

EMBODIED ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNICATIVE STRATEGIES:
A CASE STUDY ON FRENCH INFORMAL
AND CLASSROOM CONVERSATION

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project is to add to the growing research on the impact of embodied activities and communicative strategies in conversational second language settings. Studies performed by Atkinson, Nishino, Churchill, and Okada (2007), Goodwin (2000, 2003, 2007), Gregersen (2005), and others have highlighted the importance of embodied activities such as gaze, gesture, participation frameworks, and affect and their impact on communication in and outside of language learning. Using a sociocognitive approach (Atkinson, 2002, 2011), this study examines the ways in which participation in a simulated L2 community affects students' communicative strategies in the target language, taking into account the social and environmental factors involved in second language acquisition as well as cognitive ones. The results show variation between the communicative strategies used in informal and classroom conversation in the target language.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Being a Graduate Teaching Assistant in French and Applied Linguistics at the University of Alabama has allowed me the opportunity of organizing and participating in the French Table, an informal, weekly conversation group that meets at a coffee shop on campus. The students who participate in this table are of varying ages, identify with different social groups, and come from diverse language backgrounds. Despite the disparity of participants, the French Table is instrumental in motivating certain students to continue their French studies domestically or abroad. Being involved in the French Table provided a chance to observe language learners at various stages of the learning process and their ways of attempting to negotiate meaning in a conversational setting. Their “word searches” (Reichert & Liebscher, 2012) are always accompanied by distinctive gestures or gazes, and their bodily positioning often indicates something about their perception of the events that are unfolding at each moment. The notable differences between their behavior in casual and in classroom conversations interested me, and I wanted to discover the root of this distinction.

The impact of my observations was strengthened through the discovery of the sociocognitive approach to second language acquisition (SLA) as postulated by Atkinson (2002, 2011). The proposed combination of the cognitive and the social camps of SLA was fascinating, as was the idea of learning necessarily taking place in and through the environment. I could easily make the logical connection between Atkinson’s work and the observations I had made in

regards to the French Table. After this discovery, I began to investigate studies performed by Goodwin (2000, 2003, 2007) on embodied activities such as gaze, gesture, participation frameworks and affect and their impact on communication in and outside of language learning. The studies performed by Goodwin and others in this field are rich in detail, which means that the actual events are small in size; Goodwin's 2000 and 2007 articles both center on interactions between two people that occur in a space of less than five minutes. While this detail provides a thick description of the events occurring, it also somewhat restricts the researcher as it requires the devotion of an entire article to a relatively small event. This means that research performed in this domain in the same manner is necessarily detailed and narrow, which underlines the importance of further, similar studies to add to the research on embodied activities and to the body of knowledge surrounding the sociocognitive approach to SLA.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents relevant research in the areas of embodied activities and communicative strategies. The following categories are discussed specifically: gestures, negotiation of meaning, embodied cognition, and the role of anxiety in language learning. The epistemological framework for the study is also explored through this section.

Gestures

Rauscher, Kraus, and Chen (1996) demonstrated the importance of gestures in communication through their article on conversational gestures, which are “unplanned, fluent hand movements that often accompany spontaneous speech” (p. 226). Rauscher et al.’s article discussed the use of conversational gestures in order to compensate for a lexical deficiency. The study discovered that gestures are more frequently used when the subject is spatial. Rauscher et al.’s results showed that physically restricting the participants’ gestures caused difficulty during word searches, instances in a speaker’s utterance when s/he must pause and search for vocabulary (Reichert & Liebscher, 2012). From these results, they determined that gesture use is essential in either the formulating or the conceptualizing part of the speaking process. These results inform the present study, which discusses the use of gestures as an important component of the embodied activities that are observed and discussed.

Iverson and Goldwin-Meadow’s (1998) article on the use of gestures in speech production confirmed the results of Rauscher et al. (1996). Iverson and Goldwin-Meadow

studied gesture use in conversations between a group of congenitally blind participants, with the purpose of showing that gestures are inherent and “require neither a model nor an observant partner” (p. 228). The results were conclusive, even to the point that all of the congenitally blind participants used gestures that were similar to the gestures used in the sighted control group. Gestures are therefore not an affected behavior that becomes engrained in conversation patterns over time; on the contrary, they are intrinsic component of conversation. Iverson and Thelen’s (1999) article the following year continued the study of gestures, defining the three major theories about the relationship between gestures and speech production. The researchers posited that gesture and speech “form a single system of communication based on a common underlying thought process” (p. 21). This is the view of gestures considered in the present study.

In their article on the imitation of new adjectives by three-year-olds, Bannard, Klinger, and Tomasello (2013) discussed the use of gestures in the communication of new language material to children. Adult speakers used new adjectives in communication with the children, who were less likely to repeat a new adjective when it was indicated to them through gesture that the new adjective was spoken unintentionally than when this was not indicated. Bannard et al. explored the use of insightful imitation, which takes intention into account, and blind imitation, which does not. Their results showed that through interpretation of the adults’ gestures, children were able to use insightful imitation, which requires awareness of the speaker’s communicative intent. The study also discussed work by Neilson (2006) in reference to the use of imitation by older children, who imitated for more social reasons than young children. Bannard et al.’s study provided valuable information for language instruction; research on students’ understanding and interpretation of instructors’ gestures allows these instructors to better connect with their students through the combination of gestures and the introduction of new linguistic material. The present

study takes into account the use of gestures as they accompany speech in informal conversation and in the classroom, building on the study by Bannard et al. and providing further implications for the use of gestures in both environments.

Embodied Cognition and Embodied Activities

In their article, “Hand, mouth and brain,” Iverson and Thelen (1999) discussed gestures as a representation of mental cognition. The researchers posited that every communicative act is remembered as coupled with gesture, and the combination is remembered as the language capability grows. The gestures and mouth movement eventually become a single act, where the physical is a manifestation of the mental. The seamless combination of cognition and action creates what is known as embodied cognition. Iverson and Thelen concluded that, since cognition “grows from perception and action and remains tied to it, body, world and mind are always united by these common dynamics” (p. 37). In the present study, the examination of embodied cognition, or the combination of mind, world, and body, is explored through the observation of participants in multiple physical and social environments to determine the differences in their communicative strategies.

Atkinson’s (2010) article about extended, embodied cognition further developed the theme presented by Iverson and Thelen. Atkinson provided a list of empirical evidence suggesting that embodied cognition is a widely-researched area of study. He posited that cognition is not only embodied, but also extended, meaning that it is environmental, adaptive, uses a highly structured environment, and is shared and distributed. To illustrate his argument, Atkinson used the example of a photograph of a girl sitting at a table at home with her mother while working on homework. The less context that is given for the image, the less information the observers are able to draw from it, showing the importance of observing the environment

during the learning process. Atkinson concluded with four implications for the field of second language acquisition; engagement is a better metaphor than internalization for language acquisition, focusing on interaction in language acquisition allows the learners to take advantage of the vast knowledge they already have, the learner engaging with the environment allows instructors to physically observe learning, and “alignment is the basis of social life” (p. 617-618). These four implications allow for a language learning experience that is both more embodied by the learners and more extended into the environment. The combination of the embodied and the extended aspects of cognition that Atkinson underlined in this article makes it necessary to consider the physical and the social environment of the language learning experience. These differences are the major focus of the present study, which explores the ways in which communication strategies differ between informal and classroom conversation.

Goodwin’s (2000) article on situated interaction discussed the implementation of communication in the construction of action sequences. The goal of his study was to analyze action and interaction as events that occur through what Goodwin termed a “temporally unfolding juxtaposition of multiple semiotic fields with quite diverse structure and properties” (p. 1517). The study centered around a video recording of girls playing hopscotch and the organization through the use of gestures of argumentative interaction that took place between the two of them. To demonstrate the complimentary implementation of talk and gesture in this specific interaction, Goodwin analyzed the use of semiotic fields, the mediums through which complex sign systems are built (e.g. lexical content of an utterance, the use of pitch for stress, the participation framework, etc.). He also discussed the importance of the environment, the hopscotch grid itself, in shaping the interaction. Goodwin’s article is useful to delineate the framework of the present study, because the concept of overlapping semiotic fields, particularly

the employment of gestures and the function of the environment, is a key factor in the analysis of the observation data.

In 2007, Goodwin published an article similar to his 2000 article. However, in the 2007 article, he narrowed his focus from situated human interaction as a whole to the specific use of embodied participation frameworks, stance, and affect. The bulk of the article centered on a brief interaction between a father and daughter completing homework together. Goodwin discussed the “range of structurally different, but mutually relevant forms” (p. 57) that the father used to attempt to communicate with his daughter in what he terms an “apprenticeship relationship” (p. 57). He concluded that the corporal organization between conversing people jointly focuses their attention. The importance of this article to the present study is similar to that of Goodwin’s (2000) article on situated interaction: the organization of conversation through various forms of communication. However, the 2007 article focuses more precisely on the impact of participation frameworks and corporal organization during activities that require focused attention. In the present study, physical alignment (specifically body lean) is examined in relation to the students’ attention in classroom and informal conversation.

Using what Goodwin termed “symbiotic gesture” (2003), that is, gesture that is situated in and makes use of the environment, Churchill, Nishino, Okada, and Atkinson (2010) examined the interrelatedness of learner, instructor, and tools in the study of grammar. Their study focused on the use of the language learners’ bodies as visible representations of grammatical structures. The tutor and the learner were both capable of understanding and implementing the variety of sociocognitive affordances, including tools (artifacts such as the grammar worksheet, embodied activities such as pointing, gaze, or leaning) and social alignment with these tools (how to respond to the learner’s gaze being directed away from the worksheet). In their study, the

interrelatedness of learner, instructor, mind, body, and environment provided a clear example of the jointly-accomplished nature of communication. In order to better understand the nature of conversational interaction in the present study, this interrelatedness is observed primarily through interaction at the French Table, but also in the classroom through the participants' use of the environments and the tools. The objective of these observations is to determine the difference in students' communicative strategies in casual real-world second language conversation and classroom second language conversation.

Embodied activities were further explored by Yu, Ballard, and Aslin (2005), who investigated the use of gaze during simulated early native language lexical acquisition, then presented a model of word learning that “not only learns lexical items from raw multisensory signals [...], but also explores the computational role of social cognitive skills” (p. 961). In their study, early language learning environment was simulated and adults were exposed to Mandarin Chinese through storytelling with varied levels of visual information available: audio-only input, audiovisual input (video of the book from the reader's perspective), and intention-cued input (video of the book with a marker indicating where the reader's gaze was directed). After hearing the story five times, they were asked to determine both the sound patterns of actual words and the meanings of those words. The participants tested with intention-cued input scored markedly higher both in the segmentation test and in the meaning association test, and the researchers concluded that language learning is significantly enhanced through gaze cues. Their study explores the use of gaze cues in storytelling, which is as potentially relevant to classroom interaction as it is to casual conversation in a second language learning environment.

Embodied Activities in the Social Environment

A significant factor of the environment in the studies discussed to this point is the role of the social environment. Communication affects and is affected by the social environment, which is discussed in this section in relation to embodied activities, student anxiety, and the role of the social environment.

Embodied activities and anxiety. Gregersen et al. (2009) stated that verbal messages “play a content or cognitive role, [while] nonverbal messages serve primarily an affective, relational, or emotional function” (p. 197). The role of nonverbal messages indicates that gestures could be used to determine a speaker’s emotional state, including anxiety. The researchers categorize these and other types of nonverbal messages as subconscious. As such, they are less easily altered than verbal messages, meaning they are more closely tied to the truth; students who are anxious, for example, are more likely to *appear* anxious than to verbally indicate their anxiety. Gregersen (2005) studied the use of nonverbal messages as they related to learner anxiety in the language classroom. Results showed that nonverbal messages change depending on the social environment, indicating that learners will react differently to people with whom they have different relationships. Gregersen discussed the difficulty in using any one nonverbal message (running a hand through the hair, blinking, etc.) to determine the emotional state of the learner due to variations across participants; gestures that indicate anxiety in learner A may simply be idiosyncratic behavior in learner B. Despite the difficulty inherent in attributing specific gestures to specific emotions, Gregersen held that nonverbal cues are still an important part of language use to research and understand. “When assigning meaning to a nonverbal behavior in the language classroom [...], one must consider that the nature of the relationship may influence the way a learner responds” (p. 395). When communicating at the French Table in

the present study, the participants interact with students of varying levels of French, which has a definite effect on their responses as shown by the variation between classroom and French Table communication strategies. Their anxiety level is affected differently by the social environments of the French Table and of the language classroom.

Embodied activities and social interaction. In a case study, Mori and Hasegawa (2009) explored embodied cognition and its social and interactional components. The authors used conversation analysis to examine word searches in pair work in the language learning classroom, taking into account the various semiotic resources that the students used to assist in their language learning outside of the classroom. The study demonstrated that the “display of one’s own cognitive states is socially situated” (p. 90), and therefore is observable to other language learners. Additionally, it showed that the co-participants’ awareness of each other’s cognitive states changed their interactional behavior and the methods used for their word searches, underlining the influence of the social environment for conversational development. Embodied cognition and the social environment are both influential factors to the present study, as it focuses on the variable physical and social environments and their impact on language learners’ communication strategies. Students communicating in the language classroom are more familiar with each other’s cognitive states, and therefore behave differently than when they are at the French Table, or in communications with other French speakers outside of their classroom.

Gregersen, Olivares-Cuhat, and Storm (2009) examined the role of proficiency in native and second language gesture use. They indicated that gestures are often used as “compensation strategies” for language learners who are at a more elementary level (p. 198). Gestures can also be used to reinforce and clarify the verbal messages they accompany, rendering the information more digestible to beginners. Gregersen et al.’s study determined that native language gesture

use differs from second language gesture use in frequency and in type of gesture, positing that “gestural and communicative competencies are likely to develop in tandem” (p. 205). This coordinated development of competencies indicates that as learners progress in their second language, their gestural abilities will change and develop as well. The change in gestural development across language level is shown in the present study through the contrast in the gestures used among the varying class levels, and through the difference in gesture use at the French Table and in the language classroom.

Epistemological Framework

The present study approaches language and language learning from a sociocognitive perspective, focusing on the social and environmental factors that affect language learners as well as the cognitive ones. With this view in mind, this section details the theoretical framework supporting the importance of the social and environmental factors of language learning.

Firth and Wagner (2007) worked to determine alternative descriptions for language learning-in-action that did not lean on cognitivistic concepts through the analysis of transcript excerpts from five naturally-occurring instances of second language interactions. They observed and explained second language learners’ use of communicative strategies in their attempts to “construct meaningful and consequential social interaction” (p. 808). They insisted on the process of language learning as it takes place in “micromoments of social interaction in communities of practice” (p. 807). They went on to call for more in-depth studies of the same nature as that of their excerpt analyses. Their perspective on language learning, as “an inseparable part of ongoing activities and therefore situated in social practice and social interaction” (p. 807), and the emphasis placed on the learning that occurs outside the classroom provide a solid basis for further studies, such as the one presented here.

