)

In order to help students better understand the text and learn vocabulary from Lesson 36, we used the following PLT activity, called “Perform and complete the text with your classmates.” See Table 33 below for a detailed description of the PLT activity.

<b>PLT ACTIVITY FILE</b>	<b>Name:</b> Perform and complete the text with your classmates
<b>Duration:</b> 10-15 mins.	<b>Language level:</b> Easy
<b>Number of participants:</b> The entire class	<b>Difficulty level:</b> Easy

This activity accompanies the first lot of text and the video from Lesson 36. Two students, students A and B, are chosen to play the characters from the text. The class is split into two groups. One group works with student A, and the other works with student B. Students A and B start acting out the text. However, they only read the beginning of the sentences, and they do not finish the sentences. Their classmates help them by finishing the sentences for them or suggesting words to use. During the first part of this activity, the students read the sentences directly from the text. In the second part, students are free to create their own sentences and a completely new story using the same characters from the textbook. Students A and B must use their hands and point in the direction of their group when they want to ask for suggestions. An example is:

Student A: “Hi, mum!”

Student B: “Hi, my daughter! Where have you been?”

Student A: “I went to the...”

Student A signals that they need help from group A.

Group A shouts several suggestions: “Park!”, “School!”, “Toilet!”

Student A speaks after selecting one of their suggestions: “I went to the park.”

Student B: “Great, have you seen...”

Student B signals that they need help from group B.

Group B shouts several suggestions: “Our dog?”, “Your father”, “My mobile phone?”  
Student B speaks after selecting one of their suggestions: “Great, have you seen your father?”

Then, the same process is repeated.

Table 33. PLT activity: "Perform and complete the text with your classmates."

Four scenes in chronological order: 36-2A, 36-2B, 36-2C and 36-2D.

Location: University garden. Figure 32 below shows the four scenes.



Figure 32. New Practical Chinese Reader 3 Lesson 36 text 2  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j05Nr8\\_ZWds](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j05Nr8_ZWds)

To help students better understand the text and learn vocabulary from Lesson 36, we used the following PLT activity, called “Typewriter.” See Table 34 for a detailed description of the PLT activity.

<b>PLT ACTIVITY FILE</b>	<b>Name:</b> Typewriter
<b>Duration:</b> 10-15 mins.	<b>Language level:</b> Medium
<b>Number of participants:</b> The entire class	<b>Difficulty level:</b> Easy
<p>The class is split into two groups. One group is the writers, and the other group is the actors. The group of writers creates a story together. They sit down in a line on one side next to the stage and pretend to be using an old typewriter to write a story. The actors are located near the stage. One of the students in the group of writers starts pretending to write a story, telling the story out loud as they write. For example, they could say, “Ma Dawei is walking in the street and goes to the subway entrance.” Then, one of the students in the group of actors acts out what the writer says. They pretend to be Ma Dawei and start walking to an imaginary subway entrance. Then, a second writer continues the story saying, for instance, “Then, Ma Dawei takes the subway. It is packed. He gets off at Tian AnMen stop, and his friend Ding Libo is there waiting for him.” Thus, several actors pretend to be passengers in the subway car. The actor playing Ma Dawei exits the subway. At the exit, another actor starts playing Ding Libo, and they start having a conversation.</p> <p>This activity assists students with their storytelling, descriptions, listening skills, creativity, teamwork, etc.</p>	

Table 34. PLT activity: "Typewriter."

Some of Lesson 36’s goals were “talking about the climate and the weather; compare the climate from different places; making a suggestion; expressing a possibility.” And also, the construction “除了 ... 以外, 还/都/也 ... (in addition...)”; “the use of 像 to cite examples and several idiomatic expressions, such as” 没错儿

(It’s sure that...)// 就是 (That’s right)// 应该说 (One ought to say...)”. To help students practice, we decided to use the following PLT activity, called “Experts and interpreters.” See Table 35 below for a detailed description of the PLT activity.

<b>PLT ACTIVITY FILE</b>	<b>Name:</b> Experts and interpreters
<b>Duration:</b> 10-15 mins.	<b>Language level:</b> Intermediate
<b>Number of participants:</b> Minimum of five (two experts, two interpreters and one host, and everyone else is a journalist)	<b>Difficulty level:</b> Intermediate
<p>This activity is inspired by Italian Nobel prize winner Dario Fo and his invented language Grammelot, as well as the Italian actor Roberto Begnini in the movie <i>Life is Beautiful (La Vita é Bella)</i>. The teacher places four chairs in a row facing the class. Four volunteers are asked to sit in the chairs. Two students are chosen to be the most famous world experts in something that is used every day. The rest of the class suggests things they could be experts in, for example, weather, shoes, hair, potatoes, and so on. The volunteers then choose a topic they like, and the experts have to talk about the topic in an invented language that no one understands, using sounds and gestures to answer questions. Each expert has an interpreter sitting next to them. The interpreters listen to the answer given by their expert and then interpret it into Mandarin Chinese. They need to pay attention to the gestures that the experts make. The rest of the class are journalists who are asking the experts questions on the topic, for example, “How can I grow back my hair?” or “What is your favorite hairstyle and why?”</p> <p>As famous writers such as Shakespeare and the Chinese poet Li Bai from the Tang Dynasty are mentioned in the text, students could be asked to choose a famous</p>	

person from the past and become them. As they are characters from the past, an ancient language, unlike the present one, would be used. Therefore, an interpreter is needed.

Table 35. PLT activity: "Experts and interpreters."

To help students to warm-up, practice concentration, and review the Chinese tones, Table 36 below describes the PLT activity called "Tone twister."

<b>PLT ACTIVITY FILE</b>	<b>Name:</b> Tone twister
<b>Duration:</b> 10-15 mins.	<b>Language level:</b> Any level and is suitable for beginners
<b>Number of participants:</b> All the students and the teacher	<b>Difficulty level:</b> Easy
<p>All the students and the teacher form a circle. One syllable is selected to pronounce in different tones, for example, the syllable ma. Then, the teacher uses their right arm, right hand moving from left to right horizontally over the head, and pronounces the syllable in the first tone of voice of Chinese Mandarin. Then, using their right-hand, they pass it to the person on their right in the circle. Then, that person does the same, and everyone in the circle says it in that tone until it comes back around to the teacher. Next, the teacher uses their left arm, left hand with a rising movement from the side of the chest upwards, and pronounces the syllable in the second tone, while passing it on to the student on their left in the circle. All of the students receive and then pass on the second tone of voice. Then, the teacher uses their body, arms, hands, waist, knees, and legs to simulate the third tone of voice. This third tone of voice is then passed around the circle. Finally, the teacher crosses both arms to simulate the fourth tone of voice, which is then practiced by all the students. Once all of the students are familiar with the embodiment of the</p>	



four tones, the game begins. The rules are simple. If someone wishes to pass the tone to the person on their right, they use the first tone and their right arm. If someone wishes to pass the tone to the person on their left, they use the second tone and their left arm. If someone wishes to ‘jump’ and send the tone to someone other than the person on their right or the left, then they should use the third tone. If someone does not wish to receive a tone, they can use the fourth tone to reject it. This game requires students to concentrate and to remember the tones of voice and their correct pronunciation.

Table 36. PLT activity: "Tone twister."

#### 4.5.4 Design of the research study

The study had a pre-test and post-test design with a treatment group using PLT for four months and a control group that followed a traditional method. Figure 33 below illustrates the diagram of the current research study.

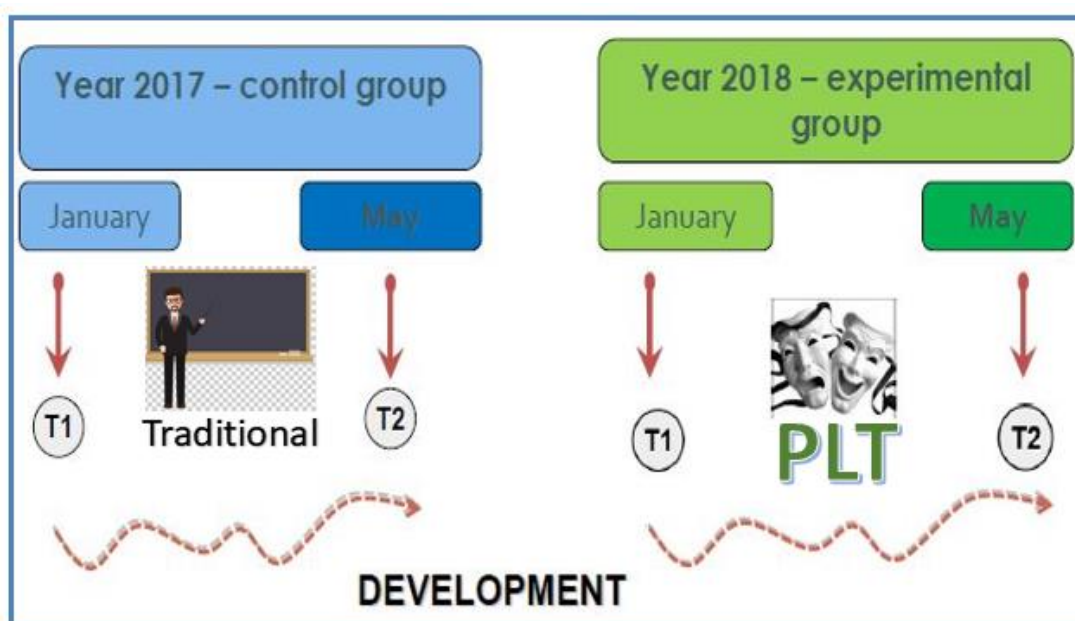


Figure 33. Design of the study: pre-test and post-test.

#### ***4.5.5 Time of the study***

Pre-test

Class 1 (traditional): January 2017.

Class 2 (treatment): January 2018.

Post-test

Class 1 (traditional): May 2017.

Class 2 (treatment): May 2018.

Previous work by Galante and Thomson (2017) and Derwing et al. (2004) showed that the use of raters was reliable to assess the variation of oral skills across tasks for examining the variables of oral fluency, comprehensibility, and accent. In the present study, we recruited 75 native Chinese speaker raters in the assessment. We studied the variation of fluency comprehensibility and accent across tasks.

### **4.6 Data collection and data processing**

#### ***4.6.1 Step 1: Students' task recording (Time 1 pre-test and Time 2 post-test)***

In the current study, we used four pre-test and post-test speaking tasks that were identical at both Time 1 (T1) and Time 2 (T2). Using those tasks, we investigated variations of oral fluency, comprehensibility, and accent in L2 speech over time. The participants performed the first three tasks individually, and the fourth one with the teacher. We gave the learners one minute to prepare and become familiar with each task before starting the tests. If they needed to ask questions about the format or requirements of the test, they could do so before starting the recording. A Huawei GRA-UL10 high-quality digital audio recorder was used to obtain the speech samples.

Each student produced eight digital audio recordings (four tasks in the pre-test and four tasks in the post-test). As there 16 participants, as illustrated in Figure 34, we obtained a total of 128 digital recordings. The recordings of Tasks 1, 2, and 3 were each approximately one minute long, and the recordings of Task 4 were one to two minutes long, depending on the student. Therefore, there were between 128 and 160 mins. (2–3 hours) of raw digital audio recordings.

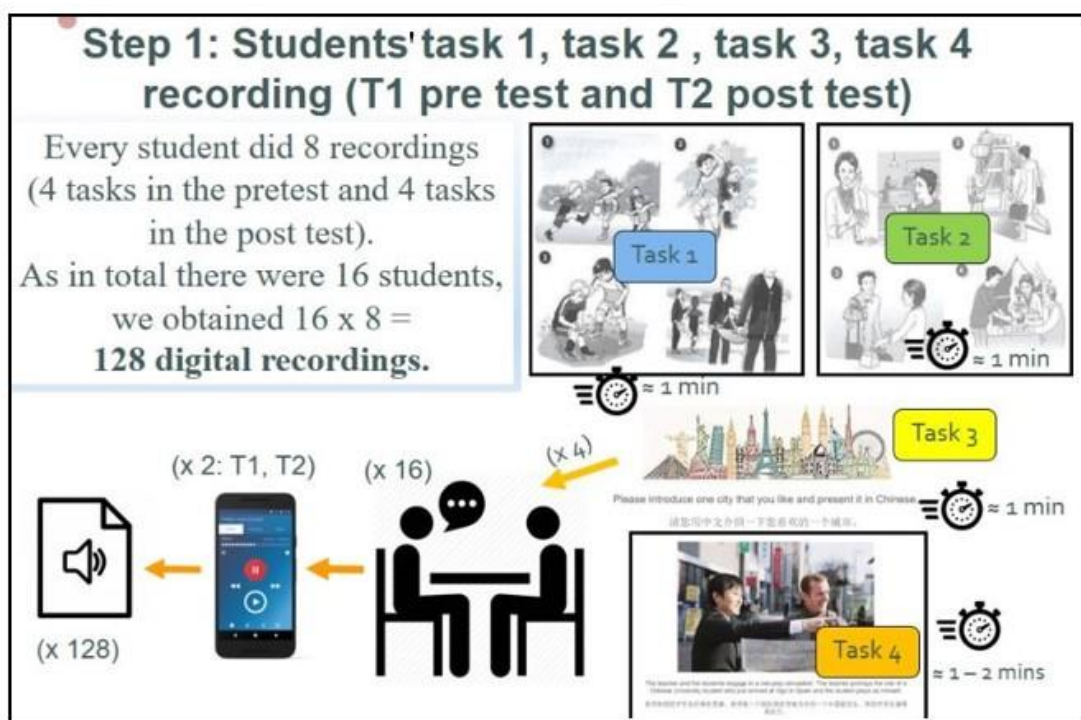


Figure 34. Step 1: Students' Task 1, Task 2, Task 3, Task 4 recordings (Time 1 pre-test, and Time 2 post-test).

On closer inspection of Figure 34, it can be seen that in the lower-left corner, there is a diagram that shows audio recording. This section of Figure 34 was selected and enlarged in Figure 35 for ease of understanding. Starting from the left, (x4) means there were four different tasks that the participants completed. The drawing of a table and two persons means that the person sitting to the right is the teacher/researcher who administered the tasks, and the person sitting to the left represents each participant in the study. As there were a total of 16 participants, there is the (x16) sign. In the center

of the figure, there is a picture of the audio recorder used. As we had a pre-test, T1, and a post-test, T2, we had to repeat the four tasks (x4) with 16 participants (x16) in T1 and T2 twice (x2). In total, these processes produced an output of 128 audio recordings ( $4 \times 2 \times 16 = 128$ ). See Figure 35 below for a visual summary.

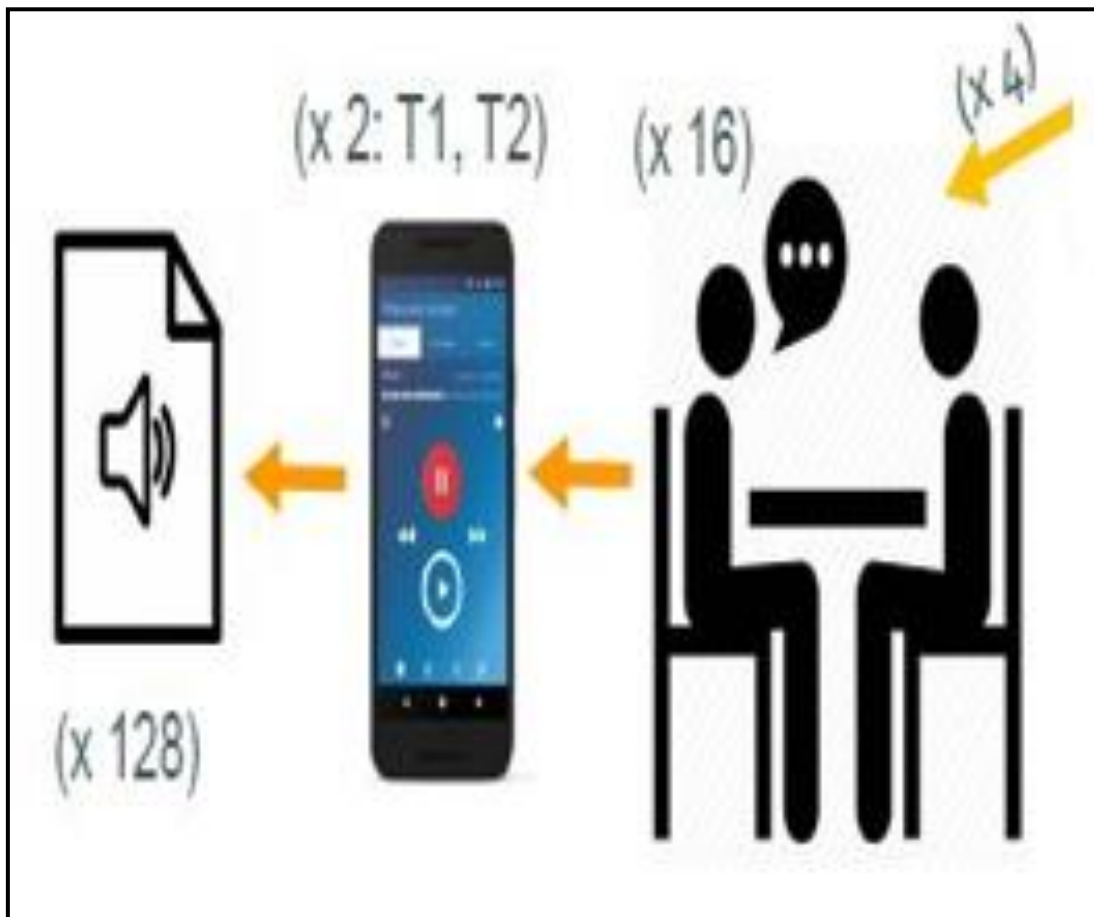


Figure 35. Selection of Step 1: audio recording.

#### ***4.6.2 Step 2: Audio file processing - Audacity software***

All 128 audio raw files were first transferred from the digital recorder to a PC and then converted to WAV format using a free online software <https://audio.online-convert.com/es/convertir-a-wav>.

As Figure 36 illustrates, the files were processed and normalized to remove variation in volume using the audio editor **Audacity**. As well as WAV format, the audio files were exported to MP3 and FLC formats.

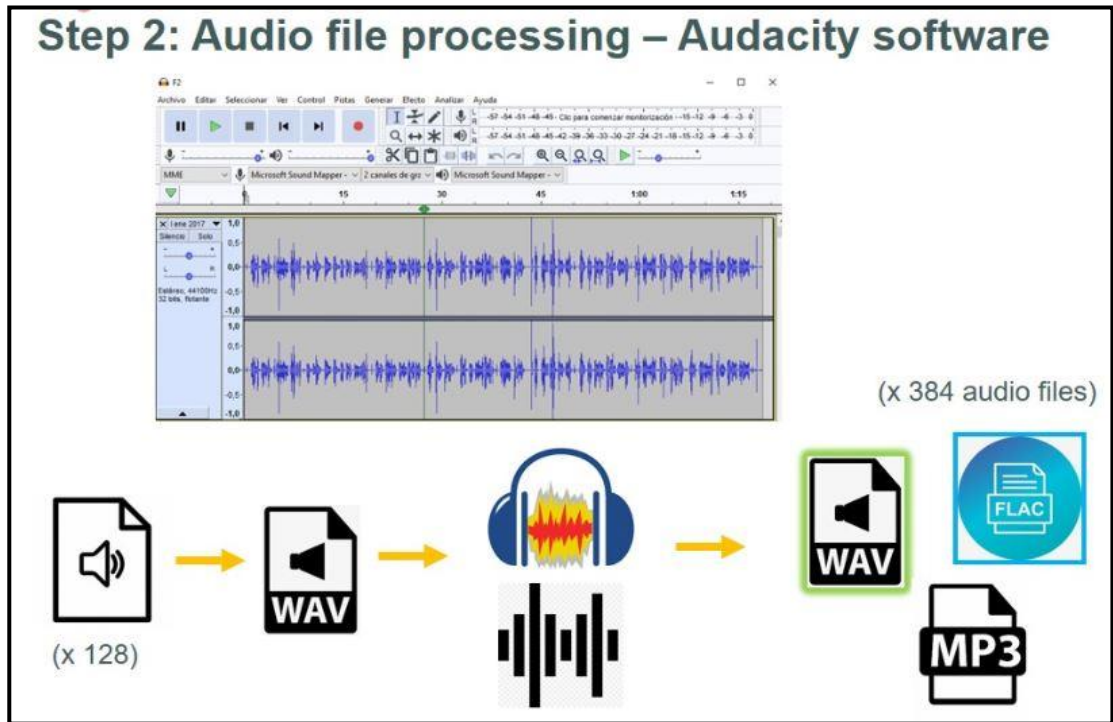


Figure 36. Step 2: Audio file processing - Audacity software.

We used Audacity software to apply several filters to increase the volume and sound quality of the audio files recorded by the students. Figure 37, below, illustrates an example of a participant's recording opened with the Audacity software.

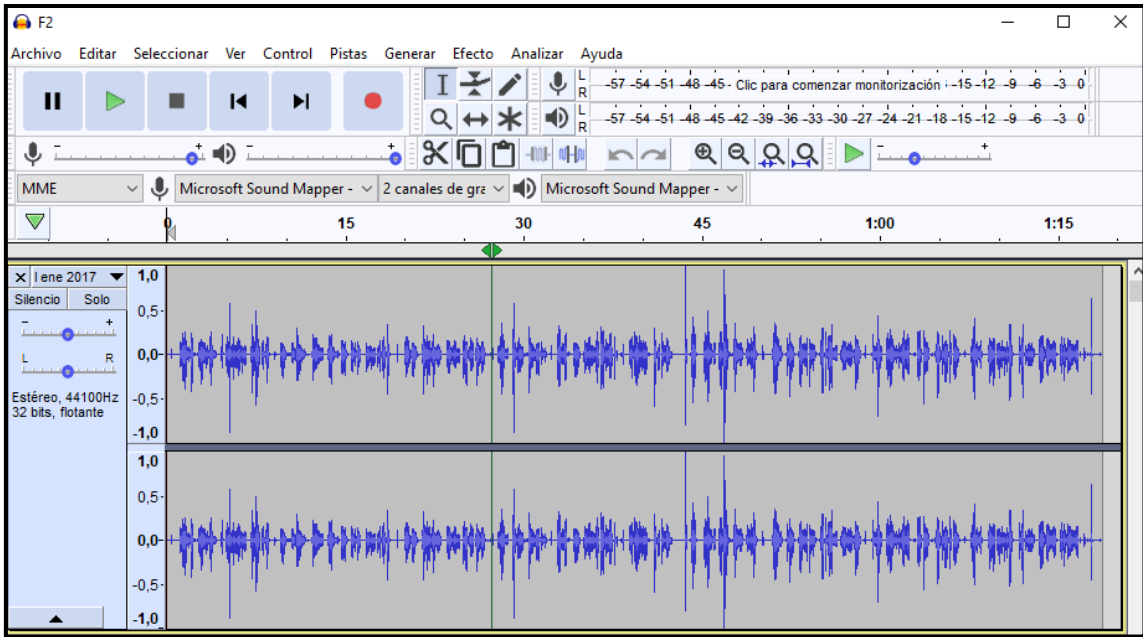


Figure 37. AUDACITY audio editor software.

