Exploring authentic language use in the classroom

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🔴 Item Details

🔑 Key points

- **What is this?** This is a concept map exploring authenticity in L2 learning.
- **Why did you make it?** I made this to help distinguish between the multiple ways that authenticity is used when designing and talking about L2 practices.
- **Who is it for?** This can be used by teachers to inform activity design, but mainly I think it's for researchers to think about how they frame lessons, activities and language use.

Tweet synopsis

L2 researchers and educators have contemplated the effect of authenticity in how it relates to materials and tasks, but this playground item explores the concept of authentic L2 use, what is it? How can it be promoted? And is it valuable?

View at the LLP Playground: https://www.llpjournal.org/2020/05/13/poole-authentic-language-use-classroom.html

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Note to future readers

This playground item was reviewed by five members of the Ludic Language Pedagogy (LLP) community. Comments expressing approval or interest in a section or statement (e.g. I like this part!) were resolved without any additions to the manuscript. Comments on fixing typos and/or grammatical errors were fixed in the manuscript and then resolved. Likewise for comments suggesting rephrasing of ideas. At the bottom of the playground item I attached comments that asked for clarifications, expansions on ideas, or challenged ideas. It is here that I address those comments and then allow the original reviewer to add a final thought if they chose to. Major additions or changes to the manuscript I made in blue font to illustrate the evolution of this idea. At a later time, I plan to add some major revisions to this playground item in hopes of converting it into a journal article.

1. Introduction

Research on second language (L2) pedagogy has made clear distinctions between authentic material and material made for pedagogical purposes. Although there is some argument on what constitutes authentic material, the general idea is that authentic materials are made by native speakers of a language for native speakers of the same language (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). In contrast, material made for pedagogical purposes, also called adapted or manufactured material, is typically created to match the learners' linguistic capabilities.

For a brief example of authentic material and how it may be used in the classroom, when I taught Chinese as a foreign language at Utah State University, I had students in a first year program search houses for rent on a Chinese website. The website is considered authentic because the content was produced by native speakers for native speakers. My students reported enjoying this activity and believing it to be valuable in a post-lesson debriefing largely because the text was short, many of the words they had just learned in our unit on housing, and the students, as a by-product, learned about Chinese culture, specifically the types of houses that Chinese people lived in and what was deemed important for Chinese people (e.g. the size of the water heater was always very prominent). My students all particularly liked this project because it gave them a sense they were learning/using the language in a meaningful way.

With this first-year class I also used inauthentic material made for pedagogical purposes or adapted materials. I created a graded-reading series that my students read each week. Graded readers are texts that increase in difficulty according to the reader's linguistic level. In this series the character count was closely monitored and new words were introduced in a controlled manner. The story had nothing to do with Chinese culture, and in fact it was quite silly. My students also enjoyed this (all but one actually) because it was silly and because it gave them confidence with their L2 abilities (Sung & Poole, 2015). By the end of their first semester they could read a story with 200 characters without any extra support.

Researchers have argued for the use of authentic material in L2 instruction because they contain cultural information, reflect how language is used in the 'real-world', and have more communicative value while also being more linguistically diverse (Crossley, et al., 2007; Kirkpatrick, 1996; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). In contrast, adapted texts have been argued as benefitting L2 learners because they provide a scaffolded approach through which learners can experience some success (Nation & Ming-Tzu, 1999). Those promoting adapted material argue that if learners struggle too much trying to understand authentic materials they may give up or develop bad habits. The purpose of this playground item is not to settle this argument but rather to expand its scope.

Similar to authentic material there is also much discussion and literature on the use of authentic tasks or activities in comparison to adapted tasks. Similar to materials, an authentic task would be a task that a native speaker engages in (Heibert, 1994), or in other words, a task that would occur in daily

situations (Greeno et al., 1992). For example, a language teacher may ask students to engage in role-play in which one student is a bank teller and the other student needs to withdraw money or students may be given a task to post a series of status updates on Twitter and to respond to other Twitter posts. In contrast, an adapted task or a pedagogical task is one that is purposely designed to address a specific language skill or vocabulary (Ellis, 2003). For example, a teacher may ask students to survey their classmates on their daily routines. This type of task is typically used to get students to practice adverbs (e.g. often, sometimes, never), but asking a friend, *"What do you always do on Mondays?"* doesn't happen between two native speakers. Again there are arguments for the benefits of both.

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This playground item is concerned with a third-level of authenticity. Authentic language use as compared to language use for pedagogical purposes, or manufactured use. Buendgens-Kosten (2013) provides a comprehensive overview of authenticity in L2 contexts. She reframes authenticity in terms of linguistic authenticity, cultural authenticity, and functional authenticity. These forms of authenticity focus on the types of and intentions behind the materials and tasks that are being implemented. However, one aspect that is missing is the type of L2 use that is manifested as a result of the types of materials and tasks that are used. The model proposed in this playground item attempts to expand on this view of authenticity to include types of L2 use.