In his articles, Atkinson (2002, 2011; Atkinson, Nishino, Churchill, & Okada, 2007) postulated a view of language learning that is simultaneously social and cognitive, drawing insight from Gee's (1992) *Social mind*. He also set forth and redefined some of the major terms in second language acquisition from this "sociocognitive" perspective (2002), such as input, the language learner, methods, cognition and language. Atkinson defined the sociocognitive approach as "a view of language and language acquisition as simultaneously occurring and interactively constructed both 'in the head' and 'in the world'" (2002, p. 525). He insisted on the fundamental importance of language as situated within actual human interaction in social settings and stated that neither language acquisition nor use can be understood outside of this integration of the cognitive and the social. His approach to language learning attempts to reconcile the formerly dichotomous relationship between the cognitive and the social approaches to and theories of second language acquisition by proposing a "mind-body-world continuum" (2007, p. 170) in which language takes place. In the sociocognitive perspective, learning is viewed as an adaptation to or an alignment with the social and physical environment. As such, it is necessary to approach language learning by placing the learner in the social world and creating situations in which the learner must adapt. Atkinson indicated that research through this perspective would allow for an examination of language learning that takes place not only in the classroom, but also in real-world settings. In the present study, observation focuses on the differences between embodied activities in the classroom and in informal language learning in a simulated real-world environment, in order to determine the impact of the environment on the participants' communicative strategies.

The article by Atkinson et al. (2007) on physical alignment began with this description: "alignment is the complex means by which human beings effect coordinated interaction, and

maintain that interaction in dynamically adaptive ways” (p. 169). The article went on to provide a list of prevalent concepts in second language acquisition research and development that entail the use of alignment (p. 172). This list included multiple aspects of social interaction, including the coordination of interaction (Goodwin, 2000), which involves turn-taking in conversation and other social efforts towards communication; contextualization clues (Gumperz, 1982), which are important for negotiation of meaning in conversation; and co-membership (Erickson, 2011), related to the co-construction of meaning, involving the social and environmental completion of conversation, each of which calls for alignment as an important part of language learning. The ways in which learners physically align themselves with their social and physical environment is further examined in the present study, which analyzes the differences in physical alignment and other embodied activities between casual and formal second language conversation. In the language acquisition environment, learners align themselves with a multiplicity of sociocognitive elements, but the present study takes into account three of the five major contenders for alignment as mentioned in Atkinson et al. (2007): tools, which includes both the semiotic artifacts and embodied activities; the social environment; and other individuals.

Research Questions

In light of the discussion above, the present study investigates the use of various embodied activities and communicative strategies, including gesture, gaze, independent events (smiling, laughter, nodding or shaking of the head), and alignment, and focusing on the variations between classroom and informal conversation. This study considers the following questions:

1. How do students perceive the effectiveness on their oral skills of participating in a weekly, informal, university-organized French conversation group?

2. How do communicative strategies vary between the conversation group and classroom conversation?
3. How does participation in the conversation group affect learners' communicative strategies in the target language?

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This section presents the three instruments used in the study, the methods of data collection, the participants, and the methods of data analysis.

Instruments

The instrument used in Phase I of the study was a questionnaire adapted from Mackey and Gass (2005, pp. 125-126). The Phase II instruments, created for the purpose of this study, were the tally sheets, used for observations at the French Table and in the classroom, and interview protocols.

Questionnaire. The questionnaire (Appendix A) was used in the first phase of the research project to gather biodata information and to answer the first of the research questions. Items zero through five of the questionnaire contained biodata information, including a brief language learning history, and items six through nine were designed to elicit participants' interest in and thoughts about participating in the French Table. The participants were asked in item six to choose the classroom activity they believed to be the most effective for developing French communicative competence out of the following options: teacher lecture, listening, reading, in-class discussion, and in-class presentations. They were then asked in item seven to choose between individual class work, small group class work, and large group class work based on which of the options they believed would be most effective for developing communicative competence in their target language. The final two questions were related to the French Table,

item eight being whether or not they would be interested in participating in such a group and item nine being whether or not they believed this group would be an effective learning tool. Each of these four questions was followed by ample space to provide opportunities for the participants to explain their choices in their own words;

Observations. In the second phase of the study, four participants were observed in their French classes and at the French Table. One section of the tally sheets (Appendix B) was used while the participant was speaking and the other section while the participant was listening. Both sections included situated gestures (such as hand or arm motions), specific events (such as laughter or nodding of the head), bodily alignment (body lean, body hunched or straight) and gaze (focused or unfocused, directed at primary speaker or elsewhere). For the listening section, the section on gaze was expanded as compared to the speaking section; the speaking section gaze categories were “focused” and “unfocused,” and the listening section included the direction of the gaze. The speaking section of the tally sheet expanded the hand and arm positioning categories, as compared to the listening section, by adding three forms of symbiotic gestures, “indicating,” “touching,” and “open-fisted” hand use.

Interviews. The interview questions used in Phase II of the study (see Appendix C for interview protocol) were created for the purpose of this study. The questions were designed to elicit responses that would reveal the participants’ communication strategies and to determine the differences in these communication strategies between the two environments.

Pilot study. The questionnaire, the observation sheet, and the interview protocol were piloted during the summer of 2013 with a group of incoming university freshman, sophomores and seniors, as well as an incoming graduate student, none of whom were attending the university where this study was taking place. The students were from various backgrounds and

were enrolled in diverse tracks at the university. Preliminary analysis of the data collected during the pilot study determined that the questionnaire and the interview protocol were adequate for data elicitation purposes. The tally sheet was piloted multiple times during the first two weeks the French Table met in Fall 2013 in order to decide whether or not the categories were appropriate and sufficient for an exhaustive notation of gaze, gestures, and participation frameworks. Before the first week of classes in Fall 2013, the researcher changed the format of the tally sheet to facilitate faster and clearer notations; the layout was changed to portrait from landscape, and lines were used around each minute slot to easily show the difference between one minute's tally and the next. The tally sheet in Appendix B reflects these changes.

Data Collection

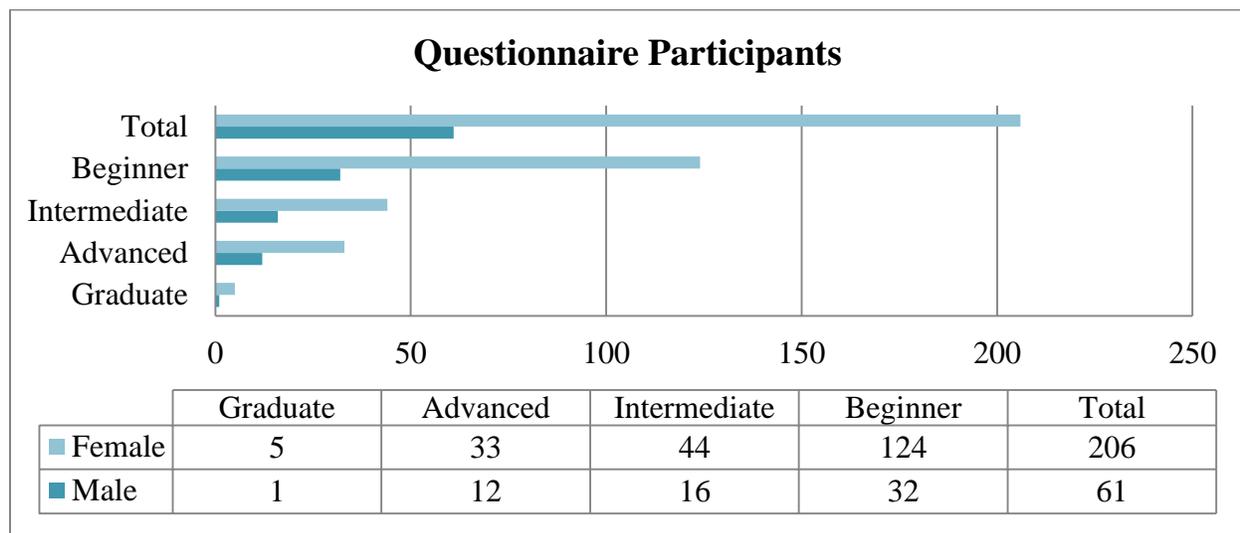
In Phase I of the study, the questionnaires were distributed to all French courses at the university during the seventh week of a 15-week semester in Fall 2013. The instructors of each individual class were provided with copies of questionnaires for their students to complete at home. The instructors collected them after completion and returned them to the researcher between week seven and week ten. In Phase II, the interview and observation began on week six. Isaac and Wendy (all names were changed to protect the participants' anonymity) were observed once in class and at the French Table, as well as interviewed once individually at times convenient to them. Wendy was interviewed immediately after her French class, and Isaac was interviewed a few hours after his French class. The same tally sheet was used during both observations in order to determine the differences in communicative strategies between the two situations; tallies were made once every two minutes based on the participants' current bodily activity. On week seven, Margaret and David were observed and interviewed in the same manner and situations. Both interviews took place two days after the French Table observation. The

eighth week was with the first two participants (Isaac and Wendy), and the ninth and final week was with the second two participants (Margaret and David). The interview protocol for the second round of interviews, week eight for Isaac and Wendy and week 9 for Margaret and David, was modified slightly. Questions relating to the participants' hand movements were added in order to elicit more complete responses relating to their embodied activities in the two environments. These participants were also provided a second time with the Phase I questionnaire after completion of Phase II, during week 15 of the semester. Their questionnaire responses during Phase II were not included in the Phase I questionnaire response analysis; they were used to determine if their responses correlate with the rest of the questionnaire participants.

Participants

The participants were all volunteer students enrolled in French courses at the University of Alabama (UA), primarily between 18 and 21 years old. At the beginning of the semester, professors distributed 513 questionnaires to students from every class conducted in French at the university. Figure 1 details the total number of questionnaires collected, by gender and by class level.

Figure 1. The number of questionnaire participants by class level and gender.



As shown in Figure 1, 267 of these students voluntarily completed the questionnaire. The sample consisted of 156 students at the beginner level (124 female and 32 male), 60 students at the intermediate level (44 female and 16 male), 45 students at the advanced level (33 female and 12 male), and five students at the graduate level (five female and one male). The mean student age was 20.5 years. English was the first language of 94% of the participants, while only 15 of the 267 students spoke a different native language (6%).

For the interview and observation phase, one student enrolled in an intermediate course, two French majors enrolled in advanced courses, and one graduate student were selected based on interest in the French Table as determined by their participation during the first few weeks of the semester, and were invited to participate in the rest of the study. These four participants were observed twice at the French Table and twice in their French classes, as well as interviewed twice individually. Table 1 provides the biodata information of the four Phase II participants, including their name, their French class level, their gender, their age, the number of years they had studied French, and the age at which they began to study French.

Table 1. Biodata information of Phase II participants.

Name	Level	Gender	Age	Years of French	Age Began French
David	graduate	male	24	11	13
Isaac	advanced	male	20	3	18
Margaret	advanced	female	20	8.5	12
Wendy	intermediate	female	19	1.5	18

As shown in Table 1, Wendy was the intermediate student, a 19-year old female who had begun taking French courses upon her to the university and was currently in her third semester of French. Isaac and Margaret were the advanced students, who were both 20 years old and enrolled in multiple advanced courses. Isaac had begun studying French two years ago upon his

enrollment at UA. Margaret had completed one year of French at UA, but had studied French for seven years beforehand. Isaac and Margaret had both studied French abroad for one semester. While they were enrolled in the same classes at the time of the study, Margaret was at a more advanced level. The graduate student, David, was 24 and enrolled in three concurrent French classes. He had been studying French for 11 years, beginning at the age of 13; this included one semester abroad and two semesters of private tutoring. The native language of these four participants was English.

Data Analysis

To answer the first research question, the responses to the questionnaire were transcribed. Once transcriptions were complete, the data obtained was analyzed for patterns in the 267 participants' responses to the four main questions, items six through nine on the questionnaire (see Appendix A). Class section, class level, concurrent classes, previous classes, gender, age, first language, and previous years of French study were all noted in a spreadsheet. In order to calculate percentages about the questionnaire participants, all of the short-form responses in items zero through nine were changed to numerical values. Four of the participants did not include the previous years of French study, in which cases the response was input depending on the number of semesters of previous French study they had indicated. Fourteen participants did not include the age at which they began their French study. Based on the National Center for Education Statistics' 2010 report (O'Donnell, Sargent, Byrne, & White, 2010), the age of incoming high school freshmen is between 13 and 14; 13.5 was therefore input for the responses "high school" and "freshman." Other grade indications given by participants (1st, 7th, 8th, middle school and 10th) were replaced with ages based on this calculated age. "Birth" was replaced with "1". Age was set to "0" for the four participants for whom age could not be logically determined

by other responses. This process was used to calculate accurate percentages related to the biodata information contained in items zero through five on the questionnaire. For the final two yes or no questions, items eight and nine, “1” was input for yes and “2” for no. For responses such as “maybe” or “possibly,” “1.5” was entered. The short-form parts of items five through nine on the questionnaire were also analyzed for percentages.

The long-form responses in items six through nine were used to answer the first research question, which examines students’ perspective of the effectiveness on their oral skills of participating in a weekly, university-organized French conversation group. These responses were analyzed for patterns relating to the students’ reasons for being interested in the French Table, or for believing that participating in the French Table would or would not help them learn French. The responses that indicated the reasons for the participants’ interest in participating in the French Table were grouped into categories. These categories are as follows: participants believed French Table would help them improve their French in some capacity; the participants desired supplemental practice time; the participants’ responses indicated their motivation for language learning; the participants indicated that the change of environment would be positive; the participants’ anxiety would be lessened by participation; the participants expressed concern about their level of French; and the participants did not have time to participate in French Table. The responses that indicated the reason for the participants’ disinterest in participating in the French Table were grouped into the following categories: the participants were unmotivated to learn French; the participants expressed negative feelings about the environment or the social aspect of the French Table; the participants’ anxiety would be increased by participation; the participants did not have the time to participate in the French Table; and the participants expressed concern about their level of French. These responses were then tallied to determine

trends in the reasoning behind the students' response. While the participants had been told to select a single answer, many responses contained multiple responses, in which case both responses were transcribed.