We converted the 128 original raw data audio recordings from the students to WAV format. We then processed them using Audacity software and later exported them to WAV, MP3, and FLC formats. Figure 38 shows a diagram of the audio processing.

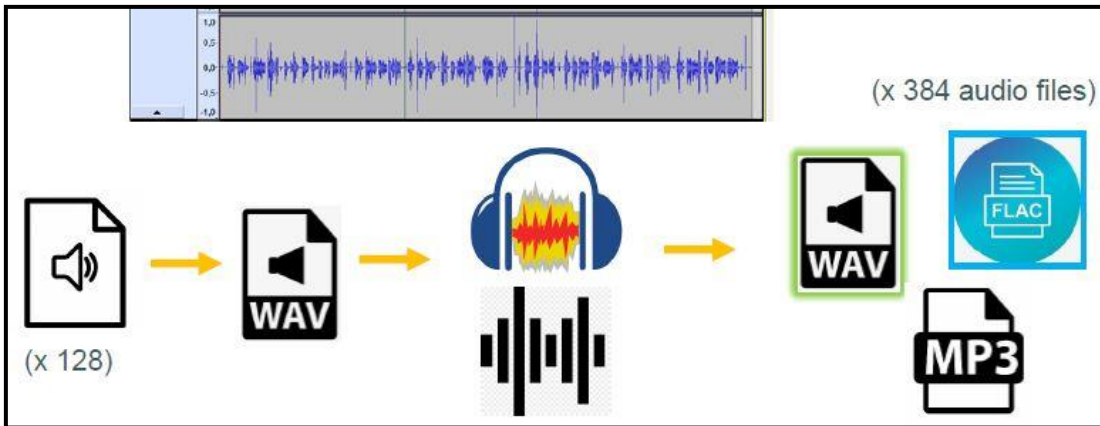


Figure 38. Audio file processing in different formats.

#### 4.6.3 Step 3: Upload audio files to SoundCloud.

The next step was to upload every single audio file onto the Internet using specific software that stores the audio file and makes it available online to be linked to other software and platforms. After having tried several options, we chose **SoundCloud**, a software we used to upload the audio files. Figure 39 illustrates the audio upload process.

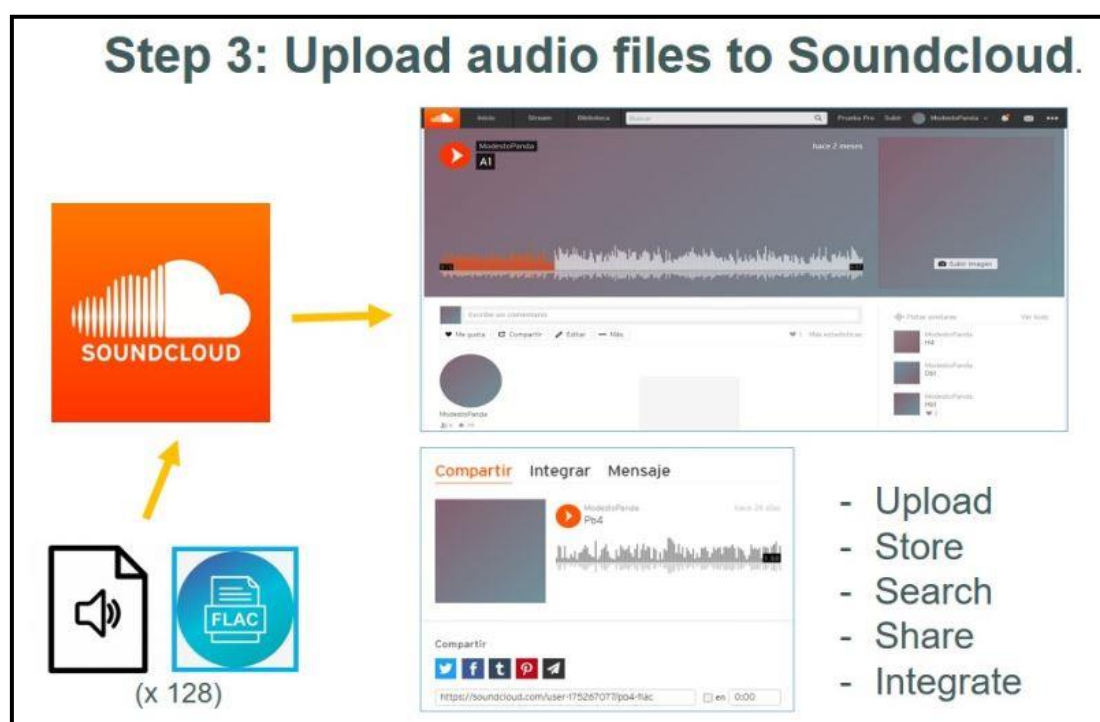


Figure 39. Step 3: Upload audio files to SoundCloud.

With the SoundCloud software and website, all students' recordings were individually uploaded and stored online. One hundred and twenty-eight audio files, one for each student's pre-test and post-test task, were uploaded in the FLC format. Once saved in the cloud, every single file could be shared and integrated with other online platforms. Another advantage of SoundCloud is the interface that allows for a fast search of files, a user-friendly display of the audio with real-time progress, and a

one-click-sharing link that can be embedded in other platforms. Figure 40 below illustrates an example of SoundCloud’s sharing and embedding options.



Figure 40. SoundCloud’s sharing and embedding option.

We labeled every audio file with a different code that corresponds to each student. We used upper case letters (A, B, C, D...) with a number indicating the task for the pre-test recordings and the upper-case letters with a “b” letter to show it was a post-test. (Ab, Bb, Cb...). For example, A1 means student A task1 pre-test, Cb2 means student C task 2 post-test, E3 means student E task 3 pre-test, and G4b means student G task 4 post-test. Table 37 describes some examples of link databases to process audio files in SoundCloud.



#	Audio file	Meaning	SoundCloud File link	Recording Time
#1	A1	Student A task 1 Pre-test	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/user-175267077/a1flac">https://soundcloud.com/user-175267077/a1flac</a>	Jan 2017
#2	Ab1	Student A task 1 Post-test	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/user-175267077/ab1flac">https://soundcloud.com/user-175267077/ab1flac</a>	May 2017
	***	***	***	***
	B1	Student B task 1 Pre-test	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/user-175267077/b1-1">https://soundcloud.com/user-175267077/b1-1</a>	Jan 2017
	Bb1	Student B task 1 Post-test	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/user-175267077/bb1-11">https://soundcloud.com/user-175267077/bb1-11</a>	May 2017
	***	***	***	***
	Hb2	Student H task 2 Post-test	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/user-175267077/hb2flac">https://soundcloud.com/user-175267077/hb2flac</a>	May 2017
	***	***	***	***
	L3	Student L task 3 Pre-test	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/user-175267077/l3-flac">https://soundcloud.com/user-175267077/l3-flac</a>	Jan 2018
	***	***	***	***
#128	Pb4	Student P task 4 Post-test	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/user-175267077/pb4-flac">https://soundcloud.com/user-175267077/pb4-flac</a>	May 2018

Table 37. Example of a link database to processed audio files in SoundCloud.

#### 4.6.4 Step 4: Design rating scales

We created rating scales integrated into the online JotForm forms. We followed scales used in previous studies to measure the three variables of oral fluency, comprehensibility, and accent (Derwing & Munro, 1997, 2013; Derwing et al., 2004; Derwing et al., 2014; Derwing et al., 2014; Galante & Thomson, 2017; Munro & Derwing, 1995b, 1999; Munro, Thomson, & Rossiter, 2009) – see Chapter 3 for detailed explanations.

In the Chinese cultural background, higher points usually mean better ability, but in this study, the opposite applies. Even though it might have seemed counterintuitive for the Chinese raters or even for the Western raters, in the original studies, the rating scales were designed with 1 as the highest score and 9 as the lowest score. Therefore, we decided to follow the original research, and we did not change the ratings. Additionally, to avoid confusion with the raters, we added Chinese/English

reminders for the raters about the scales at the beginning of each online form, after each picture, after each embedded audio file, and when we sent them a digital message in WeChat to explain the rating procedure. We did all this so that the raters would not make accidental scaling mistakes. Table 38 describes the rating scores.

<b>Variable</b>	<b>1 to 9 Scale</b>
<b>Oral Fluency</b>	1 very fluent 非常流利 - 9 very disfluent 一点都不流利
<b>Comprehensibility</b>	1 very easy to understand 很容易听懂 - 9 very hard to understand 一点都听不懂
<b>Accent</b>	1 no foreign accent 没有外国口音 - 9 very strong foreign accent 口音非常重

Table 38. Rating scores for all variables.

At the beginning of each online form, we added brief recommendations to the raters to tell them how to assess the audio recordings. We wrote instructions on how to assess fluency, comprehensibility, and accent. Derwing et al. (2004) had previously used this strategy of adding clarification for raters. These instructions were necessary so that the raters did not confuse fluency with proficiency, and, for example, to remind them that the highest rating was 1, and the lowest was 9. In previous studies, researchers reported that such instructions were sufficient and resulted in reliable ratings (Derwing & Munro, 1997; Derwing et al., 2004). In the original study by Derwing et al. (2004), the instructions were in English. In our case, we showed the text in English and also translated it into Chinese because all the raters were native Chinese speakers. Table 39, below, shows the recommendations for the raters.

### Note to the raters

You will hear several foreign learners of Chinese Mandarin language recordings. What we would like you to do is make three judgments about each sample. 您将听到一些外国学生的汉语录音。希望您能给每个录音做三个方面的评价。

First, we will ask you to rate fluency. This is the flow of the language—does the person have problems finding words, using a lot of ums and ahs, or pauses, or do the words come easily? Do not worry about grammar mistakes—that doesn't matter. Therefore, someone who is very fluent—that is, the words just flow with no struggle, would be at close to 1, while someone who has a hard time expressing him or herself would be closer to 9. 第一，口语流利度。他说得流利吗？有很多停顿吗？他花很多时间思考吗？注意：不要重视语法错误，只要看他/她的口语流利度。所以，表达比较流畅的人接近 1 分，很难表达自己想法的人给 9 分。

Second, we will ask you to say how easy or difficult the sample is to understand, using a 9-point scale. You might be able to understand everything but it may require a lot of effort on your part—so what we are interested in is the effort you put in. Can you understand it without even thinking about it, or do you have to work at it? 1 means very easy to understand and 9 means very hard to understand. 第二，用 1-9 分判定你能听懂的程度。很容易听得懂还是很难？也许你仔细听的话全部能听懂，所以我们感兴趣的是你是否很费劲去理解才能听懂。你能在不思考的情况下听懂吗，或者你必须想一想才能听懂？1 分是很容易听懂，9 分是很难听懂。

Third, we are interested in accent. We all have accents, but what we are interested in knowing is how different the speakers' accents are from a standard Chinese Mandarin accent. Accent is different from comprehensibility—you might be able to understand somebody easily and still hear a heavy accent. Again, the scale is 1-9: 1 = no accent and 9 = extremely heavy accent. 第三，口音。我们都有口音，但我们感兴趣的是，说话者的口音与标准的汉语普通话有多大的不同。每个人对口音的理解不一样，也就是说，尽管有人口音很重，但对你来说很容易听懂。同样，我们也用 1-9 分来打分，1 分代表没有口音，9 分代表口音很重。

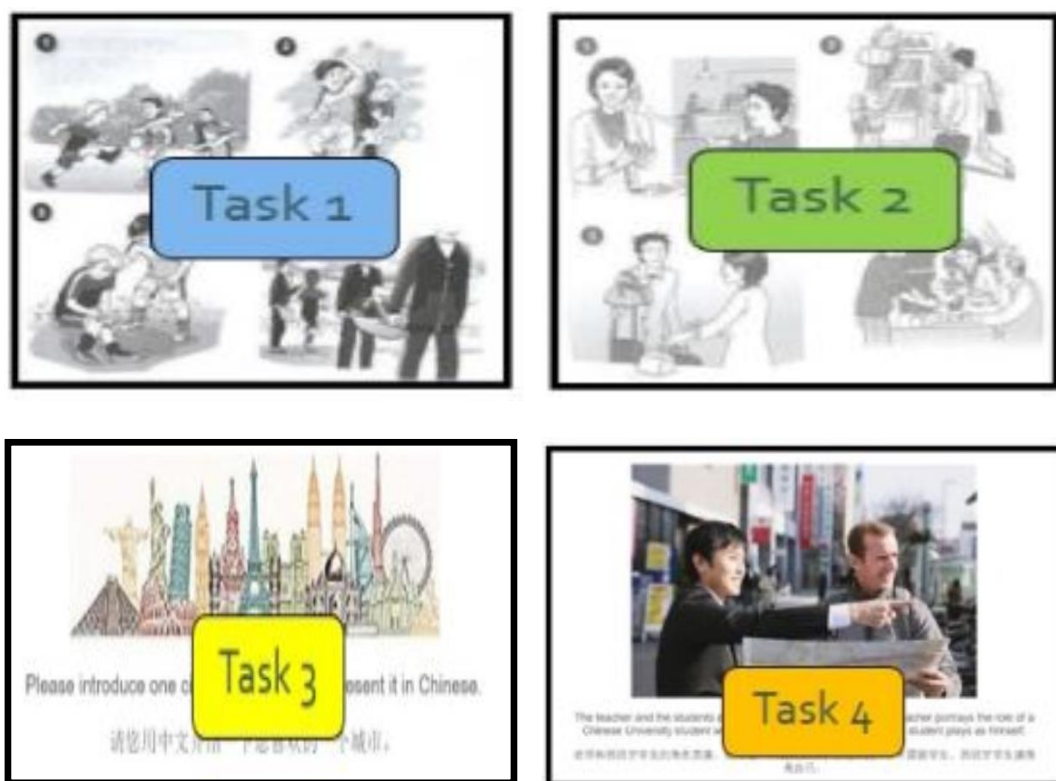
We would like you to try to use the whole scale over the course of the experiment. Please listen to the whole sample before making your decisions. 我们希望你能充分利用这次实验的评分范围。请完整听完录音后再打分。

Table 39. Recommendations to the raters. Adapted from Derwing, Rossiter, Munro and Thomson (2004).

#### 4.6.5 Step 5: Integrate tasks in the online form

Once we had all the audio files uploaded onto SoundCloud, the most challenging part was to find suitable software to create forms that could integrate the text and pictures, and be able to have embedded audio links from SoundCloud. These forms needed to be suitable for smartphones, tablets, and computers and needed to have a simple yet effective design. After testing several different software platforms, we decided to use JotForm ([www.jotform.com](http://www.jotform.com)).

With JotForm software, we designed the online forms, including the text, pictures, and question items, according to the rating scales. All the text in the online forms was bilingual in English and Mandarin Chinese (simplified characters). Figure 41 illustrates an example of an integrated form in JotForm.



HT1 Fluency 流利度 1 very fluent 非常流利 --- 9 very disfluent 一点都不流利 \*

1  2  
 3  4  
 5  6  
 7  8  
 9

HT1 Comprehensibility 是否能听懂 1 very easy to understand 很容易听懂 --- 9 very hard to understand 一点都听不懂 \*

1  2  
 3  4  
 5  6  
 7  8  
 9

HT1 Accent 口音 1 no foreign accent 没有外国口音 --- 9 very strong foreign accent 口音非常重 \*

1  2  
 3  4  
 5  6  
 7  6  
 9

Figure 41. Integrating the tasks in Jotform.

We added the pictures for each task to the JotForm online form so that the raters could see the image that was given to the students for their narration.

As we have explained above, there were 16 participants in this study (8 for the control group and 8 for the treatment group). Each participant was coded with a letter, starting with the letter A and finishing with the letter P: A – B – C – D – E – F – G – H – I – J – K – L – M – N – O – P.

In order to have more suitable forms for the raters that could be completed in approximately 10–15 minutes and could also be easily uploaded, streamed online, and completed using a smartphone, tablet, or computer, we decided to split them into five groups, four groups of three students and one group of four students.

16 (students) = 3 + 3 + 4 + 3 + 3. That is, 16 students (A – B – C – D – E – F – G – H – I – J – K – L – M – N – O – P) = 3 students (A – B – C) + 3 students (E - F- G) + 4 students (D – H – M – N) + 3 students (I – J – K) + 3 students (L – O – P).

Therefore, twenty online forms were created, five forms for each of the four tasks. (5 x 4 = 20). Each form from the groups of three (ABC, EFG, IJK, and LOP) had three different students' recordings of the pre-test and the post-test. In other words, there were six recordings in each form (3 students x 2 recordings/student = 6 recordings). One form had four students (DHMN) with eight recordings. (4 students x 2 recordings/student = 8 recordings). The forms were named with the students' codes and stored in the JotForm server <https://form.jotforme.com/> (form code). Table 40, below, describes a list of the forms used.

<b>ABC</b>	T1	<a href="https://form.jotforme.com/83635737414361">https://form.jotforme.com/83635737414361</a>	1
<b>ABC</b>	T2	<a href="https://form.jotforme.com/...">https://form.jotforme.com/... (code)</a>	2
<b>ABC</b>	T3	<a href="https://form.jotforme.com/...">https://form.jotforme.com/... (code)</a>	3
<b>ABC</b>	T4	<a href="https://form.jotforme.com/...">https://form.jotforme.com/... (code)</a>	4
<b>EFG</b>	T1	<a href="https://form.jotforme.com/...">https://form.jotforme.com/... (code)</a>	5
<b>EFG</b>	T2	<a href="https://form.jotforme.com/...">https://form.jotforme.com/... (code)</a>	6
<b>EFG</b>	T3	<a href="https://form.jotforme.com/...">https://form.jotforme.com/... (code)</a>	7
<b>EFG</b>	T4	<a href="https://form.jotforme.com/90985247187370">https://form.jotforme.com/90985247187370</a>	8
<b>DHMN</b>	T1	<a href="https://form.jotforme.com/...">https://form.jotforme.com/... (code)</a>	9
<b>DHMN</b>	T2	<a href="https://form.jotforme.com/...">https://form.jotforme.com/... (code)</a>	10
<b>DHMN</b>	T3	<a href="https://form.jotforme.com/90975169317367">https://form.jotforme.com/90975169317367</a>	11
<b>DHMN</b>	T4	<a href="https://form.jotforme.com/...">https://form.jotforme.com/... (code)</a>	12
<b>IJK</b>	T1	<a href="https://form.jotforme.com/...">https://form.jotforme.com/... (code)</a>	13
<b>IJK</b>	T2	<a href="https://form.jotforme.com/...">https://form.jotforme.com/... (code)</a>	14
<b>IJK</b>	T3	<a href="https://form.jotforme.com/90984764117366">https://form.jotforme.com/90984764117366</a>	15
<b>IJK</b>	T4	<a href="https://form.jotforme.com/...">https://form.jotforme.com/... (code)</a>	16
<b>LOP</b>	T1	<a href="https://form.jotforme.com/...">https://form.jotforme.com/... (code)</a>	17
<b>LOP</b>	T2	<a href="https://form.jotforme.com/90942460629361">https://form.jotforme.com/90942460629361</a>	18
<b>LOP</b>	T3	<a href="https://form.jotforme.com/...">https://form.jotforme.com/... (code)</a>	19
<b>LOP</b>	T4	<a href="https://form.jotforme.com/...">https://form.jotforme.com/... (code)</a>	20

Table 40. List of all 20 Jotform online forms with five example links.

#### 4.6.6 Step 6: Embed audio in the online form.

We uploaded the audio links for the SoundCloud Raters to the online forms so that the raters could see the picture and listen to each recording simultaneously. Additionally, the raters could play the audio files as many times as they wished before making their assessments.

We would like to highlight that we introduced here a critical technological and methodological difference in our research. As we have explained above, in previous studies with no online forms, using traditional paper forms, the raters were shown the pictures. They then listened to the recordings played by the researchers, but they only had five seconds to rate each recording and had no control over when they could listen to them. In the past, the raters all needed to do their job at the same time and in the same location. In our study, thanks to the use of new information technologies and the Internet, the raters could be in any part of the world that can freely access the Internet.

We successfully integrated the audio from the SoundCloud software onto the online forms. Figure 42 illustrates student E, task 1, pre-test, and duration 1:07 mins.

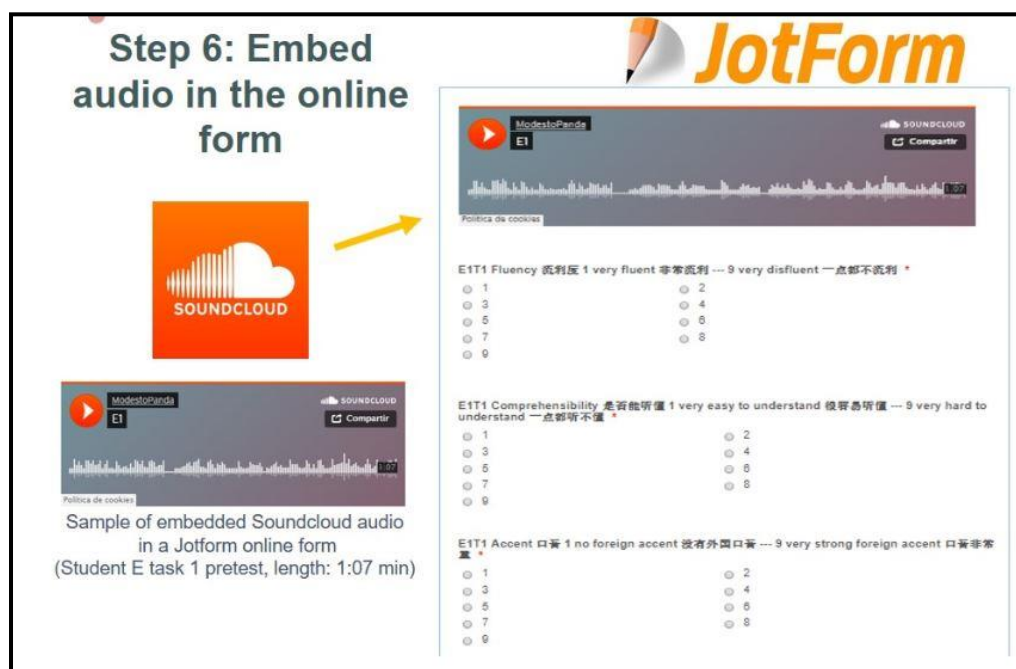


Figure 42. Sample of embedded SoundCloud audio in a JotForm online form.