2. The concept map

Authentic L2 use is seen as using language for the purpose of accomplishing a self-defined task that does not include specifically improving one's L2 skills or vocabulary. If we borrow from definitions on authentic materials and activities, the common piece is that they are materials and activities that native speakers of any language use and engage in. Similarly, authentic L2 use mimics how native speakers use language to perform tasks, engage in communities and learn. Native speakers use language voluntarily and to accomplish a goal. That is to say a native speaker does not typically recite their daily routine because someone asks them to. It's important to note here that the term is authentic language **use** because **use** includes reading, writing, speaking and listening. Native speakers read a text because they want to know what happens in the story, retrieve information from it, or learn some knowledge. Similar arguments can be made for listening and writing tasks. There is some gray area when talking about *students* given that *students* are often assigned reading and writing tasks. Though I would argue that the primary difference is that the writing and reading tasks are typically assigned to learn content and not the language itself.

> It's important to note here that the term is authentic language *use* because **use** includes reading, writing, speaking and listening

In contrast to authentic L2 use would be L2 use for target language learning, or manufactured use. This can occur via authentic tasks and materials, but the key is that the L2 use is being done for the purpose of learning the target language. Thus if a student engages in a conversation purely to practice his/her language, they would be engaging in manufactured use (they manufactured the situation to practice their L2 skills). In contrast, if the student was looking to make a friend or get directions to a store their use shifts towards authentic L2 use. This is where it gets confusing because Authentic L2 use also involves learning the target language, in that most of the time when the L2 is being used, it will involve some level of development. Think about any student studying abroad. They engage in

authentic L2 use on a daily basis and they learn in leaps and bounds. The difference between the two types of language use largely resides in the L2 learner. Does the L2 learner perceive the use of L2 as a learning moment or is the L2 being used for authentic purposes outside of learning the language?

Finally, it's important to note that L2 use for learning can be further divided into implicit L2 use versus explicit L2 use. Both of these uses are for learning the language, but explicit L2 use occurs when the teacher asks the student to produce language for an explicit purpose. For example, the teacher says, "Tell me what you did last week, and use the past tense." In contrast to implicit L2 use, in which the student uses the L2 because he/she is genuinely interested in the topic and wants to contribute. For example, a teacher asks students some pre-reading questions about a book that the student is interested in. The student here is aware that the language being produced is done so for L2 learning purposes, and this language is directly incited by the teacher, but there is also genuine interest in producing this language due to the interest in the book. Also, it should be noted that implicit L2 use for learning and authentic L2 use will look very similar. Implications for this will be discussed further down.

(OLD CONCEPT MAP) Authenticity Concept Map

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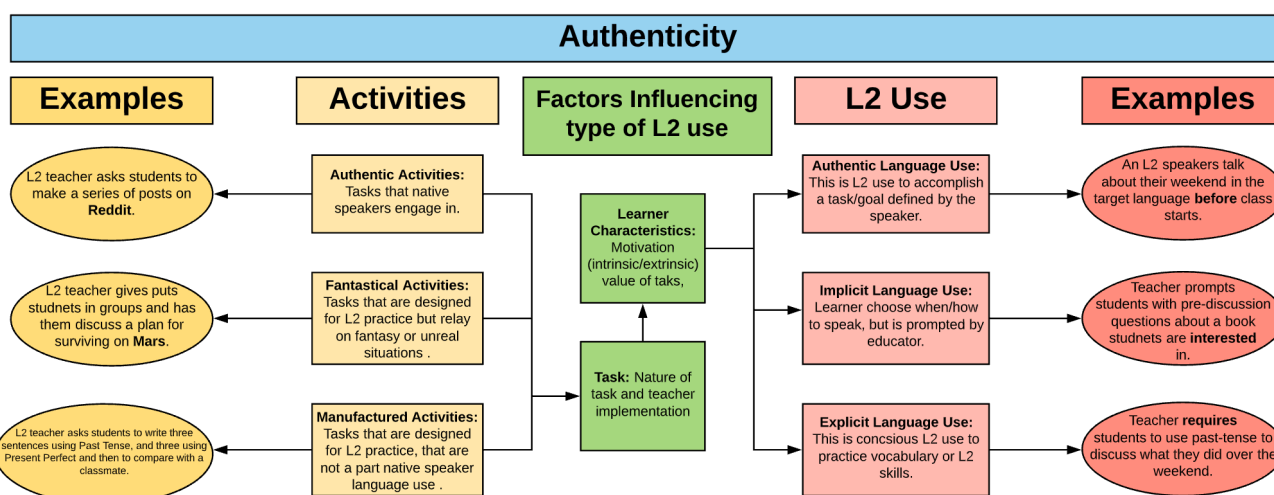
[[The following section has been re-written below to reflect the new concept map]]

The concept map above was designed to illustrate how activities and L2 use are related. For this map, activities can be interchanged with materials. Essentially, the type of activity and material (authentic, manufactured, and or fantastical) will influence how the teacher uses them in the classroom. This task is also impacted by the student depending on student linguistic abilities, interest in target culture, self-efficacy beliefs about L2 use, and overall motivation and willingness to use the L2. Taking into account both the learner and the task (which involves the authenticity of the task and the materials), the type of language use will vary. Although it has been argued that when learners are in the classroom they are always acutely aware of the fact that they are there to learn (Goffman, 1981), I argue that there are moments when implicit L2 use and even authentic L2 use can occur.