The four primary participants' responses to the questionnaire were transcribed separately from, but in the same manner as, the questionnaire participants. Their tally sheets were transcribed into Excel to consider the second research question, which asks how communicative strategies vary between the classroom and the French Table. The sections were tallied and analyzed to find out which embodied activities differed between the classroom and the French Table. The interviews were transcribed in order to respond to the third research question, which asks how participation in the conversation group affects learner's communicative strategies. After transcription, the interviews were skimmed for topics, which were then organized into the following categories: communicative strategies, embodied activities, anxiety, and the difference in environment. The themes developed during the analysis of these categories were used in the study to answer the second research question, which is related to the differences in communicative strategies in the classroom and at the French Table, and the third research question, which is related to the effect of French Table participation on classroom communicative strategies.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

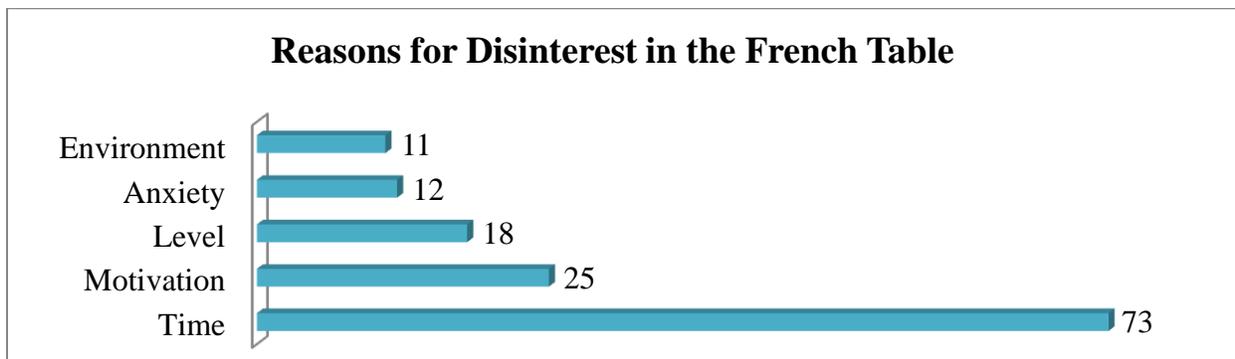
This section contains results based on the analysis of the student questionnaire, including results for the student participation in the French Table, for the student perception of the effectiveness of the French Table on their conversation skills and the type of classroom activity students feel is most effective for learning conversation skills. It also includes the results of the observations and interviews, including the differences in embodied activities of the four participants between the classroom and the French Table and these four participants' perspectives of their embodied activities in both environments.

Students' Desire to Participate in the French Table

In order to answer the first of the research questions, relating to students' perception of the effectiveness on their oral skills of participation in the French Table, I analyzed the questionnaire distributed in class. According to their response to the penultimate question, which asked whether or not they would be interested in participating in the French Table, a majority of the participants (148 out of 267 or 55.4%) answered affirmatively, whereas 119 participants responded negatively.

Students disinterested in the French Table. Figure 2 provides the reasons for students' disinterest in participation in the French Table: lack of time, lack of desire or motivation, language level deficit, sense of anxiety, and hesitation towards the social or physical environment.

Figure 2. Top reasons for students' disinterest in participating in the French Table.



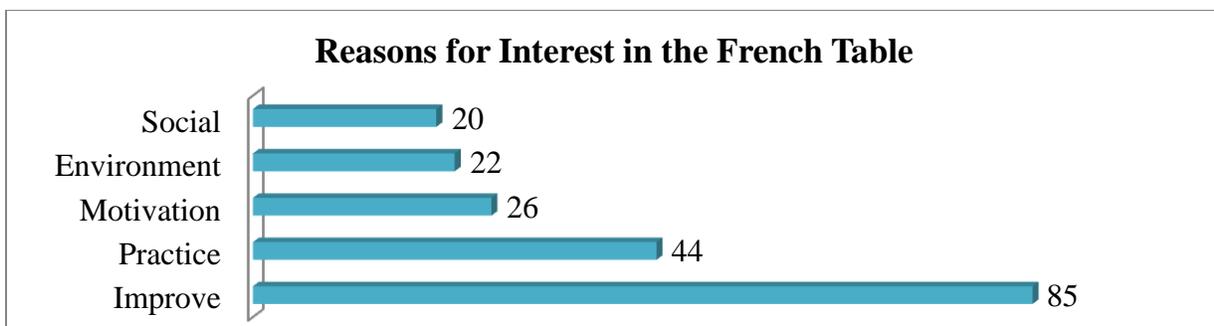
As shown in Figure 2, the lack of time was the predominate reason; of the 119 students who replied negatively in response to their desire to participate in the French Table, 73 participants (61.3% of the negative response and 27.3% of the total response) indicated that they did not have enough time. Lack of motivation was the second reason, with 25 participants (21% of the negative response) responding either that they were not majoring in French or that they were “uninterested in general.” Eighteen students (15%) believed their level of French to be inadequate for participation in this type of activity, and 12 students (10%) stated that they would be anxious, embarrassed, intimidated, uncomfortable or nervous during the conversation group. These responses can be categorized together, as they both indicate a feeling of inadequacy from the students. The following response from a beginner student, for example, is categorized under both anxiety and belief that their level of French is inadequate for participation. “I’m not particularly good at speaking French. Even though I know practice would make me better, it’s still something that would be a little uncomfortable.” This participant starts by indicating that she feels her level of conversational French is inadequate for the conversation group. While there is an acknowledgment of the potential benefits of the French Table, what seems to be determinant is the potential for discomfort or anxiety if the student were to attend the French Table. Other

participants, particularly at the beginner level, responded similarly, such as “I am not comfortable in speaking French yet,” and “I’m not great at French. It would help, but I’d be embarrassed.” The combined level inadequacy and anxiety categories were found in 24 responses, which is a fifth of the negative response (20.2%), showing anxiety and language level deficit to be significant factors in discouraging students from participation in the French Table.

The final major reason given for lack of interest was the environment of the French Table, which included the physical location (a campus coffee shop), the difference between the orientations of the chairs and tables in the coffee shop and in the classroom, the social differences between the coffee shop and the participants’ usual classroom experience, etc. Ten students (8.7%) said that the social or physical environment would be uncomfortable in some way. One indicated that she does not enjoy speaking French “in front of a lot of people,” a typical response classified under the social aspect of the public environment.

Students interested in the French Table. Figure 3 shows the top five reasons for participants’ interest in the French Table: the desire to improve the level of French, the desire to practice French, their personal motivation for learning French, the appeal of the environment, and the appeal of the social aspect of the conversation group.

Figure 3. Top reasons for students’ interest in participating in the French Table.

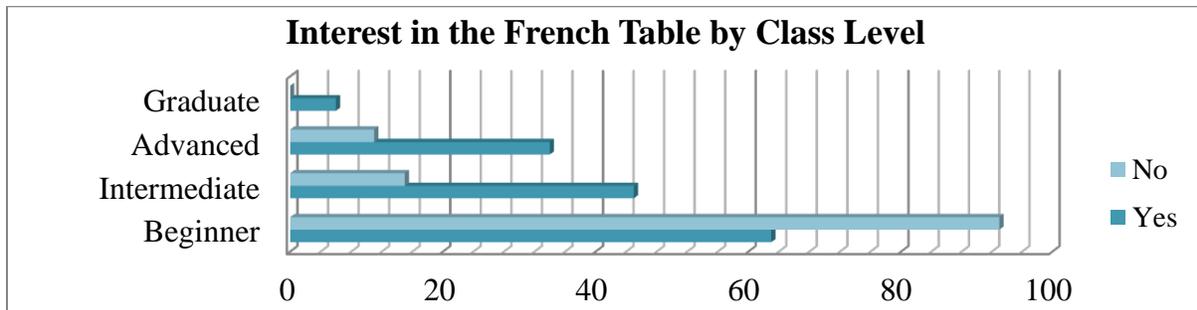


Of the 148 students who indicated that they would be interested in participating in the French Table, the vast majority expressed a desire to either practice or improve their French. As

shown in Figure 3, a majority of the participants (85 out of 148 or 57.4%) wanted to improve their French, and a third (44 out of 148 or 29.7%) wanted to have the chance to practice their French. Often these two responses were coupled, as illustrated in the following comment, “I think practicing with others would help to learn and speak better,” which implies that practicing French in communication helps with French language development. Twenty-six students out of 148 (17.6%) cited their original motivation for French study (fluency, communication, a minor or major, enjoyment of the language) or other personal motivations (amusement, interest in the group) as the reason they were interested in participating in the French Table. Twenty-two students (14.9%) indicated that the environment of the French Table appealed to them in some way (the casual atmosphere, being outside of the classroom and office hours), and 20 students (13.5%) indicated that they wanted to be involved in the social aspect of the French Table (interacting with others, meeting people).

French Table interest by class level. Of the 267 participants who completed the survey in Phase I of this study, over half of them were enrolled in beginning French classes (156 participants or 58.4%). Approximately a fourth of them were enrolled in intermediate French classes (60 participants or 22.5%). The remaining participants were enrolled in advanced (45 participants or 16.9%) and graduate French classes (six participants or 2.3%). Figure 4 shows the differences in interest between the four levels (beginning, intermediate, advanced, and graduate).

Figure 4. Number of students interested in the French Table by class level.



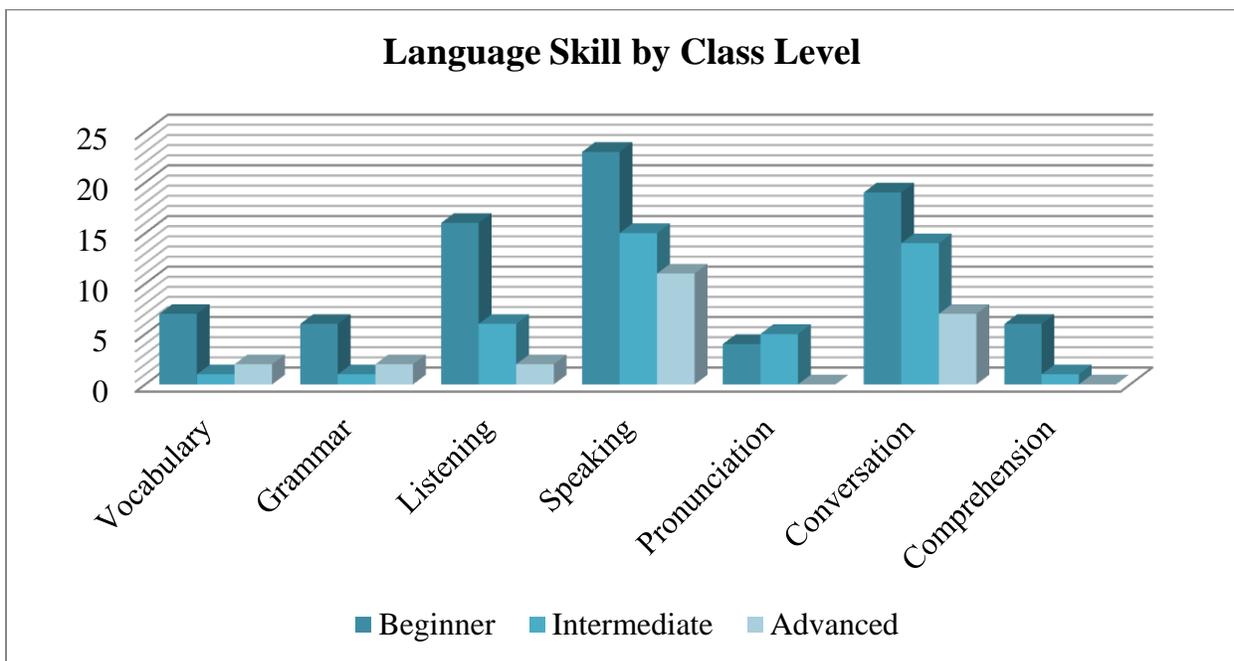
As shown in Figure 4, less than half of the beginner students (63 out of 156 or 40.4%) who completed the questionnaire responded that they would be interested in participating. However, a majority of the intermediate students (45 out of 60 or 75%), as well as the advanced students (34 out of 46 or 74%), and all 6 of the graduate students indicated their interest in participating in the French Table. Thus, as the students advanced in class level, it appears they were more interested in participating in the French Table. The more advanced students were also more inclined to cite lack of time as the reason for their disinterest in participating in the French Table; nine of the 11 advanced students (81.9%) who responded negatively indicated they did not have time, as compared with 53 of the 93 beginner students (57%). The beginner students were more likely to include lack of motivation to pursue or to improve in French as the reason for their disinterest in participating in the French Table; 22 of the 93 beginner students (23.7%) as compared to three of the 15 intermediate students (20%) and none of the advanced students. The beginner students made many comments along the lines of “I wouldn’t see the point of going,” “French isn’t my major,” or “French isn’t my top priority.” The percentage of participants that mentioned anxiety or level inadequacy was consistent across the three levels; at the beginner level, 19 out of the 93 participants who responded negatively cited one or the other of those categories (20.4%), as well as three of the 15 intermediate students (20%) and two of the 11 advanced students (18.2%).

Students’ Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the French Table

The final question on the survey was whether or not the French Table would be effective in language acquisition, and 93.3% (or 249 out of 267) of the questionnaire participants answered affirmatively, saying that participating in such a group would help them learn French. The 18 participants who responded negatively mentioned the following reasons: four students

mentioned language level deficit; six students the desire to work alone and not with other students; seven students, the sense of anxiety; one, a lack of time; and six, the belief that it would not be helpful. The 249 participants who responded positively believed that participating in this conversation group would provide them valuable practice that would enhance their French language skills, and almost half of these participants (110 of 249, 44.2%) indicated a specific language skill that this participation would improve. Figure 5 shows the variation by level in the language skills the participants cited; vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, pronunciation, conversation skills, and comprehension.

Figure 5. Improvement in language skills by class level.



Across all levels, speaking was the skill considered most likely to benefit from participating in the French table (49 out of 110 participants or 44.5%), followed by conversation skills (40 out of 110 or 36.4%). For beginners and intermediate participants, listening was the third most mentioned skill (16 out of 53 or 30.2% of all beginners who cited a specific skill, and six of 34 or 17.6% of intermediate participants), though this category was closely followed by

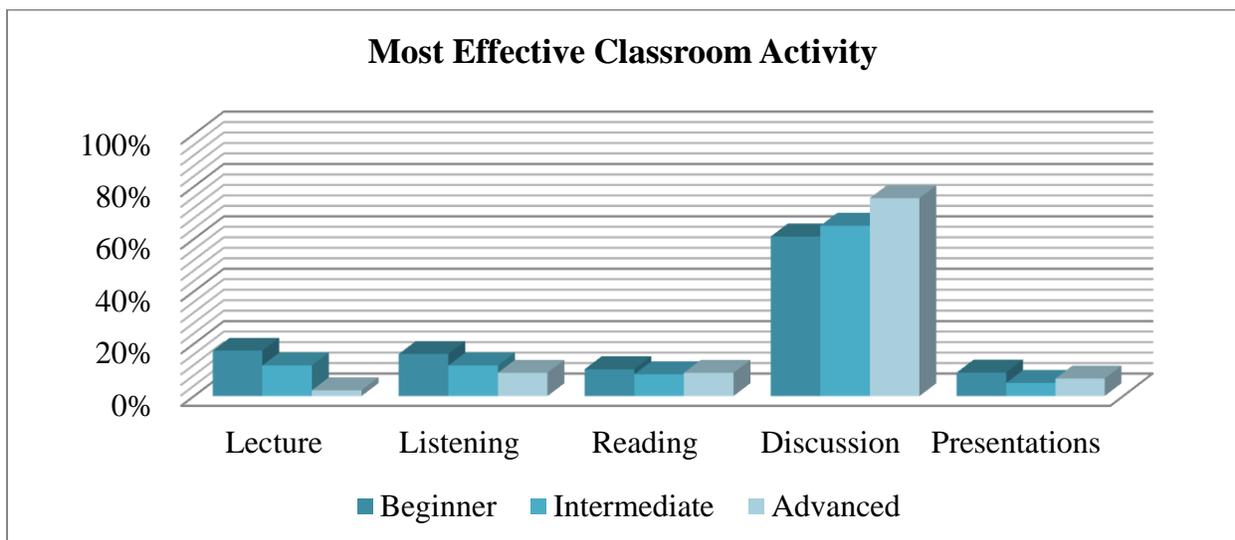
pronunciation skills among the intermediate (five out of 34 or 14.7%). For advanced students, improving pronunciation was not mentioned as a benefit of participating in the French Table, contrasting with the response for pronunciation among beginners and intermediate students. For the advanced level, vocabulary, grammar, and listening tied for the third most mentioned skill with two participants (two out of 21 participants or 9.5%) per category.