Figure 43 below shows an example of part of an online form that has already embedded audio from SoundCloud:



The screenshot displays an online form with an embedded audio player at the top. The audio player is from SoundCloud, showing a waveform and a play button. Below the audio player, there are three rating scales, each with a title in English and Chinese, and a scale from 1 to 9. The scales are:

- E1T1 Fluency** 流利度 1 very fluent 非常流利 --- 9 very disfluent 一点都不流利 \*
- E1T1 Comprehensibility** 是否能听懂 1 very easy to understand 很容易听懂 --- 9 very hard to understand 一点都听不懂 \*
- E1T1 Accent** 口音 1 no foreign accent 沒有外國口音 --- 9 very strong foreign accent 口音非常重 \*

Figure 43. Example of the embedded audio on an online rating form.



#### 4.6.7 Step 7: Integration of JotForm with Google Drive and Email.

Each online form was integrated with Google Drive. Each time one form was completed by a rater, the data (from 1 to 9) of all the variables were automatically synced to Google Sheets stored in Google Drive. Each form had its own Google Sheet. Figure 44 illustrates the integration of the online forms with Google Drive and Hotmail.

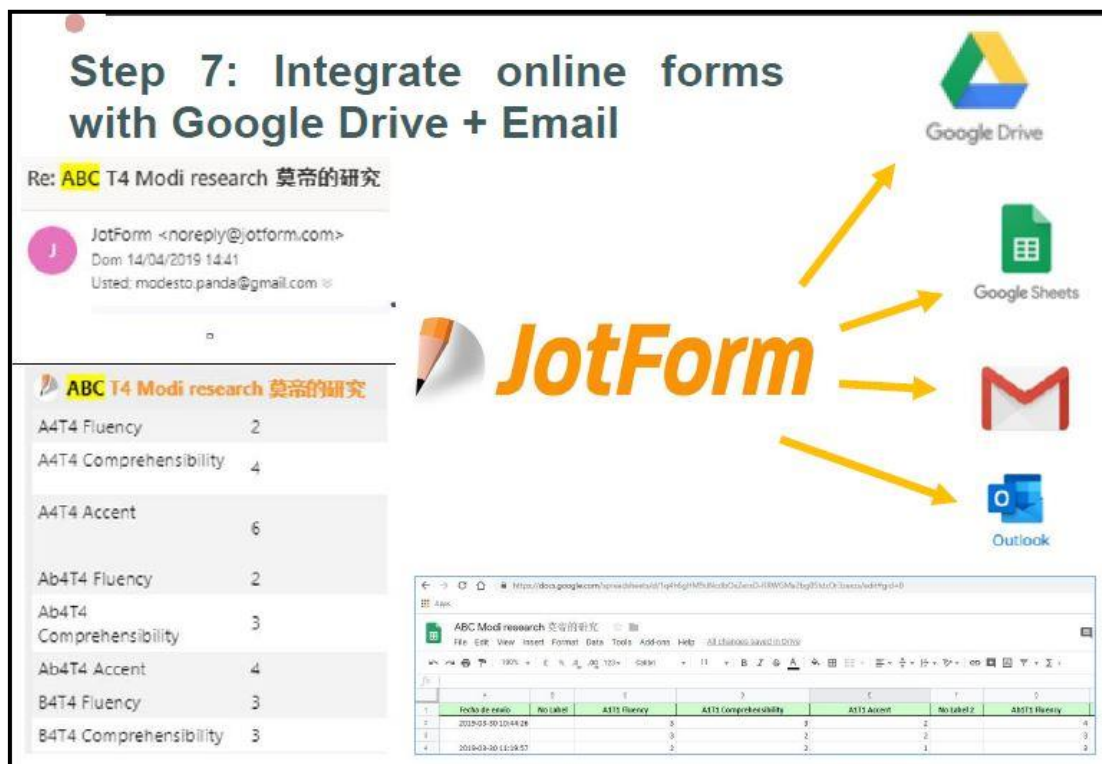


Figure 44. Integrating online forms in JotForm with Google + Gmail and Hotmail.

Figure 45 below provides an example of the Cloud storage of Jotform with Google Drive.

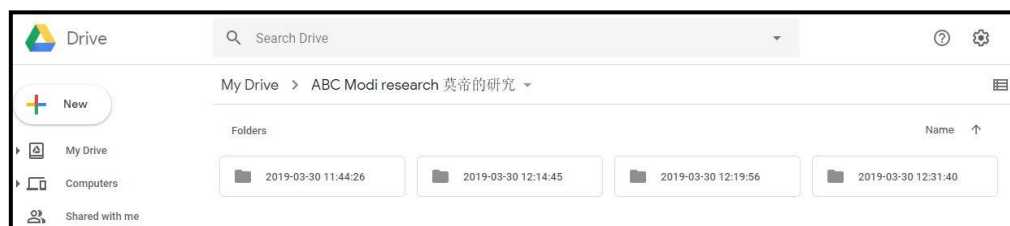


Figure 45. Integration of Jotform and Google Drive.

Every time a rater completed a new form, the system automatically added that information to a new line on the Google Sheets document. All the raters' responses were automatically stored in the Google Drive online Cloud server. Figure 46 illustrates an example of the results from raters stored in the Cloud server of Google Sheets.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Fecha de envío	No Label	A1T1 Fluency	A1T1 Comprehensibility	A1T1 Accent	No Label 2	Ab1T1 Fluency
2	2019-03-30 10:44:26		3	3	2		4
3			3	2	2		3
4	2019-03-30 11:19:57		2	2	1		3


Figure 46. Integration of Jotform and Google Sheet.

### Integration of Jotform with Email

In addition, every time a rater completed one form, all the data were automatically sent by email, in text format, to the author's email accounts, one in Gmail, and the other in Hotmail (as a backup). The goal was to keep track of the raters' progress. Figure 47 shows a sample of an email sent after a rater completed form ABC, Task 4.

Re: **ABC** T4 Modi research 莫帝的研究

 JotForm <noreply@jotform.com>  
 Dom 14/04/2019 14:41  
 Usted: modesto.panda@gmail.com

 **ABC** T4 Modi research 莫帝的研究

A4T4 Fluency	2
A4T4 Comprehensibility	4
A4T4 Accent	6
Ab4T4 Fluency	2
Ab4T4 Comprehensibility	3
Ab4T4 Accent	4
B4T4 Fluency	3
B4T4 Comprehensibility	3
B4T4 Accent	6
Bb4T4 Fluency	4
Bb4T4 Comprehensibility	4
Bb4T4 Accent	5
C4T4 Fluency	3
C4T4 Comprehensibility	2
C4T4 Accent	6
Cb4T4 Fluency	4
Cb4T4 Comprehensibility	3
Cb4T4 Accent	5

Figure 47. Sample of email sent after a rater completed form ABC Task 4.

#### 4.6.8 Step 8: Online raters

In previous studies, the researchers took excerpts of initial speech samples from the beginning of the picture descriptions and the monologue tasks from the participants and prepared the stimuli for the raters. Table 41 compares the length of the rating speech samples employed in past studies with the current research.

<b>Study</b>	<b>Rating Stimulus Preparation</b>
<b>Munro &amp; Derwing (1995b)</b>	Excerpt: the initial 30 seconds of the narrative from each speaker.
<b>Derwing &amp; Munro (1997)</b>	Each sample was between 4.5 and 10.5 seconds long.
<b>Munro &amp; Derwing (1999)</b>	Excerpt: the initial 30 seconds of the narrative from each speaker.
<b>Derwing, Rossiter, Munro &amp; Thomson (2004)</b>	Excerpt: the initial 30-seconds from the beginning of the picture narrative and monologue. The initial 90-s samples from the beginning of the dialogue task.
<b>Derwing, Thomson &amp; Munro (2006)</b>	Excerpt: the initial 30 seconds of the narrative from each speaker.
<b>Derwing, Munro &amp; Thomson (2008)</b>	Excerpt: the initial 20 seconds of the narrative from each speaker.
<b>Derwing, Munro, Thomson, &amp; Rossiter (2009)</b>	Excerpt: the initial 30 seconds from the Mandarin and Slavic L1 narratives and the initial 20 seconds of the same speakers' L2 English productions.
<b>Derwing &amp; Munro (2013)</b>	Excerpt: initial 20-25 seconds of the narrative from each speaker.
<b>Derwing, Munro, Foote, Waugh, &amp; Fleming (2014)</b>	Excerpt: the initial 20 seconds from the picture description and the initial 30 seconds of the monologue from each speaker.
<b>Galante &amp; Thomson (2017)</b>	Excerpt: the initial 20-seconds from the beginning of the picture narratives and monologues. The initial 90-s samples from the beginning of the dialogue task
<b><u>Current study:</u> Corderi Novoa (2020)</b>	<b>Full length</b> of speech samples of all speakers and in all tasks.

Table 41. Comparison table stimuli from previous research.

However, in our study, we decided to use full speech audio files for the speaking tasks. This methodology was chosen as a way to compensate for the relatively small number of participants and, simultaneously, fulfill our goal to obtain more precise measurement than previous studies. Regarding Task 4, we followed past research studies and gave the raters the dialogue with both the participant and the

researcher. According to Derwing et al. (2004, p. 664), “The listeners were asked to focus on the person asking the questions in the conversation task”, confirming that they did include the responses from the researcher. In addition, in Galante and Thomson’s (2017) study, they also gave the raters the full audio file, including the researcher’s parts of the interactions. They stressed that what is more important is that the researcher in each sample should hopefully be the same person so that there is no interlocutor effect. In our study, both at the data collection and interviews both at both Time 1 and Time 2, the teacher was the same, i.e., the author of this research.

Another methodological and technological difference is that in past studies, all the raters had to be in a room at the same time, where they had to listen to all the stimuli and only had a few seconds to choose a number in the scale and assign it to each speaker. However, in our study, we used integrated online forms that could be accessed at any place in the world, at any time. The raters, who were all information technology users, had the opportunity to use the Internet and complete the rating. We strongly believe that our study will benefit from having the full output speech files from the participants. Therefore, our audio files for the pictured description and monologue tasks have a length of approximately 60 seconds. Similarly, in previous studies, because the role-play (Task 4) “was longer than the other tasks and included speech produced by the first author, a 1:30-minute excerpt was taken from the beginning of each of these recordings” (Galante & Thomson, 2017, p. 124). Nevertheless, in our study, we used the full recording for Task 4 (length: 1–2 minutes, average duration: 1:42 minutes of recorded speech). Consequently, we decided to provide raters with all the possible available input information, hoping that it would lead to a more accurate assessment in terms of oral fluency, comprehensibility, and accent.

As mentioned above, due to the People's Republic of China Internet regulations, the online forms were not available to residents of mainland China. The Chinese Internet Great Wall blocks various software and websites from other countries. Therefore, we selected raters who were Chinese nationals living outside Mainland China, usually native Chinese speakers who live in the European Union (mainly Spain and Portugal) and the USA. Seventy-five native Chinese raters were selected and randomly assigned to different forms. We would like to thank them for their help, as they volunteered to take part in this research without any kind of economic retribution in exchange.

Using the most popular Chinese chatting app, WeChat, we contacted the raters using our personal contact list. We sent a message in Chinese, inviting them to participate in the rating process. In the message, there was a link of one form with a link for one task. Once they had completed the task, they were sent another for Task 2, then Task 3, and finally Task 4. This whole process could take from several days to a couple of weeks, depending on how busy the raters were. Figure 48 illustrates the process of the online integration of the 75 raters.



Figure 48. Online raters' integration.

Once the raters had completed a form, the JotForm software stored the results in the Cloud Server. Figure 49 shows an example of completed online forms.

<input type="checkbox"/>	★	<b>11</b>	<b>LOP T1 Modi research 莫帝的研究</b>	11 Envíos. Modificado en Mar 31, 2019.
<input type="checkbox"/>	★	<b>25</b>	<b>IJK T1 Modi research 莫帝的研究</b>	25 Envíos. Modificado en Mar 31, 2019.
<input type="checkbox"/>	★	<b>10</b>	<b>DHMN T1 Modi research 莫帝的研究</b>	10 Envíos. Modificado en Mar 31, 2019.
<input type="checkbox"/>	★	<b>14</b>	<b>EFG T1 Modi research 莫帝的研究</b>	14 Envíos. Modificado en Mar 31, 2019.
<input type="checkbox"/>	★	<b>20</b>	<b>ABC T1 Modi research 莫帝的研究</b>	20 Envíos. Modificado en Mar 31, 2019.

Figure 49. Sample of completed rated forms in Jotform.

#### 4.6.9 Step 9: Data export

After collecting all the data, we exported the information stored on the Cloud from Google Sheets to Microsoft Excel. Then, once we had successfully converted the data to Microsoft Excel format, we organized the data according to the control or treatment group, pre-test or post-test, student ID, and task number. Figure 50 below illustrates the process of data export from Google Sheets to Microsoft Excel.

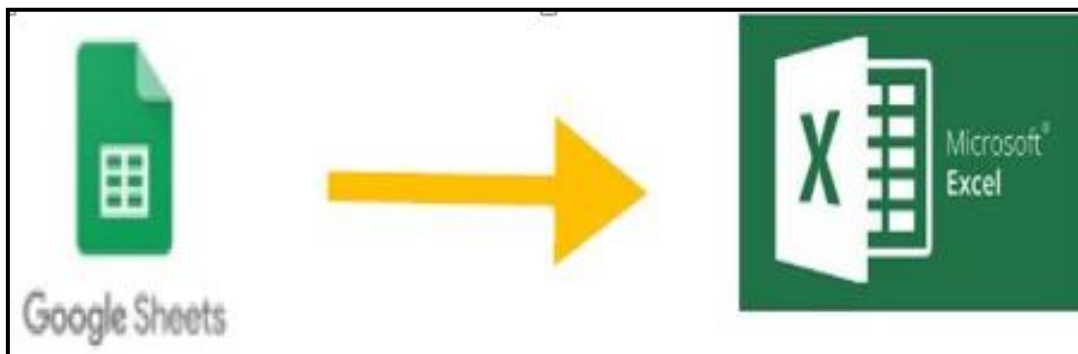


Figure 50. Step 9: Data export (Google Sheets to Microsoft Excel).

Finally, we exported the data from Microsoft Excel to a Statistical software: Stata IC version 13.1 for further analysis (see Chapter 5 for a discussion of the findings). Figure 51 displays data organized in Microsoft Excel.



ID	group	Task_#	Student	Fluency_T1	Comprehensibility_T1	Accent_T1	Fluency_T2	Comprehensibility_T2	Accent_T2	Student
1	control	1	A	6.26666667	6.53333333	7.8	5.8	6.4	7.46666667	A
2	control	1	B	6.33333333	5.53333333	6.2	6.13333333	6	6.06666667	B
3	control	1	C	7.4	6.66666667	7.06666667	7.06666667	6.8	7.46666667	C
4	control	1	D	6.66666667	3	5.53333333	6.13333333	1.53333333	5.06666667	D
5	control	1	E	7	4.4	7.13333333	6.13333333	4.8	6.26666667	E
6	control	1	F	4.26666667	4.8	6	4.66666667	4.93333333	6	F
7	control	1	G	7.6	6.53333333	6.8	6.93333333	6.26666667	6.73333333	G
8	control	1	H	5.53333333	4.73333333	5.4	5.26666667	3.93333333	4.73333333	H
9	experimental	1	I	7	6.93333333	7.46666667	2.13333333	2.33333333	4.8	I
10	experimental	1	J	4.53333333	3.86666667	4.93333333	1.93333333	2.4	3.33333333	J
11	experimental	1	K	5.6	4.8	5.86666667	2.53333333	2.53333333	4.26666667	K
12	experimental	1	L	6.93333333	5.73333333	7.13333333	2.53333333	3.66666667	5.13333333	L
13	experimental	1	M	4.13333333	3.26666667	3.53333333	2.66666667	2.33333333	3.6	M
14	experimental	1	N	4.13333333	3.66666667	4.93333333	2.46666667	3.93333333	4.4	N
15	experimental	1	O	4.26666667	3.46666667	4.8	2.33333333	1.8	3.4	O
16	experimental	1	P	7.13333333	6.4	6.6	3.33333333	3.93333333	4.73333333	P
1	control	2	A	3.4	3.8	5.86666667	2.93333333	3.66666667	5.33333333	A
2	control	2	B	3.13333333	2.86666667	4.2	3.4	3	3.86666667	B
3	control	2	C	4.26666667	3.73333333	4.73333333	4.13333333	3.66666667	5.06666667	C
4	control	2	D	6.06666667	5.13333333	6.26666667	5.4	4.53333333	5.33333333	D
5	control	2	E	6.26666667	5.26666667	5.33333333	5.2	4.26666667	4.66666667	E
6	control	2	F	3.73333333	3.53333333	4.93333333	4.4	3.6	4.8	F
7	control	2	G	5.73333333	4.46666667	5.33333333	5.86666667	4.8	5.13333333	G
8	control	2	H	4.86666667	4.13333333	5.46666667	5.53333333	5.13333333	6.2	H
9	experimental	2	I	5.26666667	5.4	5.66666667	3.53333333	3.6	4.66666667	I
10	experimental	2	J	5	3.53333333	4.13333333	2.73333333	2.53333333	3.06666667	J
11	experimental	2	K	4.73333333	3.53333333	4.6	3.33333333	3	4.4	K
12	experimental	2	L	5.73333333	5.8	5.73333333	5	5.13333333	5.4	L
13	experimental	2	M	4.8	4	5.13333333	4	3.66666667	4.93333333	M
14	experimental	2	N	5.13333333	4.73333333	6.13333333	4.13333333	4.13333333	5.8	N
15	experimental	2	O	5.13333333	4.2	4.93333333	3.66666667	3.06666667	3.66666667	O
16	experimental	2	P	4.8	4.6	5.53333333	4.06666667	4	4.86666667	P
1	control	3	A	4	4.06666667	5.66666667	3.8	4.26666667	5.8	A
2	control	3	B	4.66666667	4.53333333	5.13333333	4.13333333	3.93333333	4.86666667	B
3	control	3	C	5.53333333	4.93333333	5.8	4.86666667	4.86666667	6	C
4	control	3	D	6.73333333	4.53333333	6.06666667	5	3.73333333	5.73333333	D
5	control	3	E	5.46666667	4.26666667	5.93333333	4.66666667	4.73333333	5.73333333	E
6	control	3	F	3.66666667	3.2	4.86666667	3.26666667	2.86666667	4.6	F
7	control	3	G	5.8	5.26666667	6.6	5.33333333	4.93333333	6.6	G
8	control	3	H	5.73333333	4.6	6.13333333	4.93333333	5.26666667	6	H
9	experimental	3	I	6.93333333	6.86666667	6.86666667	5.33333333	4.93333333	5.93333333	I
10	experimental	3	J	3.2	3.4	4.2	2.53333333	2.33333333	3.53333333	J
11	experimental	3	K	3.33333333	3	3.93333333	2.46666667	2.26666667	3.8	K
12	experimental	3	L	5.26666667	5.46666667	5.8	4.4	4.73333333	5.4	L
13	experimental	3	M	4.8	4.46666667	5.46666667	4.8	4.13333333	5.13333333	M
14	experimental	3	N	4.33333333	4.93333333	5.73333333	3.8	4.6	5.4	N
15	experimental	3	O	3.4	2.86666667	4	2.46666667	2	3.66666667	O
16	experimental	3	P	4.73333333	4.93333333	7.2	3.93333333	4.73333333	6.4	P
1	control	4	A	2.4	2.66666667	4.46666667	2.6	3.06666667	4.26666667	A
2	control	4	B	2.93333333	3.06666667	4.13333333	3.66666667	3.66666667	4.53333333	B
3	control	4	C	4.6	4.2	5.66666667	4	4.13333333	5.26666667	C
4	control	4	D	4.6	3.93333333	5.2	4.66666667	4.33333333	5	D
5	control	4	E	4.33333333	3.93333333	5	4	3.33333333	5.06666667	E
6	control	4	F	2.2	2.2	4.2	2.26666667	2.33333333	4.33333333	F
7	control	4	G	5.46666667	4.6	5.8	4.86666667	4.4	5.53333333	G
8	control	4	H	4.66666667	4.33333333	5.86666667	5.4	5.13333333	6.33333333	H
9	experimental	4	I	3.86666667	4	4.86666667	3.4	3.46666667	4.73333333	I
10	experimental	4	J	2.53333333	2.4	3.33333333	1.93333333	1.86666667	3.33333333	J
11	experimental	4	K	4.2	3.6	4.66666667	3.6	3.13333333	4.46666667	K
12	experimental	4	L	4.46666667	4.13333333	5.13333333	3.73333333	3.53333333	5.06666667	L
13	experimental	4	M	5.46666667	4.46666667	5.33333333	4.46666667	4.26666667	5.73333333	M
14	experimental	4	N	4.6	4.33333333	6.2	4.33333333	4.13333333	5.8	N
15	experimental	4	O	5.73333333	4.53333333	4.93333333	3.46666667	3.13333333	4	O
16	experimental	4	P	4.66666667	4.33333333	5.13333333	4.46666667	4.26666667	5	P

Figure 51. Google Sheets to Microsoft Excel Data export (Note: 1= highest score, 9= lowest score).

#### 4.6.10 Summary of the process

Figure 52 displays a flow chart summary of the data gathering and processing procedure of the current research:

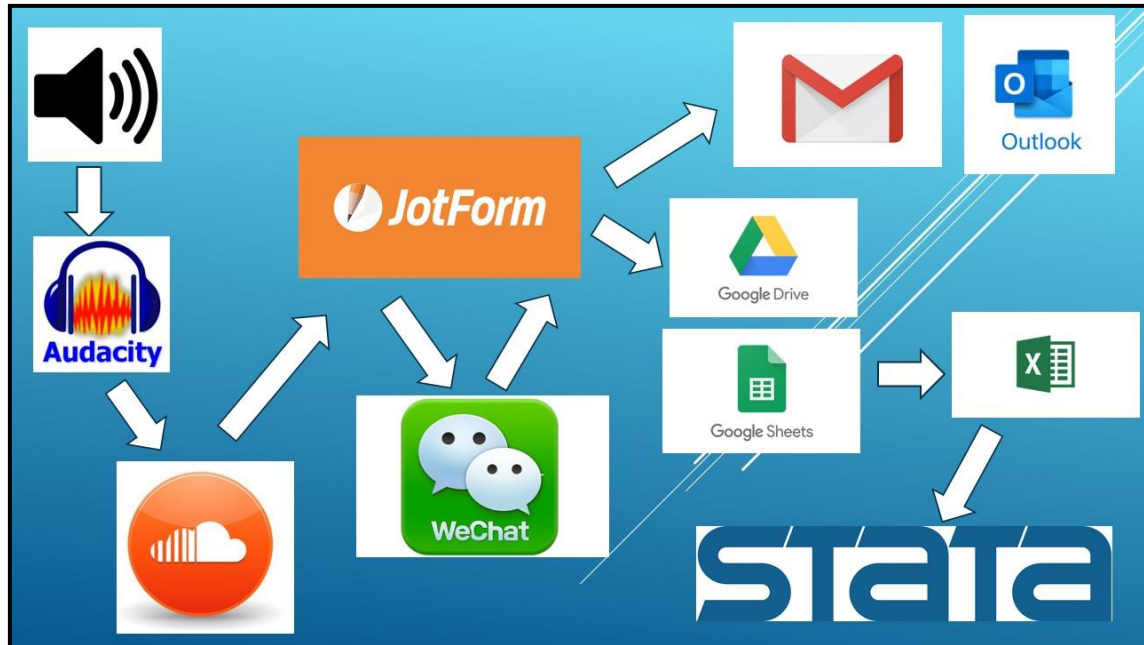


Figure 52. Data collection, processing, and analysis Flow Chart.