The four Phase II participants responded similarly to this question. Margaret, Isaac, and Wendy all indicated that the French Table would be effective for their language development. David responded both positively and negatively; while he believed the conversation would be an effective tool for language learning, he also believed that the participants would be limited by the knowledge of their peers. Of the three Phase II participants who responded positively, Isaac and Wendy cited speaking improvement, and Margaret cited conversation improvement.

Students' Perceptions of the Most Effective In-Class Activity

Figure 6 details the in-class activities considered to be most effective across the beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. The five categories provided to the participants were teacher lecture, listening, reading, in-class discussion, and in-class presentations.

Figure 6. Most effective in-class activity by class level.



As shown in Figure 6, the majority of participants (172 of 267 or 64.4%) indicated that discussion was the most effective in-class activity. The results were mostly consistent across class levels, though the choice of discussion increased in percentage as the students increased in level. A lower percentage of beginner students chose discussion (95 out of 156 or 60.9%) than intermediate students (39 out of 60 or 65%), and the advanced students chose discussion significantly more often than either of the lower levels (34 out of 45 or 75.6%). Teacher lecture and listening also showed meaningful changes between the levels. Twenty-seven beginner students chose teacher lecture (17.3%), and 25 chose listening (16%). At the intermediate level however, seven students chose lecture (11.7%) and seven students chose listening (11.7%). At the advanced level, one participant chose lecture and four participants chose listening.

The responses from the four participants from Phase II reflected the trends noted in the large sample. David, Isaac and Wendy agreed that discussion was the best in-class activity, while Margaret indicated that reading was best. Isaac, Margaret and Wendy chose small group as the most effective size, while David chose large. All of the Phase II participants were interested in the French Table, and they all believed it would be effective.

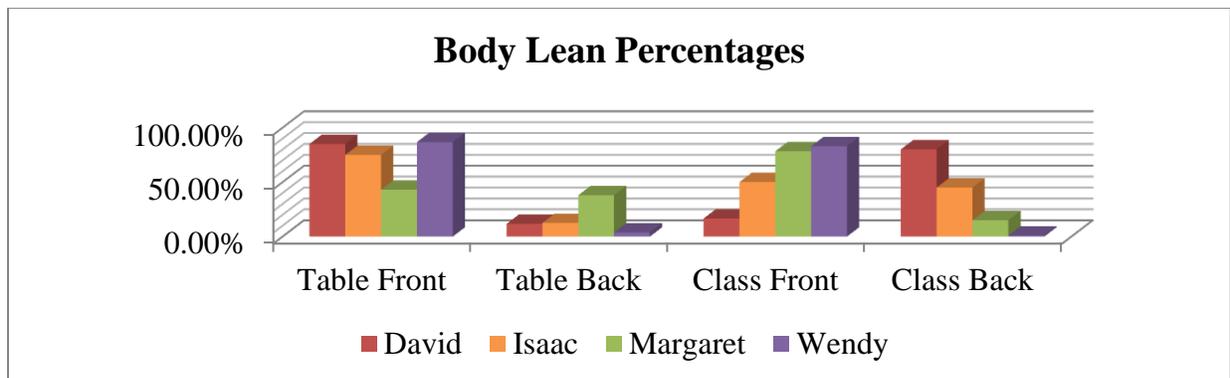
Variations in Communicative Strategies at the French Table and in the Classroom

The second research question examined the ways in which communicative strategies vary between the informal conversation group and classroom conversation. This research question was answered through the observations of the four Phase II participants and through the interviews with the same four participants. Analysis of the tally sheets used during observation showed significant differences between embodied activities at the French Table and in the classroom. These differences were most clear within the categories that indicate student engagement and student anxiety. The following two sections address these two groups of

categories as they relate to the differences in the individual participants' embodied activities at the French Table and in the classroom.

Student engagement. The listening portion of the tally sheets used for the Phase II participants revealed significant differences in the categories of body lean, arm use, and independent events (smiling, laughing, nodding, and shaking head) between the French Table and the classroom. Figure 7 shows the distribution of tallies of the body lean category by percentage across the four participants while listening and speaking at the French Table and in class. The four categories are leaning forward at the French Table, leaning backwards at the French Table, leaning forward in French class, and leaning backwards in French class.

Figure 7. Body lean notation percentages across Phase II participants.

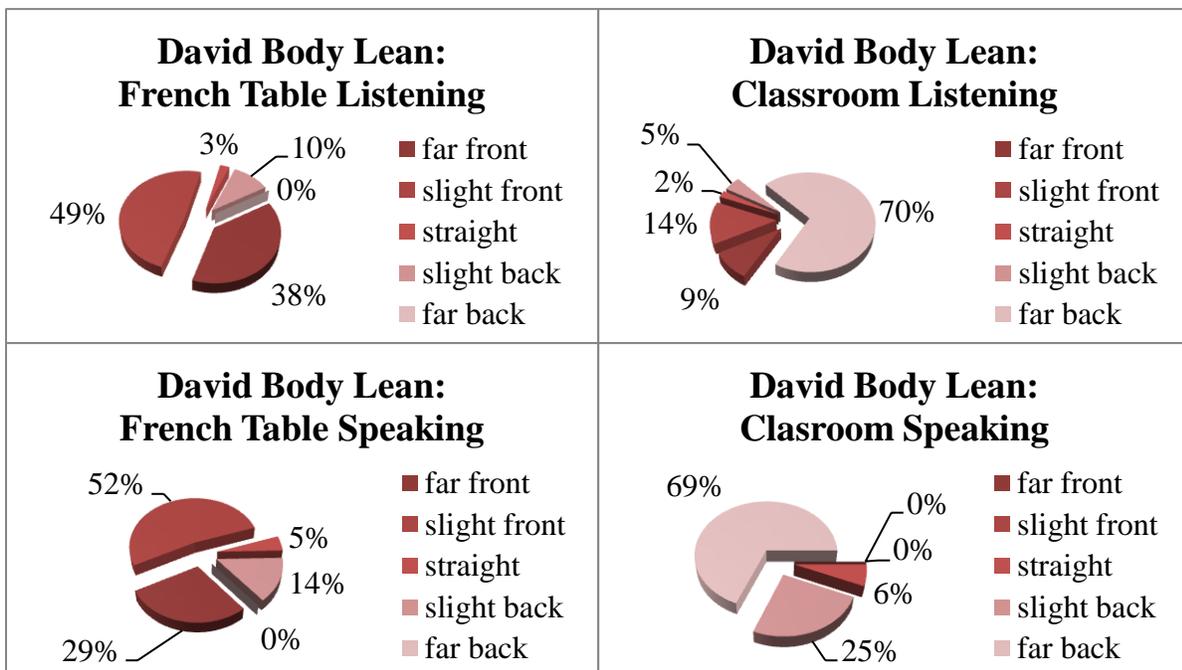


The French Table tallies show David and Isaac leaning forward significantly more than the classroom tallies, which could be a sign of interest or engagement in a topic of conversation, though this positioning could also be attributed to environment. The chairs used at the French Table were standard wooden, four-legged chairs with mostly straight edges and a straight back. The chair David used in the classroom was similar to a small rolling office chair, but with a built-in armrest surface for schoolwork. The back of that chair could be pushed back, allowing the person seated in it to recline slightly. The chairs in Isaac and Margaret's classroom were similar to the chairs in David's classroom, but the seat area was smaller, making the entire chair

more confining. Additionally, one of the two observation days, there was a table in front of Margaret’s chair, and her feet were placed on a rung on the side of the table throughout the class, which made her body take a naturally forward-leaning position. The chairs in Wendy’s classroom were metal with padding on the back and seat, both of which were wider than the chairs in Isaac and Margaret’s classroom. Also important to note is the fact that Wendy took notes almost constantly when in the classroom, leaning far forward to do so. Margaret took notes about half as often as Wendy, while David and Isaac rarely took notes. All of these factors influenced the position of the participants’ bodies during the observations.

Figure 8 shows the details of David’s body lean notation divided by the five categories on the tally sheet: leaning far forward, leaning slightly forward, sitting straight, leaning slightly back, and leaning far back.

Figure 8. David tally sheet body lean notation.

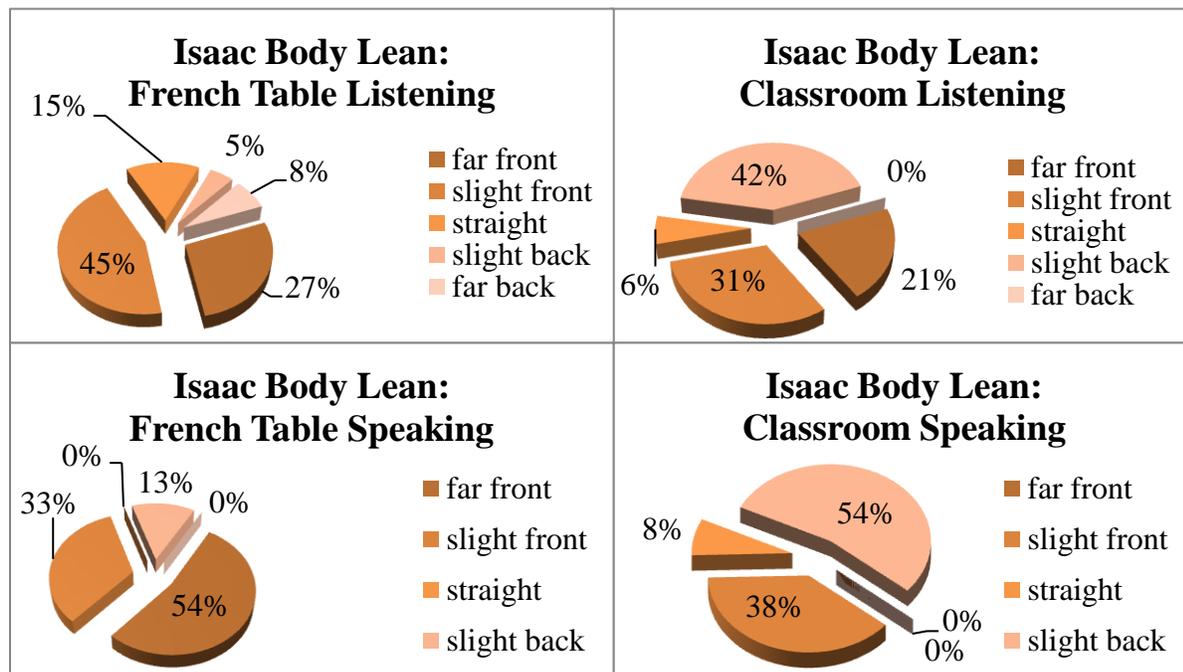


As shown in Figure 8, there was a clear difference between the position of David’s body in the classroom and at the French Table. Out of the 44 classroom listening notations, 31

notations (70.5%) were made with David leaning far back in his chair, something he did not do in a single one of the 39 French Table notations. While listening in the classroom, David leaned back during 33 out of 44 tallies, which means he was at least slightly reclined 75% of the time during his class. While listening during the conversation group, he leaned forward during 34 of his 39 tallies, which is 87.2% of the tally marks made at those times. These results suggest that David was more physically engaged at the French Table than in the classroom, which could logically be linked to the difference in the environment, and specifically to the chairs.

The body lean category of Isaac’s tally sheet also varied significantly between the French Table and in class. Figure 9 details the distribution of Isaac’s body lean category by percentage while listening and speaking at the French Table and in class.

Figure 9. Isaac tally sheet body lean notation.

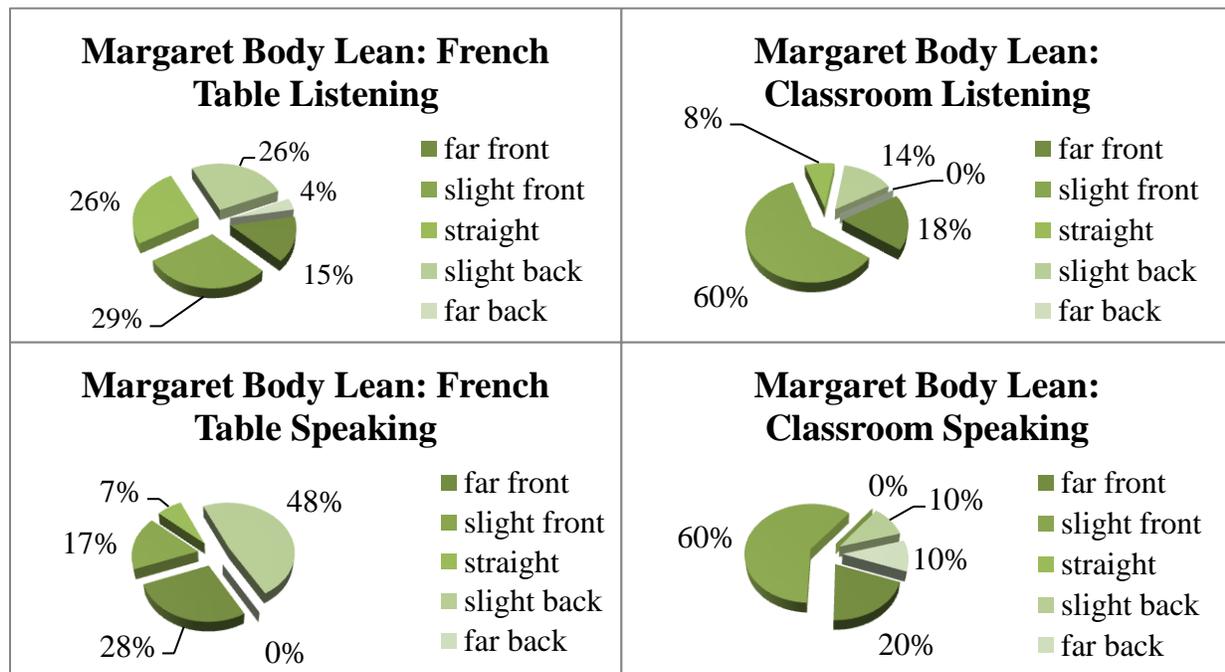


Just like David, Isaac was leaning forward during the majority of the French Table listening notations (29 out of 41 or 70.7%), leaning back during five of those notations (12.2%), as shown in Figure 9. While listening during class, however, Isaac leaned forward approximately

half of the time (25 out of 48 or 52.1%) and leaned backwards significantly more than while listening at the French Table (20 out of 48 or 41.7%). The speaking notations showed similar results. Thirteen of the 15 French Table speaking tallies were leaning forward (58.7%) and two were leaning back (13.3%), as compared to five of the 12 classroom speaking tallies leaning forward (41.7%) and seven leaning back (58.3%).

Margaret’s body lean was different between the French Table and the classroom, as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Margaret tally sheet body lean notation.



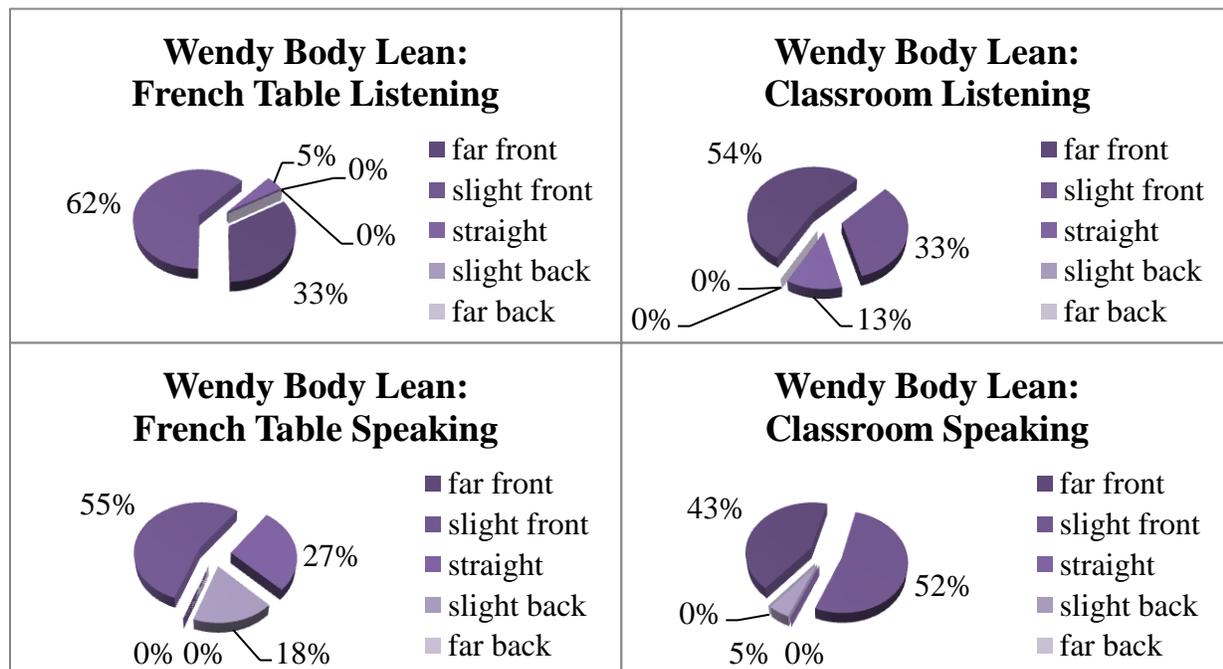
During the listening section, she was leaning back during eight of the 28 notations at the French Table (28.6%), and during seven of the 50 classroom notations (14%). She was leaning forward during 12 of the French Table listening tallies (52.2%) and during 39 of the classroom listening tallies (78%). This difference in body lean or alignment could be due to the classroom environment in the same way that the differences in David’s body lean were related to the environment. The chairs in Margaret’s classroom were small and had small surfaces attached to

the arms, which were handy to be lean on. Indeed, Margaret’s arm and hand tallies indicated that she leaned on her elbows or hands significantly more in her class than at the French Table.

During the 10 times when she was speaking in class, she leaned on her hands or arms 8 times (80%). When she was listening in class, she leaned on her hands or arms 31 of the 50 tallies (62%). She leaned on her hands and arms significantly less in French Table: during eight of the 28 listening tallies (10.3%) and during ten of the 30 speaking tallies (33.3%).

Wendy was the final Phase II participant. Her body lean changed between the classroom and the French Table, but in a way that differed from the other participants. Figure 11 shows the distribution of Wendy’s body lean between listening and speaking at the French Table and in her French class.

Figure 11. Wendy tally sheet body lean notation.

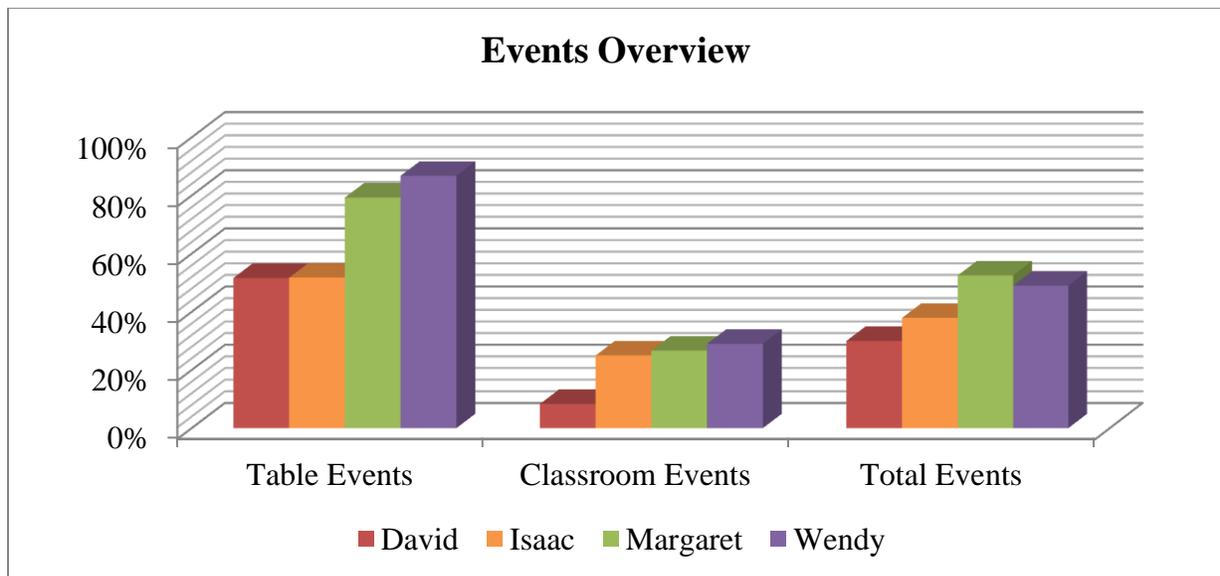


Between speaking and listening at the French Table and in the classroom, the only environment in which Wendy leaned back for a significant amount of time was while speaking at the French Table, as indicated in Figure 11. Out of the 42 conversation group listening tallies,

Wendy was leaning forward during 40 (95.2%), and during the 72 in-class listening tallies, she was leaning forward during 63 (87.5%). Out of the 11 conversation group speaking tallies, Wendy leaned forward six times (54.6%), and out of the 28 in-class speaking tallies, Wendy leaned forward 20 times (71.4%).

The difference in body lean among the four participants is in and of itself noteworthy in relation to students' engagement. However, independent events such as smiling, laughing, nodding, and shaking of the head are also indicators of engagement in the conversation or dialogue. Figure 12 shows the tally of these four events combined across the four participants at the French Table, in the classroom, and in total.

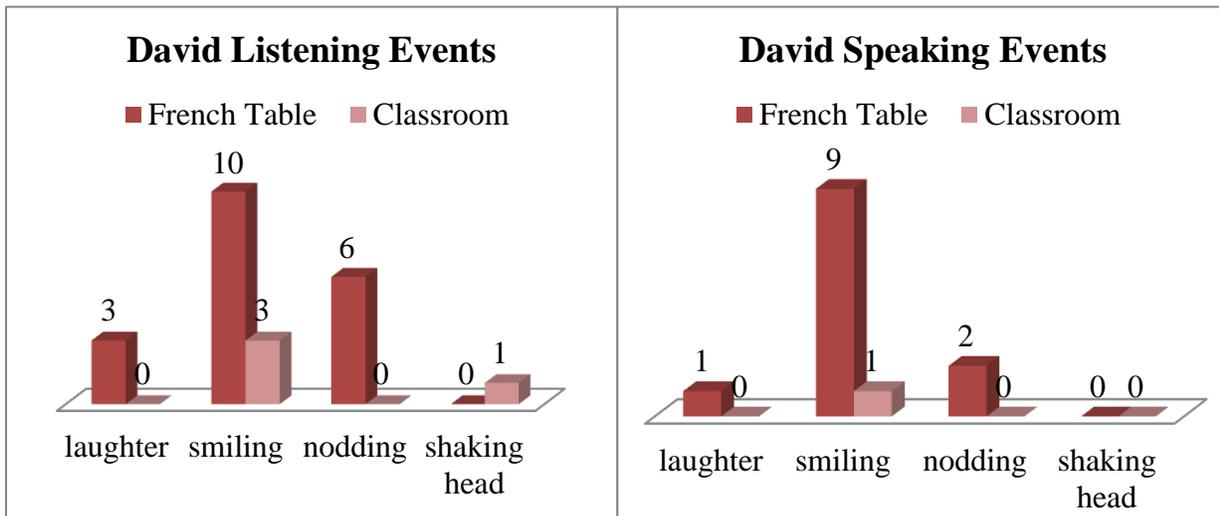
Figure 12. Overview of the notation of events of the four participants.



As shown in Figure 12, all four of the students were more likely to engage in acts such as smiling, laughing, and nodding or shaking of the head at the French Table than in the classroom, indicating a higher level of engagement in that environment. The four participants on average were engaged in one of these events 67.4% of the notations at French Table and during 22.3% of the notations in the classroom. Margaret was engaged in these events the most among the

participants, as 62 of her 118 total tallies (52.4%) noted one of these events. Wendy used these events the second most frequently out of the four participants, with 75 event tallies out of 153 total (49%). Isaac and David's event notations were lower. Isaac was engaged in one of these events 44 out of his 116 tallies (38%), while David used them 36 out of 120 tallies (30%). The divergence across the four participants' use of individual events reinforces the differences in engagement or interest across the four participants. While David was noted smiling, laughing, nodding, and shaking his head the least out of all of the participants, the instances in which these events do occur suggest a clear trend for the use of events in the French Table more than in the classroom. Figure 13 shows the differences between the four events noted at the French Table and in class in David's tally sheets.

Figure 13. David tally sheet event notation during listening and speaking.

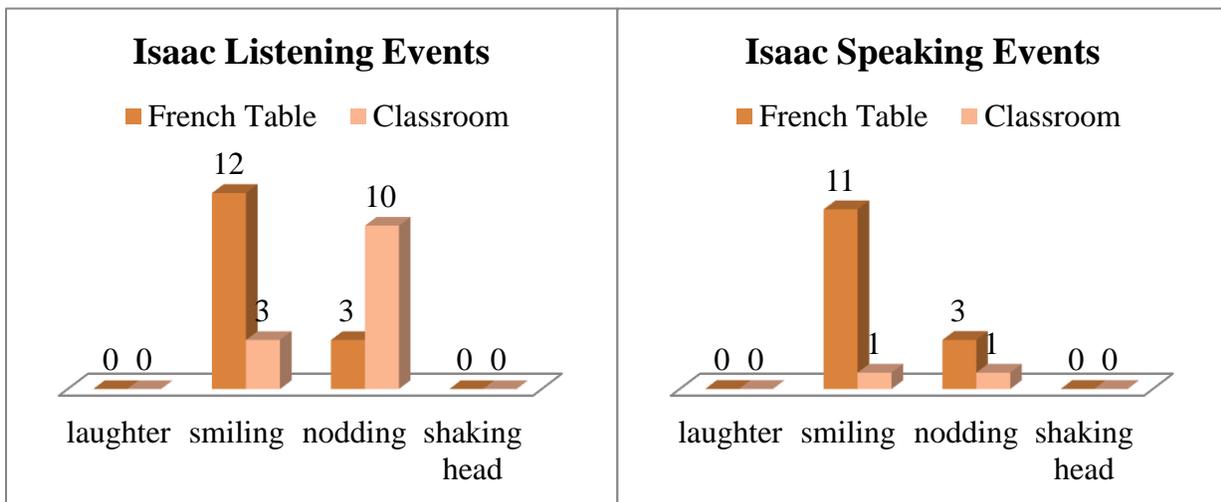


As seen in Figure 13, of the 39 notations at the French Table, there were ten tallies of smiling (25.6%), three of laughter (7.7%), and six of nodding (15.4%). In the 44 in-class notations, there were three tallies of smiling (6.82%), and one of head shaking (2.27%). In total, there were 19 event tallies at the French Table (42.7%) and four in the classroom (9.1%). The difference between the amounts of specific events recorded in the two situations suggests that

David found the conversation at the French Table to be more engaging than that of the French Class. There was a similar distribution in the results of the speaking tallies for David. There were 21 French Table speaking tallies and 12 activity tallies (57.1%), as compared to the 16 classroom speaking tallies with one activity tally (6.25%).

Similar results were found in Isaac’s tally sheets, as shown in Figure 14, which shows the distribution of events between listening and speaking at the French Table and in the classroom.

Figure 14. Isaac tally sheet event notation during listening and speaking.

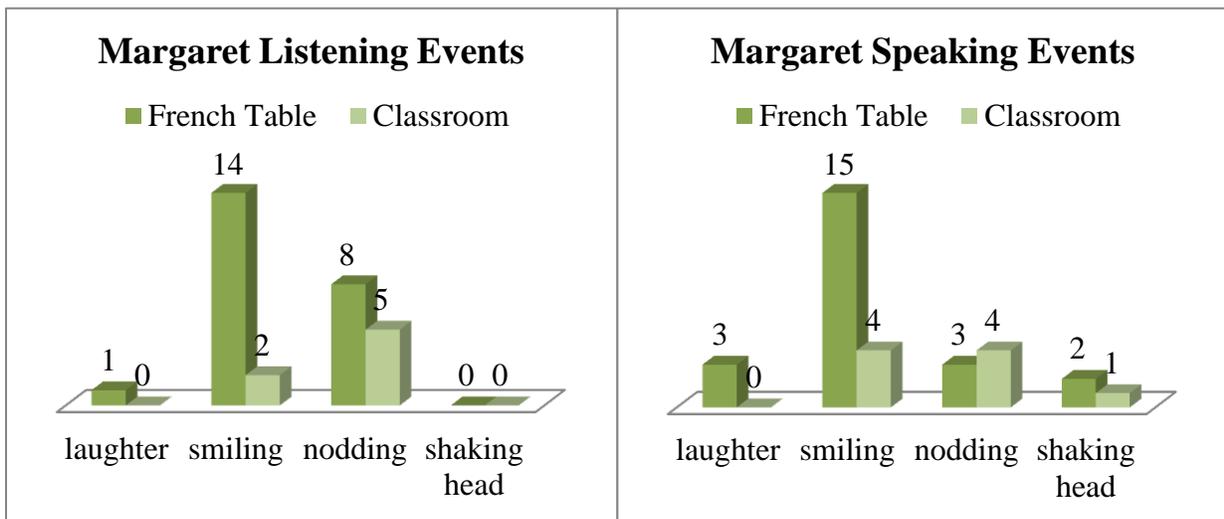


During the 41 French Table listening notations, Isaac smiled 12 times (29.3%) as compared to the three smile tallies in the 48 class listening notations (6.3%). During the 15 French Table speaking notations, he smiled 11 times (73.3%), and there was one smile tally during the 12 class speaking notations (8.3%). Almost every time he was speaking at the French Table, Isaac was engaged in one of these four events (14 out of 15 notations or 93.3%), as compared to the two event tallies out of 12 in-class speaking notations (16.7%). During the listening portion, there were 15 event tallies out of the 41 French Table tallies (36.6%) and 13 activity tallies out of the 43 class tallies (27.1%). Like the other three participants, Isaac was significantly more engaged overall at the French Table than in the classroom setting, based on

these four activities as a measure of engagement. However, Isaac was the only participant among the three to nod as frequently as he did while listening and while in the classroom (10 out of 12 notations or 83.3%).