1. Digitally record students' speech samples.
2. Process audio files with Audacity software.
3. Upload the processed audio files to SoundCloud.
4. Create online forms with pictures, text, and embedded audio links using JotForm.
5. Send the online forms to the raters via WeChat.
6. Raters complete the online forms.
7. The system sends data to Gmail and Hotmail accounts and Google Drive – Google Sheets.
8. Export Google Sheets data to MS Excel.
9. Export MS Excel data to STATA statistical software for further analysis.

This chapter has introduced the rationale of the study, the research questions, and the hypothesis. We have also described the context of the study; we provided detailed information about the participants, the 75 raters, and the four tasks employed. In addition, we explained in detail the methodology used in the research, the teaching procedures, the traditional comparison program (control group), and the PLT program (treatment group). We specifically compared the different methods used in the Chinese classroom in the control group versus the treatment group. Additionally, we described the design and time frame of our study.

The last section of this chapter has described the data collection and data processing used in our research in detail. Several of the procedures for data collection and processing have never been used in previous research. We decided to integrate several technologies to facilitate the process. The most complicated technological challenge was the integration of audio from the Cloud using SoundCloud software combined with JotForm software and Google Drive. This integration allowed the raters to access information from different countries and using different devices (cell phones, iPads, computers, etc.).

Chapter 5 will analyze and discuss the main findings of the study and the impact of PLT on the fluency, comprehensibility, and accent of Spanish learners of CFL.

## CHAPTER 5. RESULTS

**“What is research, but a blind date with knowledge?”  
Will Henry (1775 -1836).  
English Chemist.**

This chapter presents the results of our study. After listening to the speech samples, the raters assigned numerical values (scores) for each of the three constructs: fluency, comprehensibility, and accent. When commenting on the findings, we present the ratings for the group of students who attended the PLT course (treatment group) and students who participated in the regular class (control group). We will report the findings at T1 and T2 and discuss any variation across tasks.

### **5.1 Impact of a PLT program on learners’ oral performance in CFL**

We separated the CFL learners’ speech sample ratings into three categories: fluency, comprehensibility, and accent. We computed Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for all 128 speech samples for each scale. The coefficient scores were .77, .78, and .75, respectively. Note that a reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is considered acceptable in most social science research situations (UCLA Institute for Digital Research & Education, 2020). With this data, we measured the inter-rater agreement, i.e., internal consistency (across raters) in the assessment of speech samples between different observations of a group. Besides, the raters’ scores for fluency, comprehensibility, and accent for each speech sample were then pooled across tasks to find the mean rating for each item.

After presenting the descriptive results of the ratings, we performed statistical tests to assess if the differences in mean scores across groups and time for each

category of oral performance were statistically significant. The main statistical tests used were the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-tests.<sup>1</sup> Three partially repeated measures ANOVA for fluency, comprehensibility, and accent, separately, with Task (four levels, Task 1, Task 2, Task 3, Task 4) and Time (two levels, T1 and T2) as within-subject factors and the group as a between-subject factor were carried out. When the ANOVA test revealed significant differences, then we carried out post-hoc independent and dependent samples t-tests.

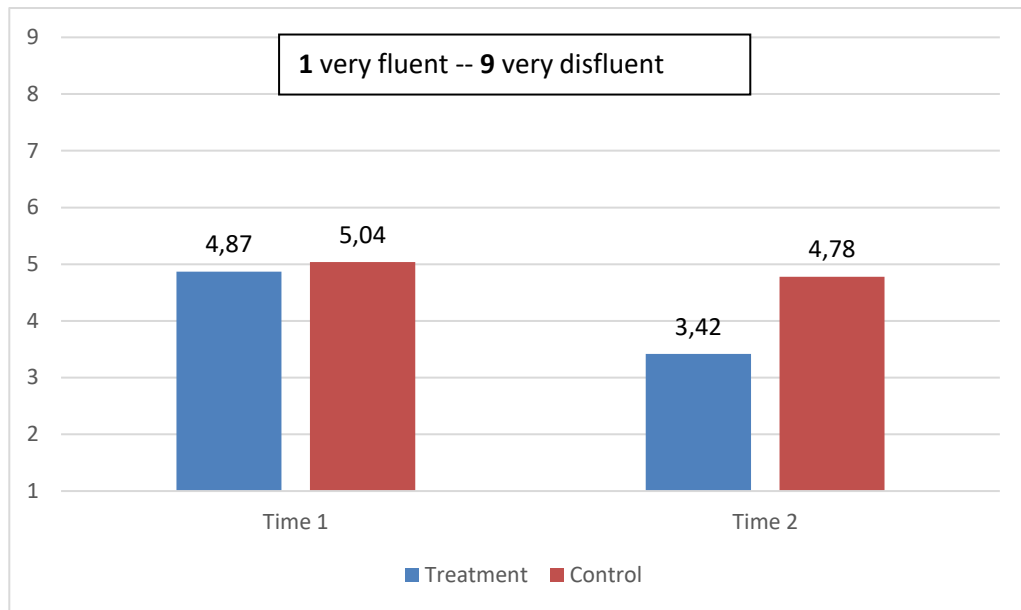
The aforementioned statistical tests have two hypotheses: (i) a null hypothesis, which states that the observed mean in the control group is statistically equal to the observed mean of the treatment group (e.g., difference or impact is zero); and (ii) an alternative hypothesis, which states that the observed mean in the treatment group is different than the observed mean in the control group (e.g., there is an impact different from zero). These statistical tests are typically assessed based on a probability estimate called “p-value” or “p”, for abbreviation. When the p-value is below the significance level (e.g., 5% or 0.05), then the null hypothesis (e.g., the difference in mean or impact equal to zero) is rejected because it is improbable. Therefore, it would mean that the alternative hypothesis holds, or in other words, that the observed difference or impact is statistically different from zero. We will also present the 95% confidence interval to compare the PLT’s impact across the three constructs of oral proficiency measured in this study. The confidence interval provides a range of values that have a 95% probability of containing the value of the impact of PLT.

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<sup>1</sup> The t-test is based on the t-probability distribution whereas the ANOVA is based on the F-probability distribution.

### *5.1.1 Analysis of the impact of a PLT program on learners' fluency in CFL*

First, we will look at the descriptive statistics of the sample. We will present the observed mean fluency scores of the two groups across time. The blue bar represents the treatment group, and the red bar represents the control group; the fluency score ranges between 1 and 9, where 1 is very fluent, and 9 is very disfluent. T1 represents how both groups performed at the baseline (before the instruction program), and T2 represents how both groups performed after the program. The descriptive statistics show that at T1, the treatment group had a fluency score slightly better than the control group, but the difference was close to zero. The gap widened at T2, where the treatment group had a better fluency score relative to the control group (the difference is 1.36). The lower the rating, the more fluent the performance of the learners. Therefore, a decrease in the ratings over time indicates an improvement. Changes in fluency ratings across time for each group were as follows: the control group's scores decreased by 0.26, and the treatment group's reduced by 1.45. Consequently, the treatment group's improvement over time was 1.19 ( $1.45 - 0.26$ ) higher than the control group. Graph 8 illustrates the observed mean fluency scores of the two groups across time.



Graph 8. Mean scores for fluency ratings across groups and time.

The ANOVA tests revealed that there were significant differences in learner's fluency performance across time ( $p < .001$ ), and across groups and time ( $p < .001$ ). We found no significant differences across tasks and time nor groups. To further validate the ANOVA results suggesting different fluency performance across groups and time, we conducted post-hoc Bonferroni-adjusted independent samples t-tests.

### **Differences between group performances at T1**

When comparing the fluency scores between groups at T1 (before the start of language instruction), the t-test showed no significant difference between groups at the beginning of the program ( $p = 0.592$ ). This result suggests that both the control and treatment groups had similar fluency levels before the start of their program of language instruction.

## **Differences between group performances at T2**

However, at T2 (after the instruction program), the t-test showed that the observed difference in fluency scores between the treatment and control group was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ). The confidence interval for the gap ranges from 0.83 to 1.89.

## **Differences within-group performances across time**

When assessing within-group performance, how students within each group performed over time, the t-tests indicated a significant development in fluency scores for students in the treatment group from T1 to T2 ( $p < .001$ ). However, if we analyze results for the learners in the control group, their scores did not change significantly over time ( $p = .433$ ). These results validate the hypothesis that the PLT course had a positive impact on the participants' fluency.

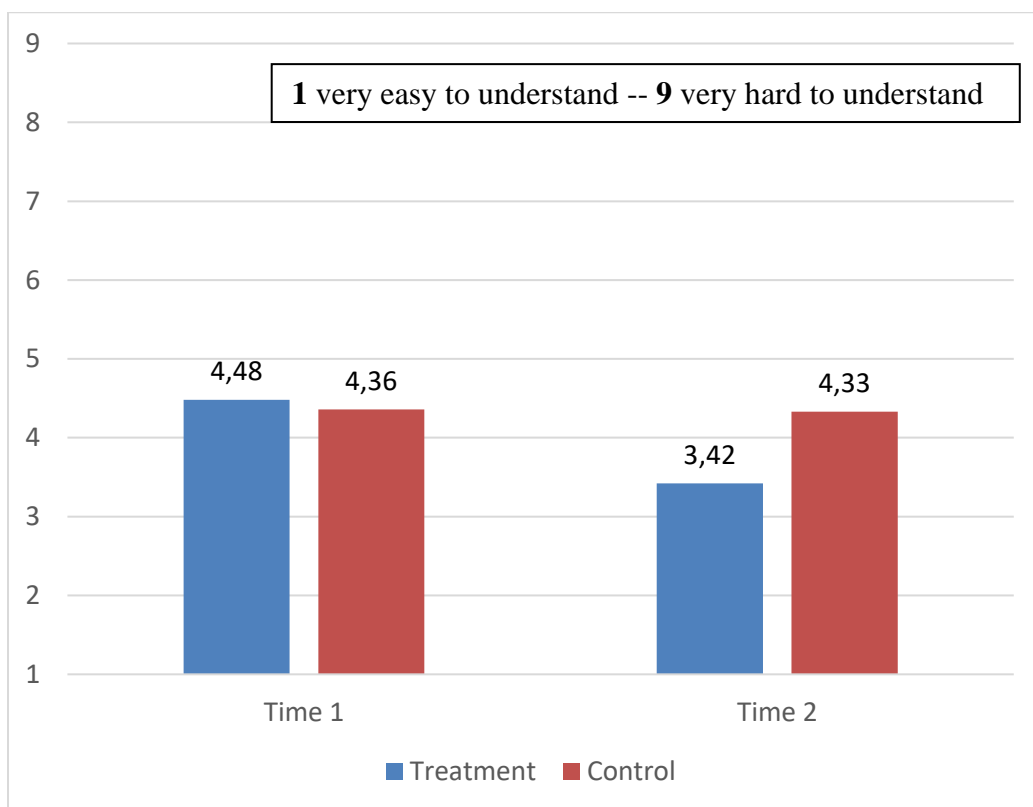
In summary, results revealed a clear improvement for the treatment group in fluency scores, while the comparison group did not improve. Overall, the test suggests that the observed difference in fluency scores at T2 is statistically significant, which means that the PLT instruction program effectively improves fluency levels (see Appendix C for more detailed statistical analyses).

### ***5.1.2 Analysis of the impact of a PLT program on learners' comprehensibility in CFL***

As was done for fluency scores, we will first look at the descriptive statistics of the sample related to comprehensibility. We will present the observed mean comprehensibility scores of the two groups across time. The comprehensibility score ranges between 1 and 9, where 1 is very easy to understand, and 9 is very hard to understand. The descriptive statistics show that at T1, the treatment group had a



comprehensibility score slightly worse than the control group, but the difference was close to zero. In contrast, at T2, the treatment group had a better comprehensibility score relative to the control group (the difference is 0.91). Similar to variations in fluency, the lower the rating, the more comprehensible the participants were. Therefore, a decrease in the scores over time indicates an improvement. Changes in ratings across time for each group were as follows: the control group's scores decreased by 0.03, and the treatment group's reduced by 1.06. Consequently, the treatment group's improvement over time was 1.03 ( $1.06 - 0.3$ ) higher than the control group. Graph 9 below illustrates the observed mean comprehensibility scores of the two groups across time.



Graph 9. Mean scores for comprehensibility ratings across groups and time.

The ANOVA test revealed significant differences in comprehensibility ratings across time ( $p = .001$ ), and across time and groups ( $p = .002$ ). We found no significant differences across tasks and time nor across groups. To further validate the ANOVA

results suggesting different comprehensibility performance across groups and time, we conducted post-hoc Bonferroni- adjusted independent samples t-tests.

### **Differences between group performances at T1**

When comparing the comprehensibility scores between groups at T1, the t-test showed no significant difference between groups at the beginning of the program ( $p = .802$ ). Results suggest that both the control and treatment groups had similar comprehensibility levels before the start of their program of language instruction.

### **Differences between group performances at T2**

After the instruction program, that is, at T2, the t-test showed that students in the treatment group had better comprehensibility levels than learners in the comparison group ( $p < .001$ ). The confidence interval for the difference ranges from 0.37 to 1.43.

### **Differences within-group performances across time**

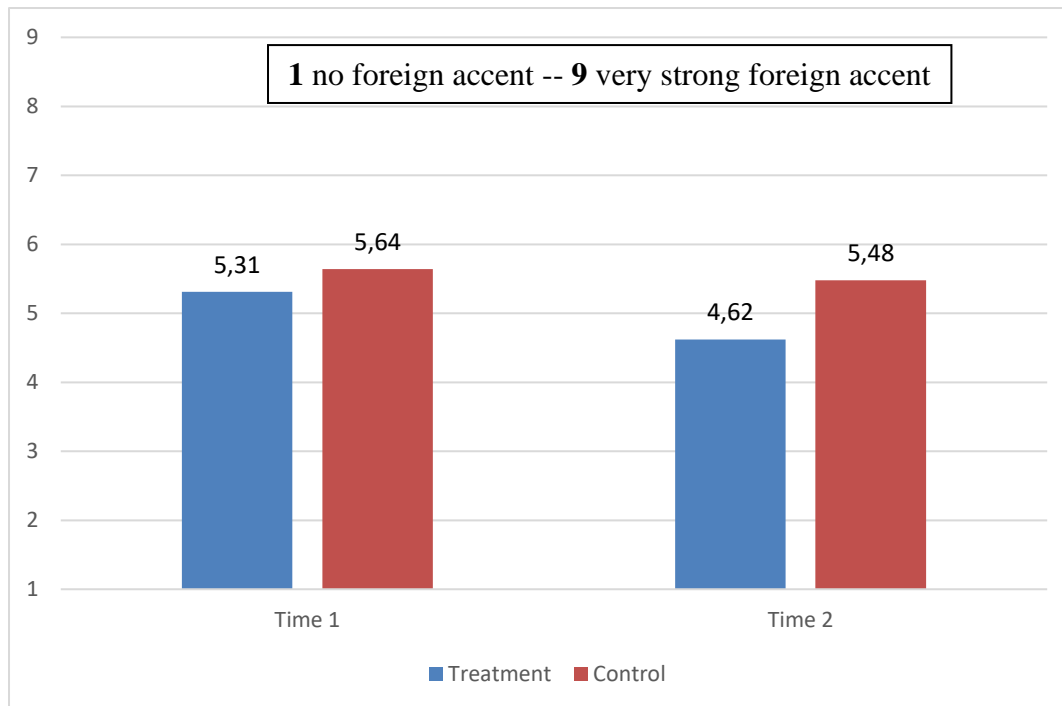
When assessing within-group performance, how students within each group performed over time, from T1 to T2, the t-tests revealed a significant development in comprehensibility scores for students in the treatment group ( $p < .001$ ). In contrast, the mean comprehensibility scores for students in the control group did not differ significantly over time ( $p = .917$ ). These results validate the hypothesis that the PLT course had a positive impact on student's comprehensibility performance.

In summary, results reveal a clear improvement for the treatment group in comprehensibility scores while the comparison group did not improve. Overall, the observed difference in comprehensibility scores at T2 is statistically significant, which

means that the PLT instruction program effectively enhanced comprehensibility levels (see Appendix D for more detailed information about these statistical analyses).

### ***5.1.3 Analysis of the impact of a PLT program on learners' accent in CFL***

Regarding the descriptive statistics of the sample, we will first consider the observed mean accent scores of the two groups across time. The accent score ranged between 1 and 9, where 1 is no foreign accent, and 9 means a very strong foreign accent. The descriptive statistics show that, at T1, the treatment group had an accent score slightly better than the control group, but this difference was not statistically significant. At T2, this difference widened. The treatment group had a better accent score than the control group (the difference is 0.86). Similar to variations on fluency and comprehensibility, the lower the rating, the less foreign accent the learners had. Therefore, a decrease in the scores over time indicates an improvement. Changes in ratings across time for each group were as follows: the control group's ratings decreased by 0.16, and the treatment group's reduced by 0.69. Consequently, the treatment group's improvement over time was 0.53 ( $0.69 - 0.16$ ) higher than the control group. Graph 10 displays the observed mean accent scores of the two groups across time.



Graph 10. Mean scores for accent ratings across groups and time.

The ANOVA test revealed significant differences in accent ratings across time ( $p < .001$ ), and across time and groups ( $p = .03$ ). No significant differences were found across tasks and time nor across groups. To further validate the ANOVA results suggesting different accent performance across groups and time, we conducted post-hoc Bonferroni- adjusted independent samples t-tests. We present the results below:

### **Differences between group performances at T1**

When comparing the accent scores between groups in period T1, the t-test showed no significant difference between groups at the beginning of the program ( $p = .169$ ). This result suggests that both the control and treatment groups had similar accent levels before the start of their program of language instruction.

### **Differences between group performances at T2**

After the instruction program (T2), the t-test shows that accent levels among learners in the treatment group were significantly better compared to the learners in the comparison group ( $p < .001$ ). The confidence interval for the difference ranges from 0.37 to 1.43.

### **Differences within-group performances across time**

When assessing within-group performance, how students within each group performed over time, from T1 to T2, the t-tests revealed a significant development in accent scores for students in the treatment group ( $p = .005$ ). In contrast, the mean accent scores for students in the control group did not differ significantly over time ( $p = .479$ ). These results validate the hypothesis that the PLT course was beneficial for the student's accent.

In summary, results from the assessment of accent scores indicate that this dimension of oral proficiency improved for the treatment group, but not for the comparison group. Overall, the tests suggest that the observed difference in accent scores at T2 is statistically significant, which means that the PLT instruction program effectively improved accent levels for the treatment group.

## **5.2 Analysis of oral performance by task type**

We present the disaggregated descriptive information of oral performance ratings by task type. We first compared and analyzed the mean differences for fluency, comprehensibility, and accent at T1 and T2 in the mean scores for the control group, the treatment group, and the control vs. treatment group. With this first analysis, our

goal was to obtain information about how different groups performed in various tasks at different times.

In addition, to find out whether the results are statistically significant, we carried out post-hoc Bonferroni-adjusted paired samples t-tests to compare differences in fluency, comprehensibility, and accent across speaking tasks. We took into account the group size, the different times, and the task type.

### 5.2.1 Analysis of fluency performance by task type

We analyzed the differences between the mean scores in fluency in all the tasks at T1 and T2. We color-coded the results as follows in order of best performance score: 1<sup>st</sup> green (best performance), 2<sup>nd</sup> blue (second-best performance), 3<sup>rd</sup> yellow (third-best performance), and 4<sup>th</sup> red (worst performance). Table 42 displays the mean fluency scores and standard deviations at T1 and T2 for the control and the treatment groups.

Fluency	Control				Treatment			
	Time 1		Time 2		Time 1		Time 2	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
<b>Task 1</b>	6.38	1.08	6.02	0.79	5.47	1.37	2.49	0.42
<b>Task 2</b>	4.68	1.24	4.61	1.07	5.08	0.33	3.81	0.67
<b>Task 3</b>	5.20	1.02	4.50	0.70	4.50	1.25	3.72	1.12
<b>Task 4</b>	3.90	1.21	4.02	1.11	4.44	0.99	3.68	0.83

Table 42. Mean fluency scores in Time 1 and Time 2 for control and treatment groups.

In what follows, we present a comparison regarding fluency in each task for each of the groups.

### ***Control group at T1: Fluency analysis by task type***

For the control group at T1, the performance results in oral fluency by the learners were worst in Task 1, with a mean value of 6.38, followed by Task 3 (5.20), Task 2 (4.68), and Task 4 (3.90). In other words, students' fluency results were best in Task 4 and worst in Task 1. Table 43 illustrates fluency performance for the control group at T1.

Fluency	Control	
	Time 1	
	Mean	Standard Deviation
Task 1	6.38	1.08
Task 2	4.68	1.24
Task 3	5.20	1.02
Task 4	3.90	1.21

Table 43. Fluency performance for the control group at T1.

### ***Control group at T2: Fluency analysis by task type***

If we analyze the oral fluency performance results for the control group at T2, we can conclude that, once more, the worst performance was in Task 1, with a mean value of 6.02, followed by Task 2 (4.61), Task 3 (4.50), and Task 4 (4.02). These results are similar to T1, where students' fluency results were also best in Task 4 and worst in Task 1. Table 44 below illustrates the fluency performance for the control group at T2.

Fluency	Control	
	Time 2	
	Mean	Standard Deviation
Task 1	6.02	0.79
Task 2	4.61	1.07
Task 3	4.50	0.70
Task 4	4.02	1.11

Table 44. Fluency performance for the control group at T2.

### *Treatment group at T1: Fluency analysis by task type*

The treatment group at T1 had the best results for Task 4 (4.44), and the second-best performance was for Task 3 (4.50). Both results were very close. Students' third-best performance was in Task 2 with 5.08, and the worst was Task 1 (5.47). Table 45 below shows the fluency performance for the treatment group at T1.

Fluency	Treatment	
	Time 1	
	Mean	Standard Deviation
Task 1	5.47	1.37
Task 2	5.08	0.33
Task 3	4.50	1.25
Task 4	4.44	0.99

Table 45. Fluency performance for the treatment group at T1.

### *Treatment group at T2: Fluency analysis by task type*

Regarding T2, the treatment group performed best at Task 1 (2.49), followed by Task 4 (3.68) and Task 3 (3.72). They performed the worst in Task 2 (3.81). Table 46 displays the fluency performance for the treatment group at T2.