Margaret’s independent event results during listening also indicate a higher level of engagement at the French Table than in the classroom. Figure 15 shows the number of times Margaret was engaged in an event during listening and speaking at the French Table and in her classroom.

Figure 15. Margaret tally sheet event notation during listening and speaking.

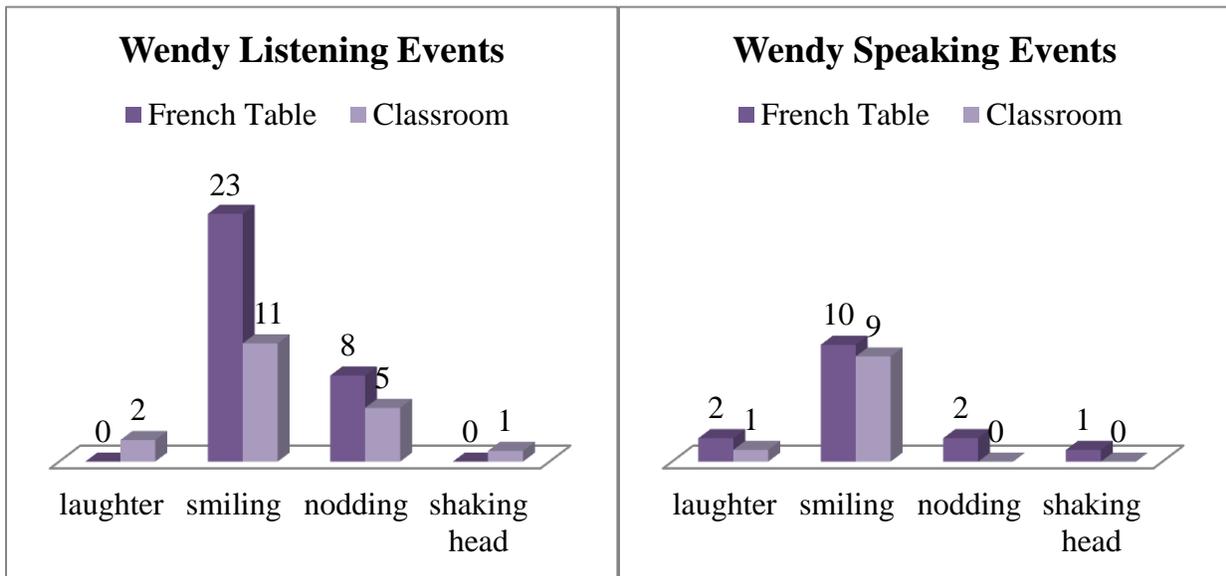


As shown in Figure 15, on Margaret’s observation tally sheets there were 28 French Table listening tallies, 50 classroom listening tallies, 30 French Table speaking tallies and 10 classroom speaking tallies. During listening, events were recorded 25 times at the French Table (82.1%) and seven times in the classroom (14%). The 23 event speaking tallies for the French Table (76.7%) also suggest that Margaret was highly engaged at the French Table, like the other participants. The classroom speaking tallies imply that she was also highly engaged when she was speaking during class (nine events, 90%). which shows that Margaret was significantly more

engaged in discussion in the classroom when she was listening than when she was speaking, like David and Isaac.

Wendy’s event notations point to further engagement at the French Table than in her French class. Figure 16 shows the event notations for Wendy by environment and by listening or speaking.

Figure 16. Wendy tally sheet event notation during listening and speaking.

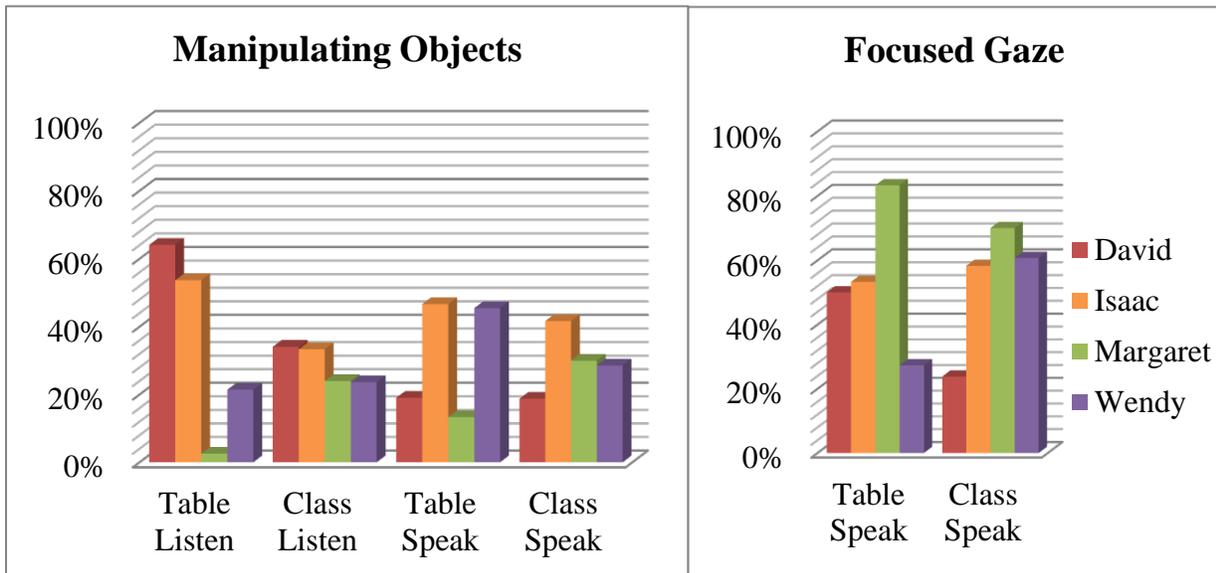


The heightened number of events during the French Table as compared to the classroom points to a higher level of engagement at the French Table, just like the other three participants. Wendy smiled during 23 out of the 42 French Table listening tallies (54.8%) and during ten of the 15 French Table speaking tallies (66.7%), as shown in Figure 16. In her French classroom, she smiled during 11 of the 72 listening tallies (15.3%) and nine of the 28 speaking tallies (32.1%). There was also a noticeable difference in the nodding between French class and the classroom, though not as considerable a difference as the nodding evidenced in Isaac’s tally sheets. While listening, Wendy nodded eight times at the French Table (19%) and five times in her classroom (7%), and while speaking, she nodded twice at the French Table (18.2%) and

never in the classroom, as shown in Figure 16. Overall, Wendy was engaged in events in a higher percentage of the French Table than the other participants (86.8% as compared to David’s 51.7%, Isaac’s 51.8%, and Margaret’s 79.3%).

Student anxiety. Some of the hand or arm categories on the survey were related to motions students make when they are nervous, such as “manipulating object.” The primary objects of use from this category during this study were pens, but the category also applied to books and personal objects, such as necklaces or watches. The gaze categories were another possible indicator of student anxiety, particularly during speech. Figure 17 details the notations that include these two indicators of student anxiety as divided into the following categories: participants manipulating an object during French Table and classroom listening and speaking, and the participants’ gaze being focused or unfocused during French Table and classroom speaking.

Figure 17. Student anxiety indicators.



As shown in Figure 17, David manipulated an object much more frequently when listening than when speaking (49.1% and 18.9%, respectively), and he was the only participant to

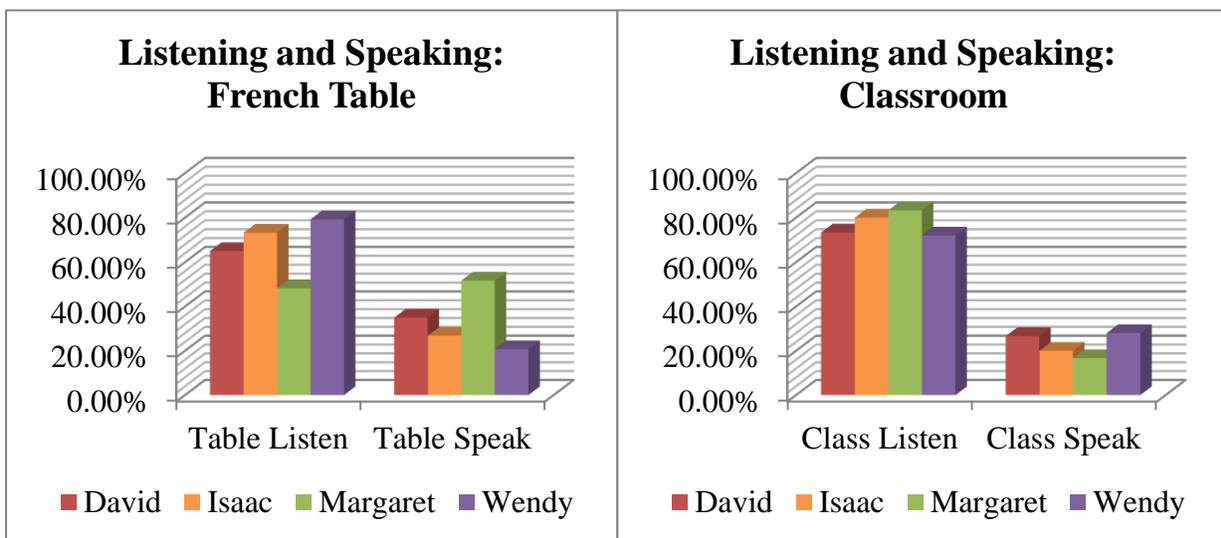
do so. Both Margaret and Wendy manipulated objects more frequently while speaking (21.7% and 37%, respectively) than while listening (13.3% and 22.5%, respectively), though Margaret manipulated objects infrequently compared to other participants. Isaac manipulated an object approximately the same amount when listening as when speaking (43.5% and 44.2%, respectively). There was a 12.7% difference in the amount of time Isaac manipulated an object at the French Table versus in the classroom (50.2% and 37.5%, respectively). David manipulated objects 11.8% more frequently at the French Table than in the classroom (41.6% and 26.4%, respectively), and Wendy manipulated objects 7.3% more frequently at the French Table than in class (33.4% and 26.1%, respectively). Margaret was the only one to manipulate objects more frequently in the classroom than at the French Table (27% and 8%, respectively), which suggests that the other three participants were likely more anxious at the French Table than in their French classrooms, although the environment could have played a role in this distribution, as well. People are more likely to drink coffee and use their cell phones at the French Table, which is located in a campus coffee shop, than in the language classroom. These actions could be indicative of a lack of engagement in the discussion or of a variety of other factors; they are not necessarily indicators of student anxiety.

However, the combined manipulating objects category and gaze category underlines the probability that Margaret was the least anxious of the four participants. Her gaze was focused the most frequently of the four, during 25 out of 30 French Table speaking notations (83.3%) and seven out of ten speaking classroom notations (70%) as shown in Figure 17, suggesting a very low level of anxiety. At the French Table, both David and Isaac's gazes were focused approximately half of the time they were speaking (50% and 53.3%, respectively), which could indicate a low to average level of anxiety. Wendy's gaze, however, was focused only about a

fourth of the time at the French Table (27.3%), pointing to a higher level of anxiety. During the French classes, Wendy’s gaze was focused during 17 out of her 28 speaking tallies (60.7%), suggesting a much lower level of anxiety than what her French Table results indicate. Isaac’s gaze was also focused more frequently in French class than at the French Table (seven out of 12 or 58.3%). David’s gaze, on the other hand, was focused significantly less frequently in the French class (five out of 21 or 23.8%) than at the French Table. Of the four participants, David and Margaret’s gazes were both more focused during the French Table than in their French classes, which was the opposite of Isaac and Wendy’s gazes. David and Margaret were at a more advanced level of French than Isaac and Wendy; it could be therefore postulated that they would feel less anxiety in the casual French conversation environment.

Another indication of student anxiety is the turn-taking during class and during the French Table. Figure 18 shows the percentage of each of the four participants’ tallies while listening and while speaking at the French Table and in the classroom.

Figure 18. Percent of Phase II participants’ listening and speaking notations.



According to Figure 18, Margaret was the only participant who spoke more than she listened at the French Table, though the difference is very slight; of the 58 French Table

notations, there were 30 speaking (51.7%) and 28 listening (48.3%) tallies. The other participants listened significantly more than they spoke at the French Table. Wendy spoke the least frequently of all of the participants (11 out of 53 or 20.8%), though Isaac and David both spoke between a fourth and a third of the French Table notations. In the classroom, Wendy spoke the most frequently of all of the participants (28 out of 100 or 28%), but this was due in part to the fact that she was scheduled to give a presentation to the class one of the days of observation. David spoke the second most frequently in class (26.7%), followed by Isaac (20%). Margaret spoke the least frequently in class (16.7%), which is surprising considering her speaking participation in the French Table.

The Effect of the French Table on Communicative Strategies

The final research question, which considered the effect of participation in the French Table on the participants' communicative strategies in the target language, was addressed by analyzing the interviews conducted twice with each of the four Phase II participants individually. During the interviews, which took place with Isaac and Wendy the sixth and eighth weeks of class and for Margaret and David the seventh and ninth weeks, three different types of situations were cited in which it would be necessary to use communication strategies in French Table and in the classroom: when missing a part of the utterance (word searches), when they did not understand what someone said (teacher or classmate), or when others did not understand what they said. The four major themes mentioned by the participants were communicative strategies, embodied activities, anxiety, and the difference in environment.

Communicative strategies. When participants found it difficult to communicate an idea or when others did not understand them, they reacted in the following ways: repetition, rephrasing, defining or describing, slowing the rate of speech, lowering the level of vocabulary,

using hand gestures and body language, reverting to English, and pausing or giving up. Repetition and rephrasing were the most recurrent strategies, though all of the participants also cited defining or describing, and using hand gestures or body language. There were a few differences between the genders in these interview responses. In the classroom, both David and Isaac mentioned mentally sculpting their utterances before speaking, a behavior that they did not mimic in the more casual environment of the French Table. Neither Margaret nor Wendy mentioned planning their speeches. All of the participants except David said that the use of English was the last resort if they were having trouble being understood. David did not mention using English as a communication strategy, likely because his higher level of French competency made it easier for him to reword utterances that were not understood. Isaac stated that in one of his two French courses, the teacher was not strict about the students speaking French in the classroom. This environment allowed for more frequent use of English as a communicative strategy, because, as Isaac said, “once English has been spoken once in the class, there’s a standard that has been set.” The other students in this class therefore used English more frequently than in the class during which he was observed for this study. Isaac also mentioned using English in conversation to regain his train of thought at the French Table. Margaret, on the other hand, used English in class as a last resort, but not at the French Table, where she would rephrase, speak more slowly, make gestures, or simplify her vocabulary in order to be understood. Wendy also used only French when speaking at the French Table, where she would use body motions and descriptions when looking for a missing word.

Wendy mentioned two contrasting reactions that she experienced at the French Table. When she had trouble communicating, she specifically mentioned that the French Table taught her to maintain the use of French. When asked about how her communicative strategies differed

in the French Table from her classroom experience, she explained that the French Table led her “to try to speak French, and even if it’s really bad, just say the words, because that will help later on speaking it. I got that from French Table, just to try.” However, her secondary response to an inability to communicate was to completely give up on communicating that idea and to let the conversation continue without her. This could be due to anxiety, as her level of proficiency was among the lowest of the regular participants at the French Table

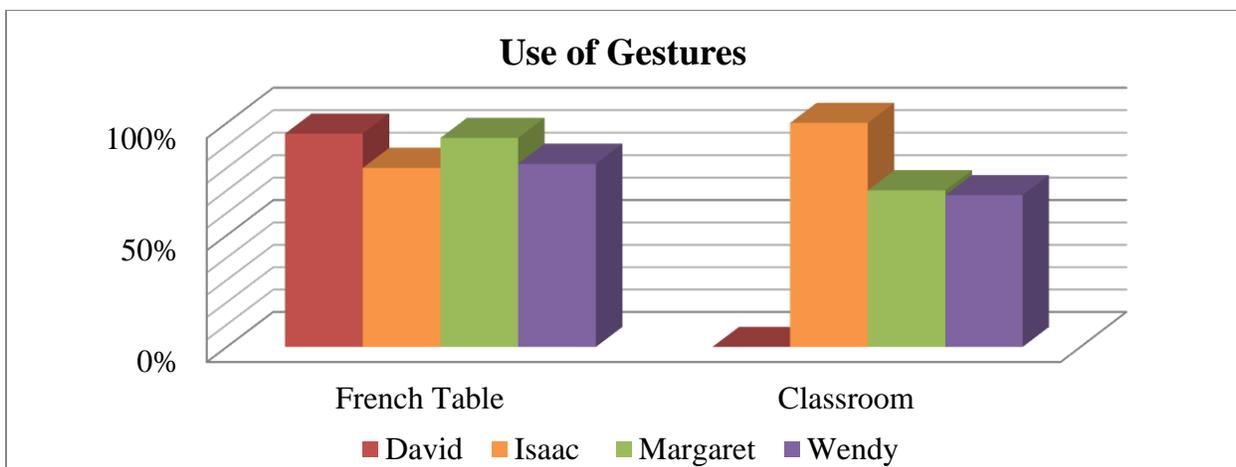
All of the participants asked for repetition or rephrasing when they did not understand something that another person said at the French Table or in their class. David also mentioned using the gesture of bringing his finger to his ear, in order to indicate he did not hear or understand when at the French Table. Wendy said she asked students around her instead of the primary speaker when she did not understand in the classroom. Isaac was the only participant to mention ignoring another speaker as a valid reaction to not understanding them, but he only reacted this way during his French class when he did not understand his fellow classmates. He felt it was “arrogant” for him to tell his other classmates that he did not understand them because it may be perceived as being critical of their pronunciation. Because of his perceived need for delicacy in the classroom, to explain his behavior when his classmates said things he did not understand, Isaac said, “I look somewhere else and don’t really respond.”

Embodied activities as communicative strategies. All four of the Phase II participants indicated that they used their hands to communicate both in English and in French, but more frequently in French. They also all used their hands to compensate for a lack of comprehension in the people they were talking to; however, Isaac and Margaret also indicated that they used their hands in word searches or when trying to shape an utterance. Isaac stated that he used hand motions as a place holder when he is forced to pause in the middle of an utterance, saying that

these hand motions demonstrated that he was “still processing.” Margaret discussed using hand motions to come up with ideas or phrases when being put on the spot in French class, because of the higher level of vocabulary necessary and because there was “less time to think and formulate.” Both David and Isaac indicated that they use their hands more to communicate when at the French Table than in the classroom. David explained that he used hand motions (pointing) in the classroom when he had trouble communicating with other students, but only after he had rephrased or repeated the original statement. While Isaac stated that he used his hands more frequently at the French Table, he also said that he was not usually aware of his body language. Margaret and Wendy both asserted that they used their hands more to communicate in the classroom than at the French Table, but for contrasting reasons. Margaret used her hands more during her class because the material was more difficult and she found it harder to communicate precisely what she desired to say, but Wendy said she used her hands more in class because she found it easier to communicate there than at the French Table.

However, results of the tally sheets indicated that Isaac was the only student to use gestures more frequently in class than at the French Table. Figure 19 shows results of the gesture tallies between the French Table and the classroom by participant.

Figure 19. Phase II participants’ gesture use at the French Table and in the classroom.



As shown in Figure 19, David, Margaret, and Wendy used gestures more frequently at the French Table than in the language classroom. Isaac used gestures more frequently in French class (12 of 12 notations or 100%) than at the French Table (12 of 15 notations or 80%).

Anxiety. Wendy stated that she felt intimidated at the French Table and at home in her French classroom, explaining that this feeling resulted in her being quieter at the Table; “I don’t want to make mistakes and embarrass myself.” In her classroom, she was less anxious because all of the students were at the same level of French as her. It was easier for her to communicate in her classroom because her level of anxiety was significantly lower there, which is different from the other three participants. However, she did express that she felt increasingly talkative at the French Table as time passed, even though she preferred to talk with someone she already knew rather than with other people. She indicated that she would most likely feel more comfortable speaking at the French Table as her level increased, a trend that appeared in the Phase I questionnaire responses.

David, Isaac, and Margaret considered the French Table a more relaxed environment than their language classrooms due to pressure on the student to perform or to get a good grade in the classroom. They agreed that the French Table provided freedom to make mistakes or to express themselves more naturally. Margaret said that it was easier to talk to the French Table because the students there are “all in the same boat,” a remark is in stark contrast with Wendy’s statement that she felt less awkward in her French class because they were “all at the same level.” Isaac was the only of the three more advanced students who expressed any kind of stress or anxiety at the French Table, stating that there is a pressure to socialize there. He followed that statement with the explanation that this pressure was beneficial for him, because he didn’t “get socialized” in many other contexts.

The role of the environment. During the interviews, all four participants commented on the influence of the environment of the French Table and of the classroom in shaping their communication. David, Isaac, and Margaret, who were less anxious at the French Table than in the classroom, also felt that their behavior was less restricted at the French Table than the classroom environment. Conversely, while Wendy noted that she had improved in confidence at the French Table throughout her time there, she explained that she still did not speak often, and when she did speak, it was brief.

The participants' perception of social roles was one of the factors that restricted their communication. David commented on the social environment of the French Table by saying, "We're at [the coffee shop] having a conversation, instead of in the classroom with one person standing up with a marker in their hand and the other person sitting at the desk." The difference between instructor and student was very clear in the classroom, but in the casual French Table environment, students were able to speak with their "peers," and it was "less a master-student situation but more of a student-more advanced student scenario." Isaac's commentary on the difference in environment was similar to David's. As a result of this social environment, Isaac felt more capable of being direct when he did not understand at the French Table than in the classroom. David added that the change in the social environment removed stress and allowed the students to avoid the fear of being judged. Like David, Wendy also mentioned the role of the instructor and the student in the classroom, but the distinction was more reassuring than stressful for her. She was more comfortable with her role in the classroom, where she was one of many students at approximately the same level of French, all under the guidance of their professor.

Wendy also mentioned the structured and organized environment of the French classroom; this aspect of the environment was calming for her, because she was able to

understand exactly what was required of her and to become accustomed to the daily sequence of events. However, the more advanced students felt the atmosphere of the French Table allowed for a more natural conversation with less self-censorship than the classroom atmosphere. In addition to being less restrictive, Margaret said that the atmosphere of the French Table was also more intimate and personal. This environment changed the way she communicated; “I’ll use more slang or push my words together, [...] and in the literature class, I try to be more refined.” For the advanced students, the structure and organization of the classroom restricted the natural flow of conversation, in contrast with the facilitating influence of the French Table environment.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This section discusses the major themes revealed in the results of this study as they relate to the three research questions. The first research question reviewed students' perception of the effectiveness of participation in the French Table, the second explored the variances in communicative strategies between conversation at the French Table and in the language classroom, and the third considered the ways in which participation in the French Table affected the participants' communicative strategies in French. Based on the results presented above, the themes explored in this section are the influence of anxiety and the importance of the social and physical environment in language learning.

The Influence of Anxiety

According to the results of the Phase I questions, anxiety combined with language deficiency among the beginner and intermediate students can prevent them from successfully engaging in casual social interaction, such as the French Table. In Phase I, the difference between the responses to the questions of participants' interest in and of the effectiveness of the French Table is evidence of students' perception of this statement. The progress in class level seems to be accompanied by an increase in desire to participate in the French Table, suggesting that students' level of French competence may play a role in their desire to communicate in a social environment outside of class. The Phase I responses suggest a strong presence of foreign language anxiety in the lower level students; the students' disinterest in participation in the

French Table because of this anxiety corresponds with the description of students with high levels of foreign language anxiety, as described by Gregerson (2005). “These foreign language students [...] exhibit avoidance behaviors by missing class [...] and they also have unrealistic high personal performance standards” (p. 338). Results of the present study suggest that anxiety prevents a significant number of students from participating in an activity they believe would help them learn French.

The interview responses given by Wendy and Isaac reflected multiple ways in which the environment can generate inhibitive anxiety. If students at the French Table still could not understand Wendy after rewording of utterances, she would simply give up and let the conversation continue without her, which meant that she missed opportunities to practice negotiating meaning in an informal foreign language setting, and for feedback from more advanced students. She was also afraid of embarrassing herself. Her anxiety in such a situation hindered her from successful engagement in the conversation, and thereby from valuable learning experiences. The gesture study by Gregersen et al. (2009) showed that less proficient students gestured in a way that was indicative of anxiety and “did not appear to have left room for gestures that could enhance communication” (p. 205). The anxiety experienced by Wendy at the French Table seemed to eclipse her desire to communicate; however, as time passed, she became increasingly talkative in that environment.

Another example of inhibitive anxiety in the classroom was how Isaac chose to deal with a lack of understanding. He was very hesitant to correct his classmates or to ask them to rephrase their utterances, for fear of being perceived as “arrogant” and overly-critical. His coping mechanism was to ignore the classmate and continue with his work or with the conversation at hand. Isaac’s fear of being considered arrogant or of losing face held him back from being able

to engage in productive communication with his classmates. As a result, Isaac found it easier to communicate at the French Table, where the atmosphere was more relaxed and he felt more capable of being direct .

Margaret's and David's cases suggest that among the higher proficiency levels, anxiety can have a productive role, pushing the students to engage more fully in order to develop their understanding of the target language. For Margaret and David there was a greater pressure to perform in their classrooms than at the French Table, this by no means negates the benefits of practicing communication in the classroom. Although the classroom environment could cause a significant level of anxiety in students, the pressure to succeed also forced them to prepare more for the class meetings than if they knew they would not be pressured to improve themselves and to get a better grade. This kind of anxiety can also positively impact the students' communication, as Isaac indicated in his comment about the pressure to socialize at the French Table. His comments underline the positive aspects of this kind of pressure, which can result in positive behaviors, such as practicing conversation in French.

The social and physical environments of the French Table played an active role in the creation or elimination of anxiety in the language experience. The environment was also listed as a factor in both positive and negative responses to Phase I students' interest in the French Table, which shows that students consider the physical and social aspects of a language learning environment to be important. The shape of the chairs forced changes in the Phase II participants' physical alignments and the location of the table within the campus coffee shop. David mentioned being at the coffee shop in his explanation about the difference between the French Table environment and the classroom environment, indicating that the choice of location contributed to the lack of anxiety felt during the conversation group.

The Role of the Environment

As the results revealed, the difference in the environments of the informal and classroom contexts had a decisive impact on social interaction and the use of symbiotic gestures.

Importance of social interaction. While nearly all of the participants in Phase I agreed that participation in the French Table would be effective, many of the students were still disinterested in doing so. One of the reasons cited in the responses of both the interested and the disinterested participants was the contrasting role of the environment between the two situations, particularly the social aspect. Students, especially beginner students, were uncomfortable leaving the social environment of their classroom, a trend that also appeared in the interviews with the Phase II participants. For example, Wendy was less comfortable in the social atmosphere of the French Table, while the more advanced students were more comfortable there than in their classrooms. It therefore seems likely that beginner students would be generally less anxious within the traditional student-teacher relationship than with the apprenticeship relationship, as described by Goodwin (2007).

The difference in social anxiety across language level has multiple implications; while it is important to provide a language learning environment that does not cause unnecessary anxiety and therefore inhibit learning, it is also important that the students become capable of communicating in various social and environmental contexts, including within an apprenticeship relationship. Learners would likely benefit from a classroom that allows them to experience versions of these various contexts within the familiar classroom environment. As Reichert and Liebscher (2012) explained, there are various types of expertise, and students' background knowledge may contribute to their expertise within the language classroom even at the beginner level, a remark that challenges the traditional expert-novice roles by posing "expertise as co-

constructed by the participants in the interaction” (p. 600). The opportunity of playing the expert, as related to their background knowledge, in a language classroom may allow the learner to feel more comfortable in the novice role, as related to their language level.

The advanced students were less anxious when interacting with peers, which means the social interaction required to participate in the French Table was not a deterrent for them. Participants linked the social interaction of French Table with improvements to their speaking, conversation, and listening skills. The primary reason for their disinterest in the French Table was a lack of free time, which was a significant factor across the class levels. While the overwhelming majority of participants (93.3%) agreed that participation in the French Table would be effective in their language acquisition, only around half of them were actually interested in participating (55.4%). As the results showed, the Phase II participants’ responses confirmed these trends, suggesting that, while students may understand the crucial social aspect to language learning, there is a disconnect between their theory and practice. The disconnect could be the result of a lack of motivation from the students, who may only be enrolled in French classes to meet a graduation requirement. It is also possible that the French Table itself is the cause of the students’ disinterest; the students may be uninterested in either the physical or the social environment. However, it is most likely that the disconnect between theory and practice is at the level of the academic environment. Students have many distinct roles in university life, some of which are incompatible, meaning that the students must choose activities based on the amount of time they have available. Increasing student motivation to learn a foreign language would begin to rectify this problem.

The social environment was also relevant in the Phase I participants’ choice of most effective classroom activity for learning French. Out of the five categories provided in this

question, discussion most closely mimics the casual and social environment of the French Table, and this was the choice the majority of the participants made. The prevalence of the social environment across these responses points to the students' perception of social interaction as a primary function of language and therefore of language learning, which echoes Firth and Wagner's (2007) claim that learning is a social accomplishment. The students' responses also suggest that they considered it important to be capable of using the language in real-time communication, which is conceivably why the percentage of students who were interested in the French Table increased by level. The lower level students frequently expressed their inability to successfully communicate in that situation, which might explain how the proportion of students who chose lecture as the best activity decreased as the class level of the participants increased. Out of all of the activity choices given, listening requires students to be the least involved in social interaction. Additionally, teacher lecture is an in-class activity that allows the students to align themselves with the sociocognitive environment with as little social alignment as possible. Of the five aspects of alignment as described by Atkinson et al. (2007), students involved in teacher lecture are only required to align themselves with the tools, such as their textbook or teacher's PowerPoint.