Fluency	Treatment	
	Time 2	
	Mean	Standard Deviation
Task 1	2.49	0.42
Task 2	3.81	0.67
Task 3	3.72	1.12
Task 4	3.68	0.83

Table 46. Fluency performance for the treatment group at T2.

### *Control vs. treatment group at T1: Fluency analysis by task type*

At T1, we can see that the performance of both the control and treatment groups were very similar. As expected, both the students at the control and treatment group performed best in Task 4. The performance from the control group (3.90) was better



than the treatment group (4.44). Each group had two stronger and two weaker performances if we compare them. The control group performed better at Task 4 and Task 2, while the treatment group performed better at Task 4 and Task 3. Therefore, from a descriptive point of view, it seems that both groups had similar fluency levels at T1. Table 47 shows fluency performance for the control vs. treatment group at T1.

Fluency	Control		Treatment	
	Time 1		Time 1	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Task 1	6.38	1.08	5.47	1.37
Task 2	4.68	1.24	5.08	0.33
Task 3	5.20	1.02	4.50	1.25
Task 4	3.90	1.21	4.44	0.99

Table 47. Fluency performance for the control vs. treatment group at T1.

***Control vs. treatment group at T2: Fluency analysis by task type***

At T2, there is a definite improvement for the treatment group, which outperforms the control group in all the tasks. For example, in Task 1, there is a very significant difference between the treatment group’s results (2.49) and the control group (6.02). Table 48 below describes fluency performance for the control vs. treatment group at T2.

Fluency	Control		Treatment	
	Time 2		Time 2	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Task 1	6.02	0.79	2.49	0.42
Task 2	4.61	1.07	3.81	0.67
Task 3	4.50	0.70	3.72	1.12
Task 4	4.02	1.11	3.68	0.83

Table 48. Fluency performance for the control vs. treatment group at T2

We carried out post-hoc Bonferroni-adjusted paired samples t-tests to compare differences in fluency across speaking tasks. Overall, Task 4 (improvised role-play dialogue) produced significantly better fluency results than Task 1 (first-person picture narration)  $t(14) = -5.88, p < .001$ . When comparing fluency across tasks at each time, learners' performance in Task 4 was significantly more fluent than in Task 1 at T1  $t(14) = -4.93, p < .001$ . We did not find any other statistically significant differences at each time. Finally, training significantly improved the performance of the treatment group in Task 1 and Task 2 when compared between T1 and T2 with  $t(14) = 5.87, p < .001$ , and  $t(14) = 4.82, p < .001$ , respectively.<sup>2</sup>

### 5.2.2 Analysis of comprehensibility performance by task type

We analyzed the differences between the mean scores by comprehensibility in all the tasks at different times. Table 49 shows the mean comprehensibility scores and standard deviations in T1 and T2 for the control and the treatment groups.

Comprehensibility	Control				Treatment			
	Time 1		Time 2		Time 1		Time 2	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Task 1	5.28	1.29	5.08	1.73	4.77	1.43	2.87	0.84
Task 2	4.12	0.81	4.08	0.72	4.48	0.83	3.64	0.81
Task 3	4.43	0.62	4.33	0.79	4.49	1.36	3.72	1.28
Task 4	3.62	0.86	3.83	0.90	3.98	0.70	3.48	0.80

Table 49. Mean comprehensibility scores in Time 1 and Time 2 for control and treatment groups.

We will analyze in detail the comprehensibility results by task type.

<sup>2</sup> Additional t-tests were carried out to compare differences in fluency across tasks by group between each time.

***Control group at T1: Comprehensibility analysis by task type***

The performance's results in comprehensibility from the control group were worst in Task 1, with a mean value of 5.28, followed by Task 3 (4.43), Task 2 (4.12), and Task 4 (3.62). Therefore, the students' performance results were best in Task 4 and worst in Task 1. Table 50 below illustrates the comprehensibility performance for the control group at T1.

Comprehensibility	Control	
	Time 1	
	Mean	Standard Deviation
Task 1	5.28	1.29
Task 2	4.12	0.81
Task 3	4.43	0.62
Task 4	3.62	0.86

Table 50. Comprehensibility performance for the control group at T1.

***Control group at T2: Comprehensibility analysis by task type***

The comprehensibility performance for the control group at T2 had the worst results in Task 1, with a mean value of 5.08, followed by Task 3 (4.33), Task 2 (4.08), and Task 4 (3.83). These results are similar to T1, where students' fluency results were also best in Task 4 and worst in Task 1. Table 51 illustrates the comprehensibility performance for the control group at T2.

Comprehensibility	Control	
	Time 2	
	Mean	Standard Deviation
Task 1	5.08	1.73
Task 2	4.08	0.72
Task 3	4.33	0.79
Task 4	3.83	0.90

Table 51. Comprehensibility performance for the control group at T2.

***Treatment group at T1: Comprehensibility analysis by task type***

The treatment group at T1 had the best comprehensibility results for Task 4 (3.98), and the second-best performance was for Task 2 (4.48), which was very close to Task 3 (4.49). Students' worst performance was in Task 1 (4.77). Table 52 below shows the comprehensibility performance for the treatment group at T1.

Comprehensibility	Treatment	
	Time 1	
	Mean	Standard Deviation
Task 1	4.77	1.43
Task 2	4.48	0.83
Task 3	4.49	1.36
Task 4	3.98	0.70

Table 52. Comprehensibility performance for the control group at T1.

***Treatment group at T2: Comprehensibility analysis by task type***

The treatment group performed best in comprehensibility in Task 1 (2.87), which is a very high score. Task 4 (3.48) and Task 2 (3.64) follow. The learners performed worst in Task 3 (3.72). Table 53 displays the comprehensibility performance for the treatment group at T2.

Comprehensibility	Treatment	
	Time 2	
	Mean	Standard Deviation
Task 1	2.87	0.84
Task 2	3.64	0.81
Task 3	3.72	1.28
Task 4	3.48	0.80

Table 53. Comprehensibility performance for the treatment group at T2.

***Control vs. treatment group at T1: Comprehensibility analysis by task type***

If we compare both the control and treatment groups at T1 from a descriptive point of view, we can see that the performance of the control and treatment groups

were very similar. Both the students in the control group and in the treatment group performed best at Task 4, with the performance from the control group (3.62) slightly better than the treatment group (3.98). The control group performed better at Task 2, Task 3, and Task 4, while the treatment group performed slightly better than the control group at Task 1. However, the most significant difference in the scores from the two groups was at T1, with a variation of 0.51. Therefore, we can conclude that both groups had similar comprehensibility levels at T1. Table 54 shows comprehensibility performance for the control vs. treatment group at T1.

Comprehensibility	Control		Treatment	
	Time 1		Time 1	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Task 1	5.28	1.29	4.77	1.43
Task 2	4.12	0.81	4.48	0.83
Task 3	4.43	0.62	4.49	1.36
Task 4	3.62	0.86	3.98	0.70

Table 54. Comprehensibility performance for the control vs. treatment group at T1.

***Control vs. treatment group at T2: Comprehensibility analysis by task type***

If we analyze how both groups performed at T2, we can conclude that there is a definite improvement for the treatment group, which outperforms the control group in all tasks. Specifically, in Task 1, there is a very significant difference between the treatment group's results (2.87) and the control group (5.08). Table 55 below displays the comprehensibility performance for the control vs. treatment group at T2.

Comprehensibility	Control		Treatment	
	Time 2		Time 2	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Task 1	5.08	1.73	2.87	0.84
Task 2	4.08	0.72	3.64	0.81
Task 3	4.33	0.79	3.72	1.28
Task 4	3.83	0.90	3.48	0.80

Table 55. Comprehensibility performance for the control vs. treatment group at T2.

We carried post-hoc Bonferroni-adjusted paired samples t-tests to compare differences in comprehensibility across speaking tasks. Overall, Task 4 (improvised role-play dialogue) led to significantly better comprehensibility results than Task 1 (first-person picture narration)  $t(30) = -1.90, p = .039$ . When comparing comprehensibility across tasks at each time, Task 4 was significantly more comprehensible than Task 1 only at T1  $t(14) = -2.806, p = .007$ . We did not find any other statistically significant differences at each time. Finally, training significantly improved the performance of the treatment group in Task 1 when compared between T1 and T2<sup>3</sup> with  $t(14) = 3.24, p = .007$ . To summarize, results for tests of comprehensibility indicate that this dimension of oral proficiency improved for the treatment group, but not for the comparison group. We found a difference in comprehensibility scores for Task 4 relative to Task 1 at T1. Training appeared to differentially impact performance in Task 1 for the treatment group.

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<sup>3</sup> Additional t-tests were carried out to compare differences in comprehensibility across tasks by group between each time.

### 5.2.3 Analysis of accent performance by task type

We analyzed the differences between the mean scores for accent in all the tasks at different times. See Table 56 for a description of mean accent scores at T1 and T2 for the control and the treatment groups:

	Control				Treatment			
	Time 1		Time 2		Time 1		Time 2	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
<b>Task 1</b>	6.49	0.84	6.23	1.00	5.66	1.35	4.21	0.69
<b>Task 2</b>	5.27	0.65	5.05	0.67	5.23	0.66	4.60	0.89
<b>Task 3</b>	5.78	0.56	5.67	0.64	5.40	1.27	4.91	1.10
<b>Task 4</b>	5.04	0.71	5.01	0.68	4.95	0.80	4.77	0.83

Table 56. Mean accent scores in Time 1 and Time 2 for control and treatment groups.

#### *Control group at T1: Accent analysis by task type*

For the control group at T1, the performance in accent by the learners was best on Task 1, with a mean value of 6.49, followed by Task 2 (5.27), Task 3 (5.78), and Task 4 (5.04). Consequently, students' accent results were best in Task 4 and worst in Task 1. Table 57 below illustrates the accent performance for the control group at T1.

Accent	Control	
	Time 1	
	Mean	Standard Deviation
<b>Task 1</b>	6.49	0.84
<b>Task 2</b>	5.27	0.65
<b>Task 3</b>	5.78	0.56
<b>Task 4</b>	5.04	0.71

Table 57. Accent performance for the control group at T1.

***Control group at T2: Accent analysis by task type***

The accent performance for the control group at T2 was worst in Task 1, with a mean value of 6.23, followed by Task 3 (5.67), Task 2 (5.05), and Task 4 (5.01). Therefore, similarly to T1, the students' accent results were also best in Task 4 and worst in Task 1. Table 58 below illustrates the accent performance for the control group at T2.

Accent	Control	
Time 2		
	Mean	Standard Deviation
Task 1	6.23	1.00
Task 2	5.05	0.67
Task 3	5.67	0.64
Task 4	5.01	0.68

Table 58. Accent performance for the control group at T2.

***Treatment group at T1: Accent analysis by task type***

The treatment group at T1 had the best accent results for Task 4 (4.95), and the second-best performance was for Task 2 (5.23). Closer to Task 2 was Task 3 (5.40). Students' worst performance was at Task 1 (5.66). Table 59 below shows the accent performance for the treatment group at T1.

Accent	Treatment	
Time 1		
	Mean	Standard Deviation
Task 1	5.66	1.35
Task 2	5.23	0.66
Task 3	5.40	1.27
Task 4	4.95	0.80

Table 59. Accent performance for the treatment group at T1.



***Treatment group at T2: Accent analysis by task type***

Regarding T2, the treatment group performed best at Task 1 (4.21), followed by Task 2 (4.60) and Task 4 (4.77). The worst performance in accent was in Task 3 (4.91). Table 60 below describes the accent performance for the treatment group at T2.

Accent	Treatment	
	Time 2	
	Mean	Standard Deviation
Task 1	4.21	0.69
Task 2	4.60	0.89
Task 3	4.91	1.10
Task 4	4.77	0.83

Table 60. Accent performance for the treatment group at T2.

***Control vs. treatment group at T1: Accent analysis by task type***

At T1, we can see that the performance of both the control and the treatment groups were very similar. However, in Task 1, the control group was worse than the treatment group (6.49 compared to 5.66). Both the students in the control and the treatment groups performed best at Task 4, with the treatment group (4.95) slightly better than the control group (5.04). Each group had two stronger and two weaker performances if we compare each other. The treatment group performed better in all the tasks; however, the difference was not very substantial. For example, the control group had a score for Task 3 of 5.78, while the score for the treatment group for Task 3 was 5.40, again, not very substantial. Therefore, from a descriptive perspective, we can conclude that both groups had similar accent levels at T1. Table 61 shows accent performance for the control vs. treatment group at T1.

Accent	Control		Treatment	
	Time 1		Time 1	
	M	SD	M	SD
Task 1	6.49	0.84	5.66	1.35
Task 2	5.27	0.65	5.23	0.66
Task 3	5.78	0.56	5.40	1.27
Task 4	5.04	0.71	4.95	0.80

Table 61. Accent performance for the control vs. treatment group at T1.

*Control vs. treatment group at T2: Accent analysis by task type*

At T2, the treatment group scores were better than those in the control group in the four tasks. The control group had its best performance at Task 4 (5.01 vs. 4.77); however, there was a very substantial difference in scores for Task 1, with the treatment group's results (4.21) and the control group's scores (6.23). Table 62 below describes accent performance for the control vs. treatment group at T2.

Accent	Control		Treatment	
	Time 2		Time 2	
	M	SD	M	SD
Task 1	6.23	1.00	4.21	0.69
Task 2	5.05	0.67	4.60	0.89
Task 3	5.67	0.64	4.91	1.10
Task 4	5.01	0.68	4.77	0.83

Table 62. Accent performance for the control vs. treatment group at T2.

We carried out post-hoc Bonferroni-adjusted paired samples t-tests to compare differences in accent across speaking tasks. Overall, Task 4 (improvised role-play dialogue) produced significantly better accent results than Task 1 (first-person picture narration)  $t(30) = -2.16, p = .024$ . When comparing accent across tasks at each time, accent was significantly better in Task 4 than in Task 1 only at T1  $t(14) = -2.806, p = .007$ . We did not find any other statistically significant differences at each time. Training significantly improved the accent performance of the treatment group in Task

1 when compared between T1 and T2<sup>4</sup> with  $t(14) = 2.71, p = .021$ . In sum, results for tests of accent indicate that this dimension of oral proficiency improved for the treatment group, but not for the comparison group. The statistical results of accent performance across tasks are similar to those of comprehensibility.

### 5.3 Summary and discussion of the main findings

The main goal of this study is to fill a gap in the literature by carrying out quantitative research to measure the effects of PLT as a methodology in the CFL classroom. More particularly, the study aims to assess the impact of PLT methodology on three constructs of oral proficiency: fluency, comprehensibility, and accent in the performance of Spanish learners of Chinese. A second goal is to assess whether there were differences across the four tasks that these participants completed.

The specific research questions that we aimed to answer in this study were the following:

- **Research question (RQ1):** Do learners in a PLT Chinese-as-a-foreign-language program experience greater gains in their oral performance than learners in a non-PLT Chinese course? Specifically, do they experience more significant gains in fluency, comprehensibility, and accent?
- **Research question (RQ2):** Do fluency, comprehensibility, and accent vary across different speaking tasks before and after the treatment (PLT program)?

We entertained the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1:** Following a PLT program will improve the learners' general oral skills in Chinese.

**Hypothesis 2:** There will be cross-task variation in oral performance.

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<sup>4</sup> Additional t-tests were carried out to compare differences in accent across tasks by group between each time.

In what follows, we will analyze the findings of this study and determine how these findings relate to the hypotheses. Results of the current research show a significant improvement for the treatment group in oral fluency, comprehensibility, and accent. The findings confirm that the use of PLT in a CFL classroom positively impacted the oral skills that we measured. After analyzing the results, we highlight that both groups, control, and treatment, had similar oral levels at the start of their program of language instruction. At the end of the intervention, after the PLT treatment, the oral levels among the learners in the treatment group improved more than those of the learners in the comparison group. Consequently, results confirm Hypothesis 1. These results will be described in more detail below.

We compared gains in fluency, comprehensibility, and accent for both groups using quantitative data obtained from the results reported in the previous section. We measured gains as the difference between the average ratings of the treatment group and the average ratings of the control group. Using the mean score data from Graphs 8, 9, and 10 above, for fluency, comprehensibility, and accent, we compared the values between the treatment group and the control group at T2. Then we calculated the difference in gains from both groups at T2. For fluency, in Graph 8 at T2, the control group's mean fluency score (4.78) minus the treatment group's mean fluency score (3.42) equals 1.36. For comprehensibility, in Graph 9 at T2, the control group's mean comprehensibility score (4.33) minus the treatment group's mean comprehensibility score (3.42) equals 0.91. Finally, for accent, in Graph 10 at T2, the treatment group's mean accent score (5.48) minus the treatment group's mean accent score (4.62) equals 0.86. Table 63 below describes gains in oral performance with a 95% confidence interval. The higher the number, the larger the gains.

Oral performance	Sample estimate	Confidence Interval (95%)
<b>Fluency</b>	1.36	(0.83, 1.89)
<b>Comprehensibility</b>	0.91	(0.37, 1.43)
<b>Accent</b>	0.86	(0.42, 1.30)

Table 63. Gains in fluency, comprehensibility, and accent.

We can see that the three variables improved; however, fluency improved more than comprehensibility and accent, as expected based on previous research. We will now discuss the main findings in fluency, comprehensibility, and accent, and relate them to the research questions.

**Research question RQ1a:** Do learners in a PLT CFL program experience greater gains in **fluency** than learners in non-PLT Chinese course?

Results for tests of fluency indicate that this dimension of oral proficiency improved for the treatment group, but not for the comparison group. Therefore, these findings confirm hypothesis 1, because the use of PLT helped students improve oral fluency in Chinese. Moreover, fluency improved more than comprehensibility and accent. The results of our study are in line with those reported in Coleman (2005), who had previously argued that PLT helps oral communication. Additionally, our results validate Stinson and Freebody's (2006) study in which PLT had a positive impact on the oral skills for the students who participated in the PLT intervention, while the students in the comparison group who participated in regular classes showed no change. However, both Coleman and Stinson's and Freebody's studies reported overall oral improvement due to PLT intervention; therefore, we will also examine other research more specific to the variables measured in our study. Chérrez Sacoto's (2017)

research further showed that PLT activities are effective in enhancing speaking skills, especially fluency.

Our findings are also in line with Galante and Thomson's (2017) study, where the oral fluency level of the treatment group improved more than that of the control group, thanks to PLT. In that study, results indicated that PLT instruction could lead to significantly larger gains in L2 English oral fluency relative to more traditional communicative EFL instruction.

In another recent study, Hu (2018) investigated the impact of task type, task-type repetition, and performance criteria on oral L2 production. In that study, task-type repetition resulted in greater accuracy and affected all fluency measures (though not all in the same direction). In our study, repeating the same tasks at T2 might have also impacted learners' fluency. However, both the control and the treatment group repeated the same tasks at T2, and t-test showed that only the treatment group improved in this variable. Therefore, we attribute the improvement to the PLT intervention and not to task repetition.

**Research question RQ1b:** Do learners in a PLT-based CFL program experience greater gains in their **comprehensibility** than learners in a non-PLT Chinese course?

Results for tests of comprehensibility indicate that this dimension of oral proficiency improved for the treatment group, but not for the comparison group. Therefore, PLT led to an improvement in comprehensibility in the treatment group when compared to the control group and, consequently, there is support for hypothesis 1. In addition, comprehensibility improved to a lesser extent than fluency. These results align with Galante and Thomson (2017), where participants in the treatment group also experienced more gains in comprehensibility as compared to learners in the

control group. However, benefits in fluency in their study were higher than increases in comprehensibility, similarly to our study.

**Research question RQ1c:** Do learners in a PLT-based CFL program experience greater gains in their **accent** than learners in a non-PLT Chinese course?

In the case of gains in accent, the observed difference in accent scores at T2 was statistically significant, which indicates the PLT instruction program was effective in improving accent levels. However, the improvement in accent was less substantial than gains for fluency or comprehensibility. This result is different from Galante and Thomson (2017) because they did not report any significant improvement in this dimension. However, Galante and Thomson (2017) used PLT techniques, but only 50% of class time and the rest of the class time followed a traditional format. However, in our study, we used PLT 100% of the time in the treatment group. Both the teachers in Galante and Thomson (2017) were not native speakers of the language they were teaching, similar to our study, where the instructor was not a native speaker. In both studies, the students from the control and treatment groups listened to native accent input in several recordings and videos from the textbook and the Internet. There was no specific accent training in any of the control or treatment groups. However, the improvement in accent of our study is much lower than fluency.

To summarize, for RQ1, results for tests of fluency, comprehensibility, and accent indicate that these dimensions of oral proficiency improved for the treatment group, but not for the comparison group. PLT led to an improvement in fluency, comprehensibility, and accent in the treatment group when compared to the control group. However, comprehensibility improved to a lesser extent than fluency. In addition, the improvement in accent was less substantial than fluency or

comprehensibility. Consequently, in our study, fluency improved more than comprehensibility and accent. Therefore, all these findings confirm hypothesis 1, as the use of PLT helped students improve oral skills in Chinese.

RQ2 focused on differences in fluency, comprehensibility, and accent across the four tasks used. We will comment on each of the constructs below.

**Research question RQ2:** Does oral **fluency** vary across speaking tasks?

Following our descriptive analysis after observing the differences of mean scores of fluency across groups at the two testing times (T1 and T2), we found that the control group at both T1 and T2 had the highest scores in Task 4 and the lowest in Task 1. The treatment group had results similar to the control group at T1. Also, at T1, the treatment group performed better in Task 4, followed by Task 3 and Task 2. They performed the worst in Task 1. For the control group at T1, we can see that the best performance was at Task 4, then Task 3 and Task 2. Their lowest performance was at T1. Consequently, at T1, we can see that the performance of both groups was similar; that is, both performed best at Task 4 and worst at Task 1. However, at T2, there was a definite improvement for the treatment group, which outperformed the control group in all tasks, mainly Task 1, in which the treatment group performed 3.53 points higher than the control group.

If we analyze and compare the observations regarding fluency in our study across groups and times, we can see that the fluency performance rankings vary across tasks and time. For example, for the control group at T2 and the treatment group at T1, in order of best to worst performance, fluency rankings are Task 4 > Task 3 > Task 2 > Task 1. Therefore, from a descriptive point of view, our results confirm the variation



of the performance in fluency across tasks. Table 64 illustrates all the different fluency performances ranking across tasks.

Fluency	Control		Treatment	
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 1	Time 2
Task	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank
Task 1 first-person picture narration	4 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>
Task 2 third-person picture narration	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>
Task 3 monologue	3 <sup>rd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Task 4 dialogue (role-play)	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>

Table 64. Fluency performance ranking across tasks.

Apart from the descriptive observation, we performed further statistical analyses. The results from the post-hoc Bonferroni-adjusted paired samples t-tests, which compare differences in fluency across speaking tasks for the treatment and control group, indicate that, overall, participants obtained significantly better fluency results in Task 4 (improvised role-play dialogue) than in Task 1 (first-person picture narration). A detailed analysis revealed that there was a significant difference in fluency in Task 4 at T1. Training appeared to differentially influence performance in Tasks 1 and 2 for the treatment group. We did not find any other statistically significant differences at each time.

In our study, Task 4 was an improvised role-play with a dialogue, which, according to several task type studies (see Chapter 3), should be an easier task that should lead to a more fluent output. In addition, Task 1 and Task 2 were both picture description monologues, which are supposed to be the tasks where learners produce less fluent speech, as Ejzenberg (2000) demonstrated. Fluency varied across tasks, with higher ratings in the dialogue Task 4 than the picture-description tasks, Task 1, and Task 2. Therefore, our findings are also in line with Derwing et al. (2004), where

raters assigned lower fluency scores to the picture-description task while the ratings for the monologue or the dialogue were significantly higher.

In the same way, our findings also support those reported in Foster and Skehan (1996). In their study, the learners' production in the picture-description task was less fluent than their output in the monologue or dialogue. As we have reported in previous chapters, the study by Mora and Valls-Ferrer (2012) also showed that fluency was higher in dialogic tasks.

However, our results differ from Galante and Thomson (2017). In their study, the treatment group performed best on fluency in the first-person picture narration, but worst in the role-play at both T1 and T2. The control group performed best on fluency on the monologue at T1 and the third-person picture narration on T2 and performed worst on the third-person picture narration at T1, and the role-play at T2.

**Research question RQ2b: Does *comprehensibility* vary across speaking tasks?**

Following our descriptive analysis of the differences between mean scores in comprehensibility, we found that the control group had better results for Task 4 at T1 and T2 and the worst results for Task 1. The treatment group performed similarly to the control group at T1; however, at T2, the treatment group performed best in comprehensibility in Task 1 and worst in Task 3. If we compare the control and treatment group at T1, we can see that both groups had similar comprehensibility levels at T1; however, at T2, there was a definite improvement for the treatment group, which outperforms the control group in all tasks. Specifically, in Task 1, the treatment group has a score 2.21 points higher than the control group.

If we analyze and compare the observations for comprehensibility in the current study across groups and times, we can see that the comprehensibility

performance rankings across task, in order of best to worst performance, is Task 4 > Task 2 > Task 3 > Task 1, except for the treatment group at T2, where the order is Task 1 > Task 4 > Task 2 > Task 3. Table 65 below illustrates the comprehensibility performance ranking across tasks:

Comprehensibility	Control		Treatment	
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 1	Time 2
Task	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank
<b>Task 1 first-person picture narration</b>	4th	4th	4th	1st
<b>Task 2 third-person picture narration</b>	2nd	2nd	2nd	3rd
<b>Task 3 monologue</b>	3rd	3rd	3rd	4th
<b>Task 4 dialogue (role-play)</b>	1st	1st	1st	2nd

Table 65. Comprehensibility performance ranking across tasks.

Apart from the descriptive observation, we performed further statistical analyses. The results from the post-hoc Bonferroni-adjusted paired samples t-tests set out to compare differences in comprehensibility across speaking tasks for the treatment and control group indicate that, although we found a difference in comprehensibility scores across tasks, a detailed analysis revealed that it only occurred for Task 4 relative to Task 1 at T1. Training appeared to impact performance in Task 1 for the treatment group differentially. We did not find any other statistically significant differences at each time.

In addition, these results align with Gilabert (2007), who acknowledged that in his study, the participants did not have planning time before the tasks; therefore, while they could have been busy maintaining a fluent discourse with the right structures, they might not have had time to focus on aspects such as choosing the correct tones for each syllable, selecting the appropriate Chinese particles to use in the speech, etc. All those aspects could have led raters to score comprehensibility higher in our study.

However, our results differ from Galante and Thomson (2017). In their study, results from descriptive statistics showed that the treatment group’s comprehensibility performance was best at the monologue at T1 and the first-person picture narration at T2, and worst at the role-play at both T1 and T2. The control group also had the best scores in first-person picture narration at T1 and in the third-person picture narration at T2, and the worst scores in the video narration at T1 and the role-play at T2.

**Research question RQ2c: Does accent vary across speaking tasks?**

Following our analysis of the differences in mean scores of accent, we found variation across tasks similar to that in comprehensibility. If we analyze and compare the observations about accent in our study across groups and times, we can see that the accent performance rankings across task, in order of best to worst performance, is Task 4 > Task 2 > Task 3 > Task 1, except for the treatment group at T2, which was Task 1 > Task 2 > Task 4 > Task 3. Table 66 displays that information:

Accent	Control		Treatment	
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 1	Time 2
	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank
Task 1 first-person picture narration	4 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>
Task 2 third-person picture narration	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Task 3 monologue	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>
Task 4 dialogue	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>

Table 66. Accent performance ranking across tasks.

Apart from the descriptive observation, we performed further statistical analyses. The findings from the post-hoc Bonferroni-adjusted paired samples t-tests were similar to the ones for comprehensibility above.

Our results are in line with Munro and Derwing (1995b), who established that accent and comprehensibility are partially related.

However, our results differ from Galante and Thomson (2017), where accent scores on descriptive statistics showed that, in general, there was no statistically significant variation in the scores across all tasks. In that study, both the treatment and the comparison group obtained the worst accent scores in Task 3 (role-play) at T1 and T2.

### **Discussion about the results of performance across different tasks**

Results from our research validate Hypothesis 2 because they confirm that, according to descriptive statistics, the participants had different oral performances across the tasks. The differences found across tasks are in line with Derwing et al.'s (2004), who stated that “the differences among the tasks found may reflect task-dependent variability in the degree of freedom the speaker had in choosing lexical items, structures, and content in general” (p. 671).

The participants had to focus on narrating the stories illustrated by the cartoons in Task 1 and Task 2 (picture narratives). Moreover, these two tasks had instructions that students were not able to bypass easily: the description should stick to the story in the cartoons and must have a justified connection to the illustration.

In addition, the cognitive load for Task 1 and Task 2 is more substantial than for the other tasks. According to Ejzenberg (2000), cognitive demands and difficulty are higher in monologic tasks such as Task 1, Task 2, and Task 3, and those characteristics might have a negative impact on fluency. For example, in Task 1, the participants had to describe the soccer match injury using the first person. Some of them found this challenging. Our findings also align with those in Levkina and Gilabert (2012) and Santos (2018). They suggested an increase in the number of elements in a task reduced fluency but increased lexical complexity (a variable that was not

measured in this study, though). Unlike Task 3 and Task 4, Task 1 and Task 2 had more elements described in all the cartoons, which could have affected fluency results.

Hu (2018) had observed that an increase in cognitive load in a picture-description task (monologue) resulted in an increasing complexity and fluency scores. However, in our study, the participant's performance in tasks with less cognitive load, such as Task 4 (improvised role-play dialogue), resulted in higher fluency scores and led to significantly better fluency results than Task 1 (first-person picture narration). This could be explained due to the different nature of the research. Hu created different groups according to task difficulty, high criterion (HC), and low criterion (LC). In addition, he added different conditions to the same task, therefore, creating different tasks, with the goal of measuring not only fluency but also accuracy and complexity. In our research, the tasks were not modified by increasing difficulty, and we have measured other variables.

Moreover, the findings in our study are in line with past research (Derwing, Munro, & Wiebe, 1998; Hardison, 2005; Parlak 2010; and Perlmutter, 1989) in the sense that picture-description tasks encourage participants to produce longer spontaneous speech because they have to describe a story based on a sequence of pictures. Consequently, Task 1 and Task 2 are good indicators of fluency improvement. In our study, due to the PLT intervention, the treatment group improved fluency scores.

In addition, in Task 2, learners had to use the third person to describe a young man going back home to celebrate Chinese New Year with his family. Scores show that students found this Task 2 more difficult than Task 1. A possible explanation could have to do with the differences between first-person vs. third-person narration. In first-person narrations, people relive emotions (McIsaac & Eich, 2004). Task 1 had a story related to personal experience: an injury that happened in a soccer match. On the other

hand, third-person pictures represent events from a more distant perspective, in a more abstract way (Libby & Eibach, 2011, 2013). Therefore, a task such as Task 2, using third-person to describe the event of going back home to celebrate Chinese New Year, “causes people to understand that event abstractly in terms of their general self-knowledge rather than specific details” (Carlston, 2013, p. 161). It was a cultural-rich story that non-native Chinese students might not have experienced before. The Chinese culture has many insights and traditions that are not well-known to Westerners. The comparison between Christmas and Chinese New Year might help students have some understanding, but none of them had experienced Chinese New Year in China in the past. Christmas has roots in the Christian tradition and the Chinese New Year in more than three thousand years of Chinese culture. There are many traditions and customs that are impossible to compare unless you have experienced them. Therefore, not having enough first-hand knowledge of an event makes it very difficult to describe using the third person, even though this choice of description will give some distance to the story. In the end, Task 2 proved to be more difficult for our participants. In addition, Task 1 employed episodic memory that “involves representing the experience of a specific event” (Tulving, 1972, p. 385). That kind of memory would be easier to access and describe. On the contrary, Task 2 could be related to semantic memory, which “involves representing abstract knowledge, apart from the experience of the event in which it was acquired” (Carlston, 2013, p. 162).

However, in Galante and Thomson’s (2017) study, the learners performed best on fluency on the picture narration task. One possible explanation of this difference is that the cartoons and the story used by Galante and Thomson (2017) were the same for both tasks. Students had to narrate them using the first and the third person. Nevertheless, in our study, Task 1 (first picture narration) was different from Task 2

(third picture narration). Therefore, the cognitive demands for those two tasks for the students in our research were much higher than in Galante and Thomson's (2017) study.

Regarding Task 3 and Task 4, the fact that fluency judgments were similar, except for T1 for the control group, is not surprising. Task 3 was a monologue where students had to describe their favorite city. This topic was part of one of the lessons from the course for both groups. The results align with Derwing et al. (2004) since participants obtained more fluent scores in the monologue about a personal story and less fluent with a picture description. Consequently, learners encountered a familiar topic easier to deal with in the monologue of Task 3, as compared to more complicated stories in Task 1 and Task 2. The main difficulty in the monologue was that the students had no help from the teacher. In fact, the monologue could be viewed as an extended turn in a conversation, but without the intervention of the other speaker. Besides, in Galante and Thomson (2017), the monologue task obtained good scores in fluency, comprehensibility, and accent. The topic was also familiar to the participants (talk about the most unforgettable journey in their lives), confirming that a familiar topic might have positively influenced the oral results for this task.

On the other hand, Task 4 had the intervention of the teacher in the conversation who could use scaffolding for the learner to give students access to the task regardless of ability (Donato, 1994; Storch, 2002). Moreover, the topic was relatively straightforward: an international student (played by the teacher) comes from China and asks the student for some information. All these factors contributed to the fact that Task 4 had a higher score in comprehensibility and very high scores for fluency. Our results are aligned with Ejzenberg's (2000), who reported that L2 learners' speech is less fluent if they have to do a monologue and more fluent if they engage in a



conversation with a native speaker. Therefore, a dialogue task is claimed to lead to more fluent speech than a monologue or picture-description tasks. Besides, research has already shown that fluency improves in dialogic tasks (Mora and Valls-Ferrer, 2012). However, our results for Task 4 differ from Galante and Thomson's (2017). In their study, both the treatment and the comparison group obtained the worst comprehensibility and accent scores in the role-play task at T1 and T2. One possible explanation is that in their intervention, they had not specifically prepared this type of dialogue related to asking for directions or meeting strangers. Also, the fact that they used PLT only 50% of the time for the treatment group. Nevertheless, in our study, we did practice similar tasks, and we used PLT 100% of the time for the treatment group.

The scores provided by the raters confirm Derwing and Munro (1997) and Munro and Derwing's (1999) findings that perceptions of comprehensibility have a more direct tie to fluency judgments than do their assessments of accent. Derwing et al. (2004) also highlighted that lightly accented speech almost always will be rated as easy to understand. Still, also very often, heavily accented speech is considered easy to understand by the raters. Munro and Derwing (1995b) stated that "comprehensibility scores were the most direct test of what the listeners actually understood" (p. 90). To analyze the scores, we must first understand how a rater does the assessment. We have to acknowledge here the role of processing difficulty. As Munro and Derwing (1995b) put it: "for instance, two foreign-accented utterances may both be fully understood (and therefore be perfectly intelligible), but one may require more processing time than another" (p. 91). There is the possibility that raters assigned lower comprehensibility scores to stimuli who needed more time to process due to other factors.

## SUMMARY OF PART II

Part II of this dissertation comprised two chapters. Chapter 4 introduced the rationale of the study, the research questions, and the two hypotheses. The need to develop a modern and more effective methodology for Chinese language teaching and learning was also discussed. Specifically, a more collaborative and engaging approach that helps Chinese language students to improve their oral proficiency skills is needed. The study's context is also described, and detailed information on the participants, the 75 raters, and the four tasks employed are provided in Chapter 4. Speech samples were obtained from 16 learners of Mandarin Chinese from Spain at the Official Language School in the city of Vigo, Spain. The control group, which comprised eight students (three female and five male) with an average age of 41.5 years old, received instruction in a traditional Chinese language program for four months in 2017. The treatment group, which comprised eight students (five females and three males) with an average age of 38 years old, took part in a four-month PLT-based Chinese language course in the same school in 2018. The teacher was the same in both cases. Both groups were tested before and after they participated in each program. Using mobile phones or computers, online forms with embedded text, images, and audio integrated with Jotform and Google Drive, untrained native Chinese speakers evaluated the speech samples and provided scores of fluency, comprehensibility, and accent. The development of both groups' oral skills was compared. Four different tasks were used to measure those oral skills, namely: first-person picture description (Task 1), third-person picture description (Task 2), monologue (Task 3), and improvised roleplay dialogue (Task 4).

The methodology used for this research, the teaching procedures, the traditional comparison program (control group), and the PLT program (treatment group) are also explained in detail in Chapter 4.

The last section of Chapter 4 provides an in-depth description of the data collection and data processing techniques used for this research. Several of the procedures used for data collection and processing have never been used in previous research. It was decided to integrate several technologies to facilitate the process. First, students' speech samples were digitally recorded, the audio files were processed via Audacity software, and the processed audio files were uploaded to SoundCloud. Then, online forms with pictures, text, and embedded audio links were created using JotForm. Afterward, these were sent to the raters via WeChat. The raters completed the online forms, and the system sent the data to Gmail and Hotmail accounts and Google Sheets in Google Drive. Finally, the data in the Google Sheets spreadsheet was exported to MS Excel. Then, the data in the MS Excel spreadsheet was exported to STATA statistical software for further analysis. The most complicated technological challenge was the integration of the audio from the Cloud using SoundCloud software combined with JotForm software and Google Drive. This integration allowed the raters to access information from different countries and using various electronic devices, such as cell phones, iPads, and computers.

In Chapter 5, we presented the main findings of the study and the impact of PLT on the fluency, comprehensibility, and accent of Spanish students learning the Chinese language. Also, the effects of task type on oral performance were analyzed and discussed. After listening to the speech samples, the raters assigned numerical values to each of the three constructs: fluency, comprehensibility, and accent. When commenting on the findings, the ratings allocated to the group of students who

attended the PLT course (treatment group) and the students who participated in the regular class (control group) were presented. The findings concerning T1 and T2 are also reported, and the variations across tasks were discussed.

The results of this study indicate that the fluency, comprehensibility, and accent of the treatment group improved, but the comparison group's fluency, comprehensibility, and accent did not improve. The improvement in fluency was greater than the improvement in comprehensibility and accent, which had similar degrees of development. Overall, the statistical tests suggest that the observed difference in scores at T2 is statistically significant, which means that the PLT instruction program was effective in improving the three constructs that were measured when assessing the students' oral skills. Overall, participants obtained significantly better fluency, comprehensibility, and accent results in Task 4 (improvised roleplay dialogue) than in Task 1 (first-person picture narration). Each time, the fluency, comprehensibility, and accent were compared across the tasks, and the learners' performance in Task 4 was significantly better than in Task 1 at T1. Finally, training improved the treatment group's fluency performance in Task 1 and Task 2 when comparing T1 and T2. Moreover, for the treatment group, their comprehensibility performance improved most in Task 1. At the same time, training improved the accent performance of the treatment group in Task 1 when comparing T1 and T2.

These results confirm this research's hypotheses and suggest that PLT positively impacts the development of oral skills, and that performance varies across task types and testing times.

## **PART III CONCLUSIONS**

## CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS

**“Santiago (de Compostela) is not the end of the Way,  
Santiago is just the beginning.”  
Paulo Coelho (1947 - ).  
Brazilian writer.**

As the final chapter, Chapter 6 summarizes the aims of the current dissertation as well as the main conclusions derived from the results obtained in the data analyses. The main pedagogical implications of the findings are also discussed. Additionally, future research directions are outlined, and the limitations of this study are acknowledged.

### 6.1 Conclusions

The main aim of the present study was to investigate the impact of PLT on the oral fluency, comprehensibility, and accent of CFL students. We had a pre-test post-test design and employed four tasks (a first-person picture description, a third-person picture description, a monologue, and an improvised roleplay dialogue). This study intended to contribute to the field by using quantitative data to suggest the positive impact that PLT approaches have on oral proficiency when learning the Chinese language. The findings of this study indicate that PLT can be successfully used in CFL classrooms, confirming the benefits that have been claimed in past studies by Wang (2009), Meng and Wan (2013), Zhang (2013, 2017), Wen (2015), and Corderi Novoa (2015, 2019). However, those previous studies were all based on qualitative research, and most of them lacked reliable and well-designed research instruments, only relying on subjective answers from simple questionnaires.

Compared to previous research, the present study used quantitative research methods that were improved through new technology. In addition, full speech samples of the participants' task performance were used, whereas past research studies only employed short 20- or 30-second samples. Moreover, new data gathering and processing methodologies were designed using various software programs, with online forms, pictures, text, embedded sound, and scales being integrated via Google Drive. Consequentially, this study's raters could use a mobile phone, iPad, or computer to rate the students, and they could do so from any location on the planet. The data was then stored in the Cloud and analyzed using statistical software. This new and original use of information technology enabled this research to have more raters and to have raters located in different countries. It is hoped that with this new technological design, future research studies will be able to access thousands of raters and participants. By using the Internet, researchers can increase the opportunities to validate their data.

In addition, mainly due to the recent restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, this study's technological innovation could be useful for future research studies where the raters cannot come together in the same room. Using technology to avoid physical contact and gather data for a study is safe and more efficient.

Regarding RQ1 (do learners in a PLT Chinese as-a-foreign-language program experience greater gains in their oral performance than learners in a non-PLT Chinese language course? Specifically, do they experience more significant gains in fluency, comprehensibility, and accent?), the results for fluency, comprehensibility, and accent show that the treatment group has improved in these three variables, but the comparison group has not. Moreover, comprehensibility improved to a lesser extent than fluency, and the improvement in accent was less substantial than the gain in

fluency and comprehensibility. Thus, in this study, fluency improved more than comprehensibility and accent. Therefore, this research's results validate Hypothesis 1.

Regarding RQ2 (do fluency, comprehensibility, and accent vary across the different speaking tasks before and after the implementation of the PLT program?), by analyzing and comparing this study's observations regarding fluency across groups and times, it can be seen that the fluency performance rankings vary across tasks. For example, for the control group at T2 and the treatment group at T1, the order of the fluency rankings from best to worst performance was Task 4 > Task 3 > Task 2 > Task 1. Therefore, from a descriptive statistical perspective, the results confirm the disparity of fluency performance across tasks for the control and treatment group. Further statistical analysis revealed that participants obtained significantly better fluency results in Task 4 (improvised roleplay dialogue) than in Task 1 (first-person picture narration). A detailed analysis revealed that a significant fluency variation occurred for Task 4 at T1. PLT training appeared to differentially influence the fluency performance in Task 1 and Task 2 for the treatment group.

Regarding comprehensibility, from a descriptive statistical perspective, the order of the tasks' comprehensibility performance rankings from best to worst performance was Task 4 > Task 2 > Task 3 > Task 1, except for the treatment group at T2, where the order was: Task 1 > Task 4 > Task 2 > Task 1. We compared the changes of comprehensibility for both groups by performing further statistical analysis and found that there was a significant variance in comprehensibility scores in Task 4 relative to Task 1 at T1. PLT training appeared to differentially impact the comprehensibility performance in Task 1 for the treatment group.

Regarding accent, following the descriptive analysis of the differences in mean scores, it was found that the order of the tasks' accent performance rankings from best



to worst performance was Task 4 > Task 2 > Task 3 > Task 1, except for the treatment group at T2, where the order was Task 1 > Task 2 > Task 4 > Task 3. The results of the variation of this variable are similar to the ones for comprehensibility noted above.

This research's results validate Hypothesis 2, as they confirm that the different tasks have an impact on the participants' oral performance when speaking CFL.

In addition, the cognitive load for Task 1 and Task 2 is more substantial than for the other tasks, and this is probably the reason why the students' fluency results for these tasks is lower. Unlike Task 3 and Task 4, there were more elements to describe in Task 1 and Task 2, which could have affected the fluency results. The picture description tasks encouraged the participants to produce longer spontaneous speech as they had to describe a story based on the sequence of pictures. Consequently, Task 1 and Task 2 are good indicators of fluency improvement. In this study, it was found that, due to the use of PLT, the treatment group had superior fluency scores. Moreover, the scores show that the students found Task 2 more difficult than Task 1. This could be due to the differences between the first-person and third-person narration and the choice of the more complex cultural topic of Chinese New Year celebrations for Task 2.

The ratings of fluency for Task 3 and Task 4 were closer, except for T1 for the control group. This is because Task 3 was a monologue, in which the students had to describe their favorite city. The main difficulty of this task was that the students received no help from the teacher. In fact, this monologue could be viewed as an extended turn in a conversation, but without the other speaker intervening. In contrast, the teacher intervened in the discussion in Task 4; thus, they could provide a framework for the learner. Therefore, the comprehensibility scores for Task 4 are higher, and the scores for fluency are very high.

After completing this research and having used PLT in the classroom when teaching a language, PLT is an excellent tool for promoting interaction, generation of input, and production of output. PLT can help educators to get students to use the target language through the use of strategies such as dramatic scenes, dialogues, roleplay, and simulations. When learners participate in these PLT activities, they need to talk as they cooperate with other classmates (Wessels, 1987). PLT recreates the linguistic environment of the outside world; consequently, the use of PLT in the language classroom promotes spontaneous verbal expression because it creates a context for language through an intense focus on meaning (Maley & Duff, 2005). Moreover, PLT provides countless opportunities for the negotiation of meaning by allowing students to express their emotions, thoughts, and feelings, which can change according to the communicative situation in which they are interacting (Fleming, 2006). In addition, PLT activities foster socialization and improve oral communication skills through the exploration of different language styles and registers (Aldavero, 2008). Furthermore, PLT activities are usually designed to have a precise setting and focus so that students can discover that the language has more meaningful content and have a more personal experience. The process of learning happens when a learner interacts with the environment (Ulas, 2008). PLT not only bridges the gap between the textbook and real life, but it also helps learners and teachers to create meaningful contexts. PLT fosters communication and provides more opportunities to practice the target language. It enables students to practice while engaging in authentic tasks instead of using traditional textbook materials. In PLT activities, the students and the teacher create imaginary worlds that are, in fact, learning contexts where students develop their own abilities and learning strategies. These activities provide a creative platform that helps learners to integrate and use their language skills.