Use of symbiotic gestures as communicative strategies. All of the Phase II participants used symbiotic gestures (Goodwin, 2003) to communicate. Three of the four participants used gestures more frequently at the French Table than in the classroom, suggesting that the students' use of expressive symbiotic gestures was facilitated at the French Table and hindered in the classroom. The study by Rauscher et al. (1996) concluded that hindering gestures causes difficulty with word searches. Reischert and Liebscher's (2012) results showed gestures are used in the formulation or conceptualization phase of speaking would also imply that the hindrance of

gestures would hinder the conceptualization of speech. Atkinson's (2007) approach to language posits that language exists within a mind-body-world continuum; the disruption of this continuum by the hindrance of gestures within the language classroom is tantamount to the disruption of language.

As suggested in the four participants' comments, the meaning or purpose of each gesture was created by establishing it within its own environmental context. For David, "pointing" was used in the French classroom if he was not understood by a classmate. This symbiotic gesture was an example of using gesture to communicate meaning to another learner. However, gesture can help formulating or conceptualizing, and performing word searches, showing the inextricability of language and gesture (Reichert & Liebscher, 2012). In the interviews, three of the four participants were incorrect about whether they used gestures more frequently at the French Table than in French class. David was the only participant whose response matched the tally sheets used during French Table and classroom observation. The difference in perceived and actual gesture use indicates the frequently subconscious nature of symbiotic gestures, which is mentioned in Isaac's interview and in Gregersen et al.'s (2009) article. "Nonverbal behaviors are often below our level of consciousness and thus less controllable" (p. 197), implying that a speaker's gestures are less controlled than their words. Becoming aware of students' gestures and other embodied activities would allow language teachers the opportunity to observe a more natural depiction of their affective state and of their learning.

Communicative strategies in the French environment. Repetition and rephrasing were the most frequent strategies used by the Phase II participants when they were not understood. Based on their comments, it seemed that this strategy was deemed effective, because it was successful the majority of the time in both the French Table and the French classroom. All

participants agreed that English was a last resort communicative strategy; it removed them from the simulated social francophone environment that the French Table and their French classes attempted to create. As Wendy's comments showed, participation in the French Table provided opportunities to learn strategies for staying in French instead of reverting to English to communicate. Isaac's comment that the use of English a single time in the classroom has a permanent effect on the students' language choice indicates that, while the more motivated students attempt to stay in French during the classroom, the bubble that surrounds this environment is fragile and can be broken.

During their interview, the Phase II participants demonstrated as they explained that they habitually use gestures in English conversation, using embodied activities to draw my attention to their hands as they spoke, which doubly reinforced their statement. The participants used their hands more frequently in French than in English, as their comments revealed. Margaret used her gestures in word searches and in the formulation of ideas in her French classroom, which Rauscher et al. (1996) discussed in their article. She believed she used gestures more frequently in the classroom because the topics of discussion in the classroom were more difficult as compared to the French Table, which means that Margaret linked her use of gestures primarily with difficulties in conversation. This finding echoes Sime's (2006) remark that "moments of difficulty [in expression] are accompanied by a correspondent increase in the amount and frequency of gestures" (p. 213). However, since Margaret gestured more frequently at the French Table than in the classroom, despite the comparative ease of the conversation there, it can be postulated that she was only aware of the gestures used to overcome lack of comprehension or used during the formulation and conceptualization phase of conversation. Her misconception about the use of her gestures, as explained by the often subconscious nature of gestures

(Gregersen et al., 2009), did not take into account the tightly linked relationship between gesture and speech (Iverson & Thelen, 1999).

Engagement

In every category that indicated engagement (alignment, events, amount of speaking, and gestures), David proved to be more engaged in the environment of the French Table than in the classroom. The events category (smiling, laughter, nodding, shaking of the head) showed all four participants to be more engaged at the French Table than in the classroom. According to this category, David was the least engaged out of the four participants, as his events were noted the least frequently out of the four. His high levels of engagement in the other categories indicate that events are not necessarily indicative of engagement in his case; they are more likely to be idiosyncratic behavior as discussed by Gregersen (2005). The distribution of independent events also indicated a significant difference in the displays of events by gender at the French Table. While David and Isaac used both these independent events over half of their time spent at the French Table, Margaret and Wendy were used them significantly more, indicating a possible trend in independent events between the genders.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This section discusses implications for language learning and teaching and suggestions for further research.

Gregersen's (2005) article determined that nonverbal cues, such as gesture, gaze, etc., are not consistent across environments. "It is rare that a particular body movement symbolizes a specific message outside of the restrictive environs of the context or culture in which it occurs" (p. 395). This inconsistency indicates that there is a variety of possible interpretations for any one embodied activity. The potential for idiosyncratic behavior means that future research would necessarily be more longitudinal and take into account participants' personal behavior in order to determine which gestures correlate with an increase in anxiety, engagement, etc. Future studies should also take into account the difference between the communicative and internal functions of gestures as described by Gullberg (2010), as analysis of these differences would provide a fuller depiction of second language learning.

While repetition and rephrasing were identified by the Phase II participants as being the most frequent strategies to combat lack of comprehension, due to the nature of symbiotic gestures, it is likely that the participants were unaware of their gestures during a significant portion of their involvement at the French Table and in their classrooms. Further evidence for this theory is the fact that three out of the four participants could not correctly identify the atmosphere in which they used gestures the most frequently. A study on the use of gesture in the

repetition of utterances would be able to determine if physical changes are occurring between the first and the identical second utterance, providing more context for the listener.

The large percentage of Phase I participants who both believed the French Table would help them with their French, *and* were uninterested or unable to participate shows a disconnect between theory and practice in French language learners. This disconnect is sometimes at the level of the student (lack of motivation) and sometimes at the level of the French Table itself (anxiety in the social context). Most often, however, the disconnect between a students' language learning theory and practice arises at the level of the university environment. Three-fourths of the participants who would not attend the French Table cited time as the primary deterrent; many students have many obligations that, whether or not they would be interested in taking advantage of an opportunity such as the French Table, they would not have the time to do so. The lack of time, however, also often indicates a lack of motivation. Students at the University of Alabama are involved in a plethora of voluntary extra-curricular activities (fraternities and sororities, sports, social events, etc.) that detract from their availability, and in most of these situations, the choice to participate rests with the students. In other words, French is not a priority. For these students, increasing their motivation to learn French could easily lead to their participation in activities such as the French Table. The increased motivation would also encourage lower-level students to participate in the French Table.

According to the Phase II participants' epistemic alignment and the presence of independent events in the tally sheet data, students were generally more engaged in the French Table than during their French classes. During the interviews, this increased engagement or interest is attributed to the personal atmosphere (Margaret) and to the less stressful environment (David, Margaret, Isaac). Taking into account Atkinson's (2010) conclusion that engagement is a

better metaphor than internalization for language acquisition, the results indicate that the environment of the French Table is more conducive to language learning. Simulating a real-world French environment in the classroom, in which the students are able to establish connections with their classmates on a personal level, would therefore facilitate the learning process. Attempting this simulation at the intermediate level would provide the students opportunity to practice casual conversation and could decrease their future anxiety and feelings of inadequacy when they interact with native speakers.

Finally, further study of embodied activities by the students and their interpretation of instructors' activities could provide valuable insight into the learning process. Instructors who apply the knowledge of students' embodied activities in their language classrooms would be able to better observe students' learning process, as postulated by Atkinson (2010). Observation of this behavior would inform the instructors' knowledge of the students and their disposition in the language classroom, and would allow the instructors to better account for student anxiety and engagement. It would also allow the instructors to understand and take advantage of the implementation of their own gestures (Sime, 2006) as it relates to their language instruction.

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Appendix A

Sample Questionnaire

1

Class Title: _____ Section: _____ Instructor: _____

Gender: ___ Male ___ Female Age: _____ First Language(s): _____

1. How many years have you studied French? _____

2. How old were you when you started to study French? _____

3.	Where have you studied French? (Check as many as necessary.)	How long? (In semesters)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Kindergarten	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary School	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Middle School	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> High School	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> University	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Private tutoring	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Abroad	_____

4. Please list any other French classes you are currently taking by class name or section:

5. Please list any other French classes you have taken in the past at the University of Alabama:

6. a. Please describe the type of classroom activity you think is the **most** effective for developing French conversation skills by circling **one** response:

teacher lecture listening reading in-class discussion in-class presentations

b. Please explain your response:

(see back of page)

7. a. Please describe the type of classroom activity you think is the **most** effective for developing French conversation skills by circling **one** response:

individual class work small group class work (2 people) large group class work (more than 2 people)

b. Please explain your response:

8. Would you be interested in participating in a weekly, informal, university-organized French conversation group?

Please check one response: ___ Yes ___ No

Why or why not?

9. Do you think participation in a French conversation group would help you learn French?

Please check one response: ___ Yes ___ No

Why or why not?

Appendix B

Sample Tally Sheets

listening

leg positioning					
crossed knees	ankles un-x'd under	ankles x'd under chair	ankles x'd front	ankles un-front	ankles x'd front
1					
3					
5					
7					
9					
11					
13					
15					
17					
19					
21					
23					
25					
27					
29					
31					
33					
35					
37					
39					
41					
43					
45					
47					
49					
51					
53					
55					
57					
59					

specific events			
laughter	smiling	nodding	shaking head
1			
3			
5			
7			
9			
11			
13			
15			
17			
19			
21			
23			
25			
27			
29			
31			
33			
35			
37			
39			
41			
43			
45			
47			
49			
51			
53			
55			
57			
59			

body lean					
far front	slight front	straight	slight back	far back	to right
1					
3					
5					
7					
9					
11					
13					
15					
17					
19					
21					
23					
25					
27					
29					
31					
33					
35					
37					
39					
41					
43					
45					
47					
49					
51					
53					
55					
57					
59					

other bodily positioning		
hunched	body straight	body
1		
3		
5		
7		
9		
11		
13		
15		
17		
19		
21		
23		
25		
27		
29		
31		
33		
35		
37		
39		
41		
43		
45		
47		
49		
51		
53		
55		
57		
59		

hands/arms						
writing something	leaning elbow/hnd	hair biting	nail/pen/with sthg	"fiddling" cell/laptop	covert cell/laptop	overt cell/laptop
1						
3						
5						
7						
9						
11						
13						
15						
17						
19						
21						
23						
25						
27						
29						
31						
33						
35						
37						
39						
41						
43						
45						
47						
49						
51						
53						
55						
57						
59						

gaze directed towards					
primary speaker(s)	other speaker(s)	convo	outside of media	relevant media	"zoned out" irrelevant media
1					
3					
5					
7					
9					
11					
13					
15					
17					
19					
21					
23					
25					
27					
29					
31					
33					
35					
37					
39					
41					
43					
45					
47					
49					
51					
53					
55					
57					
59					

speaking

leg positioning	
1	ankle on knee
3	ankles x'd
5	front
7	ankles un-x'd front
9	ankles x'd under chair
11	ankles un-x'd under knees
13	crossed
15	
17	
19	
21	
23	
25	
27	
29	
31	
33	
35	
37	
39	
41	
43	
45	
47	
49	
51	
53	
55	
57	
59	

specific events	
1	shaking head
3	nodding
5	smiling
7	laughter
9	
11	
13	
15	
17	
19	
21	
23	
25	
27	
29	
31	
33	
35	
37	
39	
41	
43	
45	
47	
49	
51	
53	
55	
57	
59	

body lean	
1	sitting straight
3	leaning to left
5	leaning to right
7	leaning far backward
9	leaning slightly backward
11	leaning far forward
13	leaning slightly forward
15	
17	
19	
21	
23	
25	
27	
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31	
33	
35	
37	
39	
41	
43	
45	
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53	
55	
57	
59	

other bodily positioning	
1	body straight
3	body hunched
5	
7	
9	
11	
13	
15	
17	
19	
21	
23	
25	
27	
29	
31	
33	
35	
37	
39	
41	
43	
45	
47	
49	
51	
53	
55	
57	
59	

gaze	
1	unfocused / shifty
3	focused
5	
7	
9	
11	
13	
15	
17	
19	
21	
23	
25	
27	
29	
31	
33	
35	
37	
39	
41	
43	
45	
47	
49	
51	
53	
55	
57	
59	

hands/arms	
1	hands at rest / in lap
3	open fist
5	hand use
7	touching people
9	touching objects
11	non-specific indicating
13	specific indicating
15	drinking or eating
17	overt
19	covert
21	cell/laptop
23	"fiddling" with sthg
25	nail/pen/hair biting
27	lean elbow / hand
29	writing something
31	
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35	
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Appendix C

Sample Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. How's it going with the French Table?
2. Do you ever feel like you're having trouble?
— *(If "Yes") Where? / In what areas?*
3. What do you do if you have difficulty talking at French table?
What are your strategies if you have difficulty talking at French table?
— How does that work for you? *(Repeat after each "what do you do..." question)*
4. What do you do if you have trouble understanding people at French table?
What are your strategies if you have trouble understanding people at French table?
5. Do you ever feel physically active/responsive at the French Table?
During which parts of the conversation do you feel more physically active?
6. How's it going with your French class(es)?
7. Do you ever feel like you're having trouble?
— *(If "Yes") Where? / In what areas?*
8. What do you do if you have difficulty talking to the teacher during class?
What are your strategies if you have difficulty talking to the teacher during class?
9. What do you do if you have difficulty talking to your classmates during class?
What are your strategies if you have difficulty talking to your classmates during class?
10. What do you do if you have trouble understanding your teacher during class?
What are your strategies if you have trouble understanding your teacher during class?
11. What do you do if you have trouble understanding your classmates during class?
What are your strategies if you have trouble understanding your classmates during class?

12. Do you ever feel physically active/responsive in your classroom?

During which parts of the class do you feel more physically active?

Office for Research
Institutional Review Board for the
Protection of Human Subjects



September 5, 2013

Chelsea Tanous
Dept. of Modern Languages and Classics
College of Arts and Sciences
Box 870246

Re: IRB # 13-OR-286, "Embodied Activities and Negotiation of Meaning"

Dear Ms. Tanous:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your proposed research.

Your application has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR part 46. You have also been granted the requested waiver of written documentation of informed consent. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your application will expire on September 4, 2014. If your research will continue beyond this date, please complete the relevant portions of the IRB Renewal Application. If you wish to modify the application, please complete the Modification of an Approved Protocol form. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. When the study closes, please complete the Request for Study Closure form.

Please use reproductions of the IRB approved stamped consent forms to obtain consent from your participants.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the above application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,



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Director & Research Compliance Officer
Office for Research Compliance
The University of Alabama



Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Chelsea Tanous** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 06/05/2013

Certification Number: 1188019