To summarize, PLT recreates a linguistic environment that is as close as possible to the real outside world, fosters interaction, the negotiation of meaning, and the generation of comprehensible input, and encourages learners to produce an output. In addition, PLT approaches can help adult learners to acquire the L2 because PLT activities access the target language more pleasantly and less tediously, as performing is learner-centered and has several psychological benefits for adults. Lastly, the four different models of adult learning from the humanistic school of thought, namely andragogy, experiential learning, reflective learning, and implicit/explicit learning, can be integrated with PLT (Piazzoli, 2008). Therefore, PLT is a powerful tool that can improve adult learners' oral skills because it better prepares them for the use of the target language in the real world.

The fact that one of the most critical challenges faced in the 21st century is the rise of China must be taken into account. The U.S., which is the current world superpower, feels threatened by China. The West must understand the East, and the East should know more about the West. Language teaching and learning is essential if these different civilizations are to understand each other better. More people need to learn the Chinese language and culture, and more engaging teaching methodologies that help Asian foreign language students improve their oral skills are needed. It is this research's position that PLT is a part of the solution and that it should be integrated into Chinese language classrooms. Ideally, the PLT methodology would also be applied to foreign language teaching in China. Promoting better cooperation between teachers to inspire more relevant research that includes relevant topics for both Western and Eastern cultures is urgently needed.

## **6.2 Pedagogical implications**

We live in the age of information technology and globalization; however, most education systems in the world are obsolete. Teachers still ask students to memorize useless data that could be found in milliseconds using Google on a mobile phone. Improving teaching pedagogy is a challenge for many countries, including China. Most students who are taught using traditional teaching methods are not able to achieve oral proficiency in the target language. Teacher-centered pedagogy is very common in China and Chinese language learning contexts. It is believed that PLT could be an alternative to more traditional methodologies. It is hoped that, with this research, more and more teachers of the Chinese language and other languages around the world start using the PLT methodology in their classrooms. Educational centers worldwide should promote the use of PLT in language courses. Textbook editors and writers should include PLT activities in their materials, and new PLT textbooks should be developed. It is also vital that this methodology is promoted among language teachers. It is suggested that the Ministry of Education and teacher training centers hold PLT teacher training seminars at a local, regional, and national level. Both teachers and learners need to be motivated to use the PLT methodology.

Chinese language teaching around the world needs a methodological revolution. Oral skills have been traditionally neglected in language classrooms in China and other Asian cultures for centuries. That is due to the Confucian tradition, where the teacher has a very high status at the school and cannot be challenged. In traditional language classes in China, the teacher imparts wisdom by speaking monologues. The students must show respect and be silent; thus, there is no opportunity to practice and develop their oral skills in the target language. The language classroom has traditionally been teacher-centered and has focused on teaching grammatical rules, reading, and writing,

with the frequent use of memorization and repetition. Therefore, it is firmly believed that learning how to use PLT would be useful for Chinese teachers everywhere. This will enable them to incorporate it into their lessons if they choose to. PLT helps students to internalize the target language because it creates a fictional task in a context where learners can perform and live and act using the language. Teaching from a textbook and asking students to memorize and repeat the words in a teacher-centered traditional classroom cannot achieve this.

In terms of lesson design and planning, this study's results confirm Derwing et al.'s (2004) idea of the need to use a set of different tasks specifically designed to foster a variety of oral skills. Students benefit from using various tasks that incorporate different cognitive loads and topics that are both familiar and unfamiliar to them. Consequently, when designing this research's language teaching lessons that focus on oral skills, targeted instructions that include tasks should also be provided to enhance the different components of fluency. Explicit fluency and comprehensibility instruction are vital for helping learners to improve. In the language classroom, tasks should be designed to encourage oral practice, such as picture descriptions, monologues, and dialogues, as well as improvisation, roleplay, and other PLT activities.

Similar to previous research by Munro and Derwing (1995b), it is believed that fluency and comprehensibility are the most important goals when teaching oral skills. Learners' accents should not be language teachers' main concern as long as other speakers are able to understand them. This study, in line with Derwing et al. (2004) and Galante and Thomson (2017), has found that accent did not improve as much as the other two oral skill components that were measured. Therefore, another crucial pedagogical implication is that learners should not be expected to have a perfect

accent. That is unrealistic. The focus should be on helping learners to make themselves understood. Fluency and comprehensibility can be improved through appropriately focused pronunciation instruction (Derwing, Munro, & Thomson, 2008).

This study also has clear implications for assessment. It is argued that oral tests should have a variety of oral tasks (Ejzenberg, 2000). The HSK® Chinese Language Official Exam should include a compulsory oral test. However, the only official exam in Chinese containing an oral part, the HSKK®, is not a mandatory part of the HSK. This shows again how oral language skills are neglected in Chinese culture. It is believed that including picture descriptions, monologues, and dialogues in oral exams would be beneficial. Currently, there is no interview or dialogue task in the HSKK®. Therefore, it is suggested that the Confucius Institute Headquarters should upgrade and change the design of the HSKK® exam. Several international official exams include oral tasks, for example, the TOEFL® and the TOEic®. Some of these tests require students to say a monologue, describe a picture, expressing an opinion, or provide a solution to a problem. Moreover, other official exams also include dialogue tasks that require an exchange of information with an examiner, such as the IELTS® for the English language, the DELF® and DALF® for the French language and the DELE® for the Spanish language.

### **6.3 Limitations and future research directions**

One of the main limitations of this study is the difficulty of recruiting intermediate level adult students of the Chinese language at EOI Vigo. The main reason for this is that the number of students at EOI in Spain has decreased over the past ten years. Most students choose to learn other languages, such as English, French, or German. Even learning Japanese is more popular than learning Chinese. Of the few

students who decide to study Chinese, a significant percentage give up after starting a beginner level class. The higher the course level, the fewer the students. Therefore, having enough participants to form a control and a design group in the same school year was challenging. The only way to achieve this was to carry out the study over two different academic years. Thus, the first shortcoming of this study is the small number of participants in both the treatment group and the control group. This was compensated for in several ways: a large pool of raters was recruited, full speech samples were used instead of shorter excerpts like previous studies, and a new technological method that enabled the use of integrated online software tools and the Internet to increase accuracy and speed and overcome geographical limitations was deployed. It is hoped that having a larger number of participants for future studies is possible. Nevertheless, as noted in Chapter 3, this is not the trend in this type of research, and as Galante and Thomson (2017) point out, classroom-based studies usually have this limitation.

Due to the Chinese Great (Fire) Wall of China, we encountered many difficulties and technological challenges. Our original plan was to recruit raters who were already in China. Still, we were forced to select and integrate software that could be used by raters in several different geographical locations around the world. First, we had to find suitable software that allowed the use of text, pictures, and sound in an online form was a significant challenge. After trying many software programs, JotForm was finally chosen. In addition, SoundCloud had to be used to embed the raters' audio in all of the forms. Once the design was integrated with Google Drive, some tests were conducted with raters in China. They could not open the links as Google and Jotform are blocked by the "The Chinese Great (Fire) Wall," and this was a significant setback, as all of the study's raters were located in China. Chinese

software that could replace the ones initially used was looked for, but none were found. Consequently, Chinese raters who lived in Europe and America were sought out. Finally, 75 new raters were found, and the research could continue. If the software could have been used in mainland China, many more raters would have been found. In the future, this should be kept in mind, and software that works in mainland China should be investigated further.

Only focusing on quantitative research methods is another shortcoming of the current study. Interviewing the students would have been very interesting; however, this was not done because all of the previous research on PLT in Chinese language classrooms was qualitative; therefore, a quantitative investigation was the focus so that this research would be different from the earlier studies.

All of these shortcomings provide possible opportunities for further research. Moreover, future research could continue to assess intermediate B1 level students in other EOI schools in Spain. Ideally, the goal should be to try to increase the number of participants. Thus, other schools that teach the same level in different cities in Spain could be contacted to ask them whether they would be willing to participate. However, many new challenges will probably be faced, such as the possible restriction of access to learners and schools. In addition, this research could be expanded to include university students and adult students at Confucius Institutes. The main problem would be that most teachers still use traditional teaching methodologies; therefore, teachers need to be trained in PLT first.

Research on younger learners of Chinese could also be conducted. There has been a significant increase in the number of Chinese learners in primary, middle, and high schools. Hence, a promising future research direction is the study of the impact



of PLT on the oral skills of younger students in a Chinese language classroom that, ideally, works together with Confucius Classrooms.

Further, studying the impact of PLT on individual emotions, such as motivation (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017) and anxiety (Galante, 2018), would also be interesting, as these have been shown to affect L2 learning.

To end with, due to the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, it would be interesting also to investigate how to adapt PLT to online teaching and to do further research comparing the efficacy of PLT instruction face to face as opposed to online PLT training.

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## APPENDIXES

### APPENDIX A. THE RESEARCHER'S PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH PLT

**"The author writes on paper.  
The actor writes with his body on the stage."  
Konstantin Sergeyeovich STANISLAVSKI (1863- 1938).  
Russian actor, theater director, theater theorist.**

When I lived in Beijing, I discovered Improvisation for the first time when watching a Beijing Improv English show in 2007 at the *PengHao* Theater, which is near the Central Academy of Drama in Beijing. There were six players and played short-form games. The show was hilarious. Later I also discover the Bilingual Improv Group (BIG), which performed in English and Chinese (The Beijinger, 2019).

I found improvisation so magical that I started to attend its free workshops. At these workshops, we learned about different aspects of drama and improvisation, such as location, character, giving offers, saying yes, storytelling, justification, status, and relationship. Bilingual workshops in English and Mandarin Chinese are also available. At the time, I was studying Chinese at the Beijing Language University and taught Spanish at *Instituto Cervantes* in Beijing. The actors from the BIG hosted open free workshops where participants could use both English and Chinese and learn about drama. It was in those workshops when I realized the huge potential that improv and theater had for language teaching and learning. I went to all the workshops and all the shows, and eventually, I became friends with the actors. My life in China was richer and more interesting, thanks to PLT.

I gradually started to use some of the drama activities in my Spanish classes, and I became more proficient in PLT. After I finished my Bachelor of Arts in Chinese, I



started a Masters of Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages, and I decided to write my final dissertation on the use of drama and improvisation in Chinese language classrooms. I started an open experimental class at the Beijing Language and Culture University, and I taught two classes of Oral Chinese to foreign university students at the Tsinghua University of Beijing for a semester in 2015, where I used improvisation and drama to teach Chinese.

After I left China and moved to Washington, D.C. in the U.S. in autumn 2015, I was hired to teach Spanish to university students at The George Washington University (GWU), where I also used some drama activities in the classroom. This was when I discovered the Washington Improv Theater (WIT). I went to its workshops and shows at The Source at 14th Street in Washington, D.C. Some of the techniques used were new to me and different from the ones I had learned in Beijing.

When I moved back to Spain in 2016, I went to Madrid's *Teatro Maravillas*, which is in the Malasaña area, and that is where I discovered a great improv show called Jamming. Jamming is a professional group of improvisers that host two shows a week in a commercial theater. It typically uses short-form improv and comedy. Each show is different. It also has a school, which offers improv courses at different levels. The show was full of energy, and it was the first time I had seen improv in such a large theater.

Unfortunately, my work was not located in Madrid but was at the Official Language School (*Escuela Oficial de Idiomas de Vigo*) in Vigo, which is in the Northwest region of Galicia. I began teaching Chinese to adults in Spain in 2016. In 2017, I created a theater group at the school, which was open to fellow teachers and students. It was named Ulises to emphasize that life is like a trip, and “the road itself is more important than the destination,” i.e., the process is more important than the

product. Teacher training was conducted at the school and at other schools in the region. We had regular free workshops at the school and several activities, including a Christmas 2017 improv performance, where the actors were school teachers who had no previous acting experience. The experimental drama Chinese classes, from which the data for this dissertation was collected, took place in 2017 and 2018. In 2017, I took part in the Imperdible Improv Theater Festival in Santiago de Compostela. I was lucky to study with Encarni Corrales, among other great improvisers and actors. In 2018, I traveled to Beijing for the summer and taught an experimental Chinese class at Beijing Language and Culture University (Corderi, 2019). Then, in September 2018, I began working at *Escuela Oficial de Idiomas de Ourense*, where I became head of the Chinese department.

In 2018, I took part in the International Congress on drama and theater applied to education at the University of Oviedo, Spain. I presented a research paper titled *Improchinese: the use of improvised theater in an experimental Chinese language class*. I continued training teachers in drama techniques in the region and gave applied drama workshops at Confucius Institutes in León in Spain) and Lisboa in Portugal. Further, I was invited to give a training session in applied drama techniques to Chinese teachers at Confucius Classrooms in the Andalucía region of Spain in 2018 and 2019. In 2019, I continued to attend drama and improv theater courses at Jamming with Omar Argentino and at Calambur Teatro Madrid with Miguel Ángel Moreno. In July 2019, I presented a paper at the Drama in Education Days Conference in Zug in Switzerland and at the Summer School in Grenoble in France. I have conducted more than 20 sessions as a teacher trainer in PLT for Xunta de Galicia regional government in the cities of A Coruña, Ferrol, Santiago de Compostela, Vigo, Pontevedra, Lugo, and Ourense. **Ourense, Spain. Modesto, 21 September 2020.**

## **APPENDIX B. INFORMATION ABOUT THE PLACES WHERE THE AUTHOR MET THE 75 RATERS**

**“All cultures are involved in one another;  
none is single and pure; all are hybrid.”  
Edward Said (1963 - 2003).  
Writer.**

The author of the study met the raters in different conferences and academic events in the United States of America and Spain during 2015 and 2018:

**I International Congress on drama, theater applied to education.** The University of Oviedo Spain, 14 - 16 Nov 2018.

**Confucius Institute. The University of Leon.** East and West contact and dialogue: International conference of contemporary China studies. León. Spain, 2-3 May 2018.

**“The use of drama techniques and new technologies to improve language teaching.”** Congress Ideas for Ourense. Universidade de Vigo, Spain. 23 Dec 2016.

**Princeton University.** Chinese Pedagogy Conference. Princeton, New Jersey. The USA. 30 April 2016.

**Notre Dame University.** Chinese Teaching Pedagogy Conference. South Bend, Indiana. The USA. 9-10 April 2016.

**The University of Maryland-College Park.** American Chinese Language Teachers Association Conference. **CLTA S2.** The University of Maryland-College Park. Maryland, USA. 1-3 April 2016.

**“2015 ACTFL American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages annual conference”.** San Diego. California. The USA. 20 -22 Nov 2015.

**“2015 CLTA-NCR Fall Workshop on Teaching Chinese Language and Culture with Technology”.** The University of Maryland-College Park. The USA. 14 Nov 2015.

**“Cross-cultural communication: China and the Spanish speaking world.”**

NOVA Northern Virginia Community College, Virginia, USA. 29 Oct 2015

**“STARTALK Annual Conference.” Orlando. Florida. The USA. 16 -17 Oct 2015.**

**“Research about the Use of Movies and Educational Drama in Teaching Chinese as a Second Language”** Confucius Institute at the University of South Carolina.

USA 19 Sep 2015

In addition, some of the raters attended the author’s performative language teaching workshops at the Confucius Institute Classrooms in Seville, Andalucía, Spain, in 2018 and 2019. Others participated at a similar teacher-training workshop at the Confucius Institute of Lisbon, Portugal, in 2018 and Madrid, Spain, in 2018 and at The Confucius Institute of León, Spain.

## APPENDIX C. STATISTICAL DATA FOR FLUENCY ANALYSIS

For Graph 8

Fluency		
	Time 1	Time 2
Treatment	4.87	3.42
Control	5.04	4.78

anova fluen group / id|group task time group#time task#time, repeated(task time)

Number of obs = 128      R-squared = 0.6405  
 Root MSE = .877658      Adj R-squared = 0.5610

Source	Partial SS	df	MS	F	Prob > F
Model	142.751389	23	6.20658212	8.06	0.0000
group	18.8088894	1	18.8088894	4.21	0.0594
id group	62.585416	14	4.47038686		
task	18.8173617	3	6.2724539	8.14	0.0001
time	23.233472	1	23.233472	30.16	0.0000
group#time	11.3605545	1	11.3605545	14.75	0.0002
task#time	7.94569511	3	2.64856504	3.44	0.0196
Residual	80.1095817	104	.77028444		
Total	222.86097	127	1.75481079		

between-subjects error term: id|group  
 Levels: 16 (14 df)  
 Lowest b.s.e. variable: id  
 Covariance pooled over: group (for repeated variables)

```
estat esize
```

```
Effect sizes for linear models
```

Source	Eta-Squared	df	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Model	.6405401	23	.4340139	.6543132
group	.2310836	1	.	.5146632
id group				
task	.1902147	3	.057786	.3019198
time	.2248189	1	.0974721	.3513499
group#time	.1241996	1	.029776	.2446791
task#time	.0902353	3	.0017003	.185759

```
by time, sort : ttest fluen, by(group)
```

```
-> time = 1
```

```
Two-sample t test with equal variances
```

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
1	32	5.041667	.2509436	1.419551	4.529864	5.553469
2	32	4.870833	.1942483	1.098835	4.474661	5.267005
combined	64	4.95625	.1577734	1.262187	4.640965	5.271535
diff		.1708334	.3173406		-.4635215	.8051883

```
diff = mean(1) - mean(2)                                t = 0.5383  
Ho: diff = 0                                           degrees of freedom = 62
```

```
Ha: diff < 0                Ha: diff != 0                Ha: diff > 0  
Pr(T < t) = 0.7039          Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.5923          Pr(T > t) = 0.2961
```

by time, sort : ttest fluen, by(group)

-> time = 2

Two-sample t test with equal variances

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
1	32	4.785417	.206345	1.167264	4.364573	5.20626
2	32	3.422917	.1659557	.9387874	3.084448	3.761386
combined	64	4.104167	.1569023	1.255218	3.790622	4.417711
diff		1.3625	.264801		.8331703	1.89183

diff = mean(1) - mean(2) t = 5.1454  
Ho: diff = 0 degrees of freedom = 62

Ha: diff < 0  
Pr(T < t) = 1.0000

Ha: diff != 0  
Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0000

Ha: diff > 0  
Pr(T > t) = 0.0000

by group, sort : ttest fluen, by(time) unequal

-> group = 1

Two-sample t test with unequal variances

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
1	32	5.041667	.2509436	1.419551	4.529864	5.553469
2	32	4.785417	.206345	1.167264	4.364573	5.20626
combined	64	4.913542	.1619551	1.295641	4.5899	5.237183
diff		.25625	.324886		-.3936705	.9061706

diff = mean(1) - mean(2) t = 0.7887  
Ho: diff = 0 Satterthwaite's degrees of freedom = 59.7686

Ha: diff < 0  
Pr(T < t) = 0.7833

Ha: diff != 0  
Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.4334

Ha: diff > 0  
Pr(T > t) = 0.2167

## OVERALL COMPARISONS OF FLUENCY ACROSS TASKS

. oneway fluen task, sidak tabulate

task	Summary of fluen		Freq.
	Mean	Std. Dev.	
1	5.0895833	1.8172893	32
2	4.54375	.97158324	32
3	4.4791667	1.1257097	32
4	4.0083333	1.0335934	32
Total	4.5302083	1.3246927	128

Source	Analysis of Variance			F	Prob > F
	SS	df	MS		
Between groups	18.8173617	3	6.2724539	3.81	0.0118
Within groups	204.043609	124	1.64551297		
Total	222.86097	127	1.75481079		

Bartlett's test for equal variances:  $\chi^2(3) = 16.8931$  Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.001$

Comparison of fluen by task (Sidak)				
Row Mean- Col Mean	1	2	3	
2	-.545833 0.437			
3	-.610417 0.307	-.064583 1.000		
4	-1.08125 0.006	-.535417 0.460	-.470833 0.608	



. pwcompare task, mcompare(bonferroni) level(97.5) effects

Pairwise comparisons of marginal linear predictions

Margins : asbalanced

	Number of Comparisons
task	6

	Contrast	Std. Err.	Bonferroni t	Bonferroni P> t	Bonferroni [97.5% Conf. Interval]	
task						
2 vs 1	-.5458333	.1838929	-2.97	0.022	-1.085004	-.0066631
3 vs 1	-.6104166	.1838929	-3.32	0.008	-1.149587	-.0712464
4 vs 1	-1.08125	.1838929	-5.88	0.000	-1.62042	-.5420798
3 vs 2	-.0645833	.1838929	-0.35	1.000	-.6037536	.4745869
4 vs 2	-.5354167	.1838929	-2.91	0.027	-1.074587	.0037535
4 vs 3	-.4708334	.1838929	-2.56	0.072	-1.010004	.0683369

## COMPARISONS OF FLUENCY ACROSS TASKS BY TIME

oneway fluen task if time==1, sidak tabulate

task	Summary of fluen		
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Freq.
1	5.925	1.2837157	16
2	4.8791667	.89615429	16
3	4.85	1.1591823	16
4	4.1708333	1.1040581	16
Total	4.95625	1.2621875	64

Source	Analysis of Variance			F	Prob > F
	SS	df	MS		
Between groups	25.1613903	3	8.38713009	6.69	0.0006
Within groups	75.2049958	60	1.2534166		
Total	100.366386	63	1.59311724		

Bartlett's test for equal variances:  $\chi^2(3) = 1.8950$  Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.594$

### Comparison of fluen by task (Sidak)

Row Mean- Col Mean	1	2	3
2	-1.04583 0.061		
3	-1.075 0.051	-.029167 1.000	
4	-1.75417 0.000	-.708333 0.388	-.679167 0.437

. oneway fluen task if time==2, bonferroni tabulate

task	Summary of fluen		Freq.
	Mean	Std. Dev.	
1	4.2541667	1.9205275	16
2	4.2083333	.95277373	16
3	4.1083334	.99088442	16
4	3.8458333	.96569877	16
Total	4.1041667	1.2552184	64

Source	Analysis of Variance			F	Prob > F
	SS	df	MS		
Between groups	1.60166655	3	.533888851	0.33	0.8051
Within groups	97.6594458	60	1.62765743		
Total	99.2611124	63	1.57557321		

Bartlett's test for equal variances:  $\chi^2(3) = 12.0879$  Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.007$

Comparison of fluen by task (Bonferroni)			
Row Mean - Col Mean	1	2	3
2	-.045833 1.000		
3	-.145833 1.000	-.1 1.000	
4	-.408333 1.000	-.3625 1.000	-.2625 1.000



-> task = 3

Two-sample t test with unequal variances

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
1	8	4.5	.4420371	1.25027	3.454748	5.545252
2	8	3.716667	.3971626	1.123345	2.777526	4.655807
combined	16	4.108333	.3043436	1.217374	3.45964	4.757026
diff		.7833333	.5942516		-.4925707	2.059237

diff = mean(1) - mean(2) t = 1.3182  
Ho: diff = 0 Satterthwaite's degrees of freedom = 13.8426

Ha: diff < 0 Pr(T < t) = 0.8956  
Ha: diff != 0 Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.2088  
Ha: diff > 0 Pr(T > t) = 0.1044

-> task = 4

Two-sample t test with unequal variances

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
1	8	4.441667	.3491344	.9875012	3.616095	5.267238
2	8	3.675	.2942404	.8322374	2.979232	4.370768
combined	16	4.058333	.2417433	.9669731	3.54307	4.573597
diff		.7666665	.4565876		-.2152598	1.748593

diff = mean(1) - mean(2) t = 1.6791  
Ho: diff = 0 Satterthwaite's degrees of freedom = 13.6094

Ha: diff < 0 Pr(T < t) = 0.9420  
Ha: diff != 0 Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.1159  
Ha: diff > 0 Pr(T > t) = 0.0580

## EXTRA

```
. anova fluen group / id|group task time group#time task#time task#time#group, repeated(task time)
```

```
Number of obs = 128      R-squared = 0.7847  
Root MSE = .699758      Adj R-squared = 0.7210
```

Source	Partial SS	df	MS	F	Prob > F
Model	174.874166	29	6.03014365	12.31	0.0000
group	18.8088894	1	18.8088894	4.21	0.0594
id group	62.585416	14	4.47038686		
task	18.8173617	3	6.2724539	12.81	0.0000
time	23.233472	1	23.233472	47.45	0.0000
group#time	11.3605545	1	11.3605545	23.20	0.0000
task#time	7.94569511	3	2.64856504	5.41	0.0017
task#time#group	32.1227772	6	5.3537962	10.93	0.0000
Residual	47.9868045	98	.489661271		
Total	222.86097	127	1.75481079		

```
Between-subjects error term: id|group  
Levels: 16 (14 df)  
Lowest b.s.e. variable: id  
Covariance pooled over: group (for repeated variables)
```

## APPENDIX D. STATISTICAL DATA FOR COMPREHENSIBILITY ANALYSIS

For Graph 9

Comprehensibility		
	Time 1	Time 2
Treatment	4.48	3.42
Control	4.36	4.33

ANOVA TEST

anova comp group / id|group task time group#time task#time, repeated(task time)

Number of obs = 128      R-squared = 0.5298  
Root MSE = .866952      Adj R-squared = 0.4259

Source	Partial SS	df	MS	F	Prob > F
Model	88.0860787	23	3.82982951	5.10	0.0000
group	5.58336881	1	5.58336881	1.48	0.2442
id group	52.8779874	14	3.7769991		
task	10.0984374	3	3.3661458	4.48	0.0053
time	8.50781207	1	8.50781207	11.32	0.0011
group#time	7.57253588	1	7.57253588	10.08	0.0020
task#time	3.44593712	3	1.14864571	1.53	0.2116
Residual	78.1669475	104	.751605265		
Total	166.253026	127	1.30907895		

Between-subjects error term: id|group  
 Levels: 16 (14 df)  
 Lowest b.s.e. variable: id  
 Covariance pooled over: group (for repeated variables)

Repeated variable: task

Huynh-Feldt epsilon = 0.7312  
 Greenhouse-Geisser epsilon = 0.5993  
 Box's conservative epsilon = 0.3333

Source	df	F	----- Prob > F -----			
			Regular	H-F	G-G	Box
task	3	4.48	0.0053	0.0121	0.0182	0.0416
Residual	104					

Repeated variable: time

Huynh-Feldt epsilon = 1.0769  
 \*Huynh-Feldt epsilon reset to 1.0000  
 Greenhouse-Geisser epsilon = 1.0000  
 Box's conservative epsilon = 1.0000

Source	df	F	----- Prob > F -----			
			Regular	H-F	G-G	Box
time	1	11.32	0.0011	0.0011	0.0011	0.0011
group#time	1	10.08	0.0020	0.0020	0.0020	0.0020
Residual	104					

Repeated variables: task#time

Huynh-Feldt epsilon = 0.6433  
 Greenhouse-Geisser epsilon = 0.5395  
 Box's conservative epsilon = 0.3333

Source	df	F	----- Prob > F -----			
			Regular	H-F	G-G	Box
task#time	3	1.53	0.2116	0.2248	0.2271	0.2247
Residual	104					

. estat esize

Effect sizes for linear models

Source	Eta-Squared	df	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Model	.5298314	23	.2796737	.5433735
group id group	.0955053	1	.	.3910371
task	.1144099	3	.0120593	.2162095
time	.0981579	1	.0167619	.2138169
group#time	.0883203	1	.0125328	.2016043
task#time	.042223	3	.	.1159688



## SIGNIFICANT GROUP AND TIME INTERACTION

by time, sort: ttest comp, by(group)

-> time = 1

Two-sample t test with equal variances

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
1	32	4.358333	.1899526	1.074534	3.970922	4.745744
2	32	4.427083	.1960602	1.109084	4.027216	4.826951
combined	64	4.392708	.1354748	1.083799	4.121983	4.663433
diff		-.06875	.2729864		-.6144421	.4769421

diff = mean(1) - mean(2) t = -0.2518  
 Ho: diff = 0 degrees of freedom = 62

Ha: diff < 0 Ha: diff != 0 Ha: diff > 0  
 Pr(T < t) = 0.4010 Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.8020 Pr(T > t) = 0.5990

-> time = 2

Two-sample t test with equal variances

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
1	32	4.329167	.2047802	1.158412	3.911515	4.746819
2	32	3.425	.171169	.9682782	3.075898	3.774102
combined	64	3.877083	.1441176	1.152941	3.589087	4.165079
diff		.9041667	.2668965		.3706482	1.437685

diff = mean(1) - mean(2) t = 3.3877  
 Ho: diff = 0 degrees of freedom = 62

Ha: diff < 0 Ha: diff != 0 Ha: diff > 0  
 Pr(T < t) = 0.9994 Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0012 Pr(T > t) = 0.0006

```
by group, sort : ttest comp, by(time) unequal
```

```
-> group = 1
```

```
Two-sample t test with unequal variances
```

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
1	32	4.358333	.1899526	1.074534	3.970922	4.745744
2	32	4.329167	.2047802	1.158412	3.911515	4.746819
combined	64	4.34375	.1385569	1.108455	4.066866	4.620634
diff		.0291666	.2793151		-.5292388	.587572

```
diff = mean(1) - mean(2)                                t = 0.1044
Ho: diff = 0                                           Satterthwaite's degrees of freedom = 61.653
| Ha: diff < 0                                         Ha: diff != 0                                   Ha: diff > 0
Pr(T < t) = 0.5414                                     Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.9172                         Pr(T > t) = 0.4586
```

```
-> group = 2
```

```
Two-sample t test with unequal variances
```

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
1	32	4.427083	.1960602	1.109084	4.027216	4.826951
2	32	3.425	.171169	.9682782	3.075898	3.774102
combined	64	3.926042	.1437032	1.149626	3.638874	4.21321
diff		1.002083	.2602661		.4816303	1.522536

```
diff = mean(1) - mean(2)                                t = 3.8502
Ho: diff = 0                                           Satterthwaite's degrees of freedom = 60.8912
| Ha: diff < 0                                         Ha: diff != 0                                   Ha: diff > 0
Pr(T < t) = 0.9999                                     Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0003                         Pr(T > t) = 0.0001
```

## OVERALL COMPARISONS OF COMP ACROSS TASKS

### OVERALL DIFFERENCES ACROSS TASKS

oneway comp task, sidak tabulate

task	Summary of comp		Freq.
	Mean	Std. Dev.	
1	4.4979167	1.6187065	32
2	4.0791667	.81058192	32
3	4.2395833	1.0558402	32
4	3.7229167	.80323886	32
Total	4.1348958	1.1441499	128

Source	Analysis of Variance			F	Prob > F
	SS	df	MS		
Between groups	10.0984374	3	3.3661458	2.67	0.0503
Within groups	156.154589	124	1.2593112		
Total	166.253026	127	1.30907895		

Bartlett's test for equal variances:  $\chi^2(3) = 21.6735$  Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.000$

Comparison of comp by task (Sidak)			
Row Mean- Col Mean	1	2	3
2	-.41875 0.590		
3	-.258333 0.931	.160417 0.994	
4	-.775 0.039	-.35625 0.750	-.516667 0.344

<

### COMPARISONS OF COMP ACROSS TASKS BY TIME

oneway comp task if time==1, sidak tabulate

task	Summary of comp		Freq.
	Mean	Std. Dev.	
1	5.0208333	1.3397001	16
2	4.2958333	.81284827	16
3	4.4583334	1.0241166	16
4	3.7958333	.78333332	16
Total	4.3927083	1.0837987	64

Source	Analysis of Variance				F	Prob > F
	SS	df	MS			
Between groups	12.2318748	3	4.07729159	3.96	0.0121	
Within groups	61.7691681	60	1.02948614			
Total	74.0010429	63	1.17461973			

Bartlett's test for equal variances:  $\chi^2(3) = 5.6408$  Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.130$

Comparison of comp by task (Sidak)			
Row Mean- Col Mean	1	2	3
2	-.725 0.254		
3	-.5625 0.542	.1625 0.998	
4	-1.225 0.007	-.5 0.670	-.6625 0.352

```
. oneway comp task if time==2, sidak tabulate
```

task	Summary of comp		Freq.
	Mean	Std. Dev.	
1	3.9750001	1.7426885	16
2	3.8625	.77266973	16
3	4.0208333	1.073787	16
4	3.65	.84169145	16
Total	3.8770834	1.1529408	64

Source	Analysis of Variance			F	Prob > F
	SS	df	MS		
Between groups	1.31249976	3	.437499921	0.32	0.8120
Within groups	82.4316715	60	1.37386119		
Total	83.7441713	63	1.32927256		

```
Bartlett's test for equal variances: chi2(3) = 12.8104 Prob>chi2 = 0.005
```

Comparison of comp by task  
(Sidak)

Row Mean - Col Mean	1	2	3
2	-.1125 1.000		
3	.045833 1.000	.158333 0.999	
4	-.325 0.968	-.2125 0.996	-.370833 0.940

CALCULATING T VALUES

```
. display invttail(14,0.039)
```

**COMPARISONS OF COMPREHENSIBILITY ACROSS TASKS BY GROUP**  
(only showing significant results for group 2 – task1; task 2 is not significant)

-> task = 1

Two-sample t test with unequal variances

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
1	8	4.766667	.5045822	1.427174	3.573519	5.959814
2	8	2.866667	.2973427	.8410123	2.163563	3.569771
combined	16	3.816667	.3744379	1.497751	3.018571	4.614762
diff		1.9	.5856756		.6156156	3.184384

diff = mean(1) - mean(2) t = 3.2441  
Ho: diff = 0 Satterthwaite's degrees of freedom = 11.3384

Ha: diff < 0 Ha: diff != 0 Ha: diff > 0  
Pr(T < t) = 0.9962 Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0075 Pr(T > t) = 0.0038

-> task = 2

Two-sample t test with unequal variances

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
1	8	4.475	.2918027	.8253427	3.784996	5.165004
2	8	3.641667	.2856175	.8078484	2.966288	4.317045
combined	16	4.058333	.2246705	.8986822	3.579459	4.537207
diff		.8333333	.4083212		-.0424662	1.709133

diff = mean(1) - mean(2) t = 2.0409  
Ho: diff = 0 Satterthwaite's degrees of freedom = 13.9936

Ha: diff < 0 Ha: diff != 0 Ha: diff > 0  
Pr(T < t) = 0.9697 Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0606 Pr(T > t) = 0.0303

**EXTRA**

```
anova comp group / id|group task time group#time task#time group#task, repeated(task time)
```

```
Number of obs = 128      R-squared = 0.5892
Root MSE = .822326      Adj R-squared = 0.4834
```

Source	Partial SS	df	MS	F	Prob > F
Model	97.9547942	26	3.76749208	5.57	0.0000
group	5.58336881	1	5.58336881	1.48	0.2442
id group	52.8779874	14	3.7769991		
task	10.0984374	3	3.3661458	4.98	0.0029
time	8.50781207	1	8.50781207	12.58	0.0006
group#time	7.57253588	1	7.57253588	11.20	0.0012
task#time	3.44593712	3	1.14864571	1.70	0.1721
group#task	9.86871545	3	3.28957182	4.86	0.0033
Residual	68.2982321	101	.67622012		
Total	166.253026	127	1.30907895		

```
between-subjects error term: id|group
Levels: 16 (14 df)
Lowest b.s.e. variable: id
Covariance pooled over: group (for repeated variables)
```

Repeated variable: task

Huynh-Feldt epsilon = 0.7312  
Greenhouse-Geisser epsilon = 0.5993  
Box's conservative epsilon = 0.3333

Source	df	F	----- Prob > F -----			
			Regular	H-F	G-G	Box
task	3	4.98	0.0029	0.0076	0.0123	0.0324
group#task	3	4.86	0.0033	0.0085	0.0135	0.0343
Residual	101					

Repeated variable: time

Huynh-Feldt epsilon = 1.0769  
\*Huynh-Feldt epsilon reset to 1.0000  
Greenhouse-Geisser epsilon = 1.0000  
Box's conservative epsilon = 1.0000

Source	df	F	----- Prob > F -----			
			Regular	H-F	G-G	Box
time	1	12.58	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006
group#time	1	11.20	0.0012	0.0012	0.0012	0.0012
Residual	101					

Repeated variables: task#time

Huynh-Feldt epsilon = 0.6433  
Greenhouse-Geisser epsilon = 0.5395  
Box's conservative epsilon = 0.3333

Source	df	F	----- Prob > F -----			
			Regular	H-F	G-G	Box
task#time	3	1.70	0.1721	0.1919	0.1968	0.2013
Residual	101					



## APPENDIX E. STATISTICAL DATA FOR ACCENT ANALYSIS

For Graph 10

Accent		
	Time 1	Time 2
Treatment	5.31	4.62
Control	5.64	5.48

ANOVA TEST

anova acc group / id|group task time group#time task#time, repeated(task time)

Number of obs = 128      R-squared = 0.6018  
 Root MSE = .692467      Adj R-squared = 0.5137

Source	Partial SS	df	MS	F	Prob > F
Model	75.3663893	23	3.27679954	6.83	0.0000
group	11.5200002	1	11.5200002	3.77	0.0727
id group	42.8231948	14	3.05879963		
task	10.5948615	3	3.5316205	7.37	0.0002
time	5.72347169	1	5.72347169	11.94	0.0008
group#time	2.27555509	1	2.27555509	4.75	0.0316
task#time	2.42930602	3	.809768675	1.69	0.1740
Residual	49.8690291	104	.479509895		
Total	125.235418	127	.986105657		

Between-subjects error term: id|group  
 Levels: 16 (14 df)  
 Lowest b.s.e. variable: id  
 Covariance pooled over: group (for repeated variables)

Repeated variable: task

Huynh-Feldt epsilon = 0.7458  
Greenhouse-Geisser epsilon = 0.6091  
Box's conservative epsilon = 0.3333

Source	df	F	Prob > F			
			Regular	H-F	G-G	Box
task	3	7.37	0.0002	0.0008	0.0018	0.0103
Residual	104					

Repeated variable: time

Huynh-Feldt epsilon = 1.0769  
\*Huynh-Feldt epsilon reset to 1.0000  
Greenhouse-Geisser epsilon = 1.0000  
Box's conservative epsilon = 1.0000

Source	df	F	Prob > F			
			Regular	H-F	G-G	Box
time	1	11.94	0.0008	0.0008	0.0008	0.0008
group#time	1	4.75	0.0316	0.0316	0.0316	0.0316
Residual	104					

Repeated variables: task#time

Huynh-Feldt epsilon = 0.9578  
Greenhouse-Geisser epsilon = 0.7458  
Box's conservative epsilon = 0.3333

Source	df	F	Prob > F			
			Regular	H-F	G-G	Box
task#time	3	1.69	0.1740	0.1763	0.1881	0.2023
Residual	104					

estat esize

Effect sizes for linear models

Source	Eta-Squared	df	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Model	.6017977	23	.3784974	.6159225
group	.2119861	1	.	.499455
id group				
task	.1752263	3	.0474774	.2858323
time	.102954	1	.0189704	.2196502
group#time	.0436393	1	.	.140084
task#time	.0464509	3	.	.1229249

### ALTERNATIVE ANOVA MODEL

anova acc group / id|group task time group#time task#time group#task, repeated(task time)

Number of obs = 128      R-squared = 0.6655  
Root MSE = .64398      Adj R-squared = 0.5794

Source	Partial SS	df	MS	F	Prob > F
Model	83.3497217	26	3.20575853	7.73	0.0000
group	11.5200002	1	11.5200002	3.77	0.0727
id group	42.8231948	14	3.05879963		
task	10.5948615	3	3.5316205	8.52	0.0000
time	5.72347169	1	5.72347169	13.80	0.0003
group#time	2.27555509	1	2.27555509	5.49	0.0211
task#time	2.42930602	3	.809768675	1.95	0.1259
group#task	7.98333236	3	2.66111079	6.42	0.0005
Residual	41.8856967	101	.414709868		
Total	125.235418	127	.986105657		

Between-subjects error term: id|group  
Levels: 16 (14 df)  
Lowest b.s.e. variable: id  
Covariance pooled over: group (for repeated variables)

## SIGNIFICANT GROUP AND TIME INTERACTION

by time, sort: ttest comp, by(group)

by time, sort : ttest acc, by(group)

|

-> time = 1

Two-sample t test with equal variances

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
1	32	5.64375	.1541135	.8717978	5.329433	5.958067
2	32	5.310417	.183885	1.040211	4.935381	5.685453
combined	64	5.477083	.1208456	.9667647	5.235593	5.718574
diff		.3333334	.2399264		-.1462727	.8129394

diff = mean(1) - mean(2) t = 1.3893  
 Ho: diff = 0 degrees of freedom = 62

Ha: diff < 0 Ha: diff != 0 Ha: diff > 0  
 Pr(T < t) = 0.9151 Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.1697 Pr(T > t) = 0.0849

-> time = 2

Two-sample t test with equal variances

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
1	32	5.4875	.1562737	.8840178	5.168778	5.806222
2	32	4.620833	.1567889	.8869322	4.30106	4.940607
combined	64	5.054167	.1226263	.9810102	4.809118	5.299216
diff		.8666666	.2213691		.4241562	1.309177

diff = mean(1) - mean(2) t = 3.9150  
 Ho: diff = 0 degrees of freedom = 62

Ha: diff < 0 Ha: diff != 0 Ha: diff > 0  
 Pr(T < t) = 0.9999 Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0002 Pr(T > t) = 0.0001

```
. by group, sort : ttest acc, by(time) unequal
```

```
-> group = 1
```

```
Two-sample t test with unequal variances
```

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
1	32	5.64375	.1541135	.8717978	5.329433	5.958067
2	32	5.4875	.1562737	.8840178	5.168778	5.806222
combined	64	5.565625	.1093107	.8744859	5.347185	5.784065
diff		.15625	.2194823		-.2824905	.5949905

```
diff = mean(1) - mean(2) t = 0.7119  
Ho: diff = 0 Satterthwaite's degrees of freedom = 61.988
```

```
Ha: diff < 0 Ha: diff != 0 Ha: diff > 0  
Pr(T < t) = 0.7604 Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.4792 Pr(T > t) = 0.2396
```

```
-> group = 2
```

```
Two-sample t test with unequal variances
```

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
1	32	5.310417	.183885	1.040211	4.935381	5.685453
2	32	4.620833	.1567889	.8869322	4.30106	4.940607
combined	64	4.965625	.1274927	1.019942	4.710851	5.220399
diff		.6895833	.2416536		.2062843	1.172882

```
diff = mean(1) - mean(2) t = 2.8536  
Ho: diff = 0 Satterthwaite's degrees of freedom = 60.4886
```

```
Ha: diff < 0 Ha: diff != 0 Ha: diff > 0  
Pr(T < t) = 0.9970 Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0059 Pr(T > t) = 0.0030
```

## OVERALL COMPARISONS OF ACCENT ACROSS TASKS

```
. oneway acc task, sidak tabulate
```

task	Summary of acc		Freq.
	Mean	Std. Dev.	
1	5.6458333	1.3063328	32
2	5.0375	.73790124	32
3	5.4375	.95608782	32
4	4.9416666	.73005132	32
Total	5.265625	.99302853	128

Source	Analysis of Variance			F	Prob > F
	SS	df	MS		
Between groups	10.5948615	3	3.5316205	3.82	0.0117
Within groups	114.640557	124	.92452062		
Total	125.235418	127	.986105657		

Bartlett's test for equal variances:  $\chi^2(3) = 14.6403$  Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.002$

Comparison of acc by task (Sidak)				
Row Mean-				
Col Mean	1	2	3	
2	-.608333			
	0.073			
3	-.208333	.4		
	0.947	0.464		
4	-.704167	-.095833	-.495833	
	0.024	0.999	0.223	

```
. display invttail(15,0.024)
2.1530119
```

```
. display invttail(14,0.024)
2.1666874
```

## COMPARISONS OF ACCENT ACROSS TASKS BY TIME

. oneway acc task if time==1, sidak tabulate

task	Summary of acc		Freq.
	Mean	Std. Dev.	
1	6.075	1.1674283	16
2	5.25	.6322213	16
3	5.5875	.96431706	16
4	4.9958333	.7325122	16
Total	5.4770833	.96676474	64

Source	Analysis of Variance			F	Prob > F
	SS	df	MS		
Between groups	10.4458344	3	3.48194481	4.31	0.0081
Within groups	48.4361119	60	.807268532		
Total	58.8819464	63	.934634069		

Bartlett's test for equal variances:  $\chi^2(3) = 6.5128$  Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.089$

### Comparison of acc by task (Sidak)

Row Mean - Col Mean	1	2	3
2	-.825 0.069		
3	-.4875 0.567	.3375 0.874	
4	-1.07917 0.007	-.254167 0.965	-.591667 0.342

oneway acc task if time==2, sidak tabulate

task	Summary of acc		Freq.
	Mean	Std. Dev.	
1	5.2166667	1.3307753	16
2	4.825	.79325865	16
3	5.2875	.9545893	16
4	4.8875	.7474277	16
Total	5.0541667	.98101017	64

Source	Analysis of Variance			F	Prob > F
	SS	df	MS		
Between groups	2.57833307	3	.859444358	0.89	0.4524
Within groups	58.0516672	60	.967527787		
Total	60.6300003	63	.962380957		

Bartlett's test for equal variances:  $\chi^2(3) = 6.3461$  Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.096$

Comparison of acc by task  
(Sidak)

Row Mean- Col Mean	1	2	3
2	-.391667 0.842		
3	.070833 1.000	.4625 0.715	
4	-.329167 0.923	.0625 1.000	-.4 0.829