Implicit L2 use in the classroom has already been mentioned above and generally occurs when language learners are genuinely interested in a topic or aspect being taught. Creating opportunities for authentic L2 use in the classroom are much more difficult because for this to occur learners have to forget they are in the classroom. They need to want to use the L2 for a purpose other than trying to improve their linguistic skills. This is where games come in. Through games, for instance a board game, meta conversations about the game and around the game can start to happen. Although these conversations can be scaffolded by teachers, teachers are not the source for the conversation. In other words, in a board game much of the discourse that occurs is not because the teacher prompted

the learner, but because the learner wants to complete the game or wants to progress in the game (Poole, et al., 2019).

2.1 The concept map part 2

In this updated version of the concept map, there are three primary levels (blue, green, red). The blue level refers to material, the green level refers to tasks, and the red level refers to L2 use. I've added Buendgens-Kosten's (2013) framework on the left to illustrate how her framework could be integrated into mine. Linguistic authenticity refers to the language being used and is generally found within the materials. Functional authenticity refers to the tasks that are being completed and whether or not they are relevant to the learner, and cultural authenticity can be found in either material or tasks and is manifested either linguistically or functionally. The key contribution of my model is student perception of task and material and how that relates to L2 use. It's important to note here, that this playground item does not argue that authentic materials or tasks are better than adapted tasks, but rather it is dependent on the appropriateness of the materials and tasks for the learners. Continuing with the model, I contend that most of the time, in the classroom, students will engage in manufactured use (and that's ok). It is manufactured because the students are acutely aware of the fact that they are in the classroom to learn. The type of task and material can have a major impact on whether or not the student engages in implicit vs explicit L2 use, but it is very difficult to move students towards authentic L2 use. To do this students must forget that they are in the classroom to learn a language. This is where games come in. Through games, for instance a board game, meta conversations about the game and around the game can start to happen. Although these conversations can be scaffolded by teachers, teachers are not the source for the conversation. In other words, in a board game much of the discourse that occurs is not because the teacher prompted the learner, but because the learner wants to complete the game or wants to progress in the game (Poole, et al., 2019).
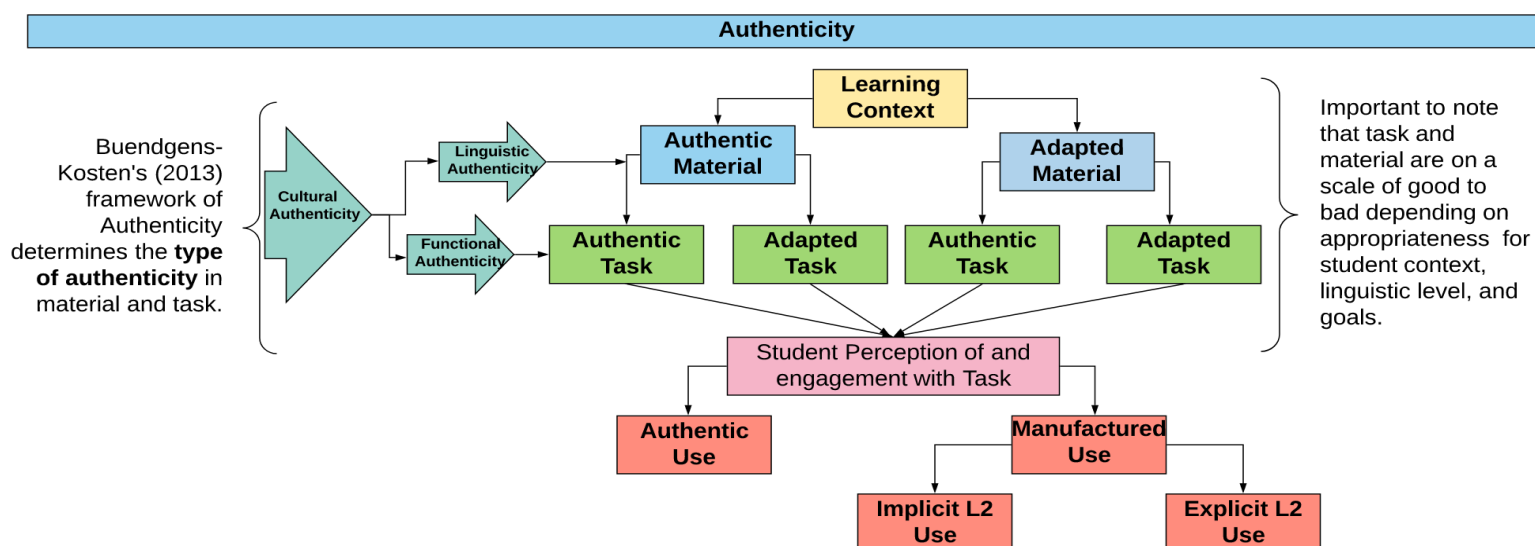
3. So what? Implications for L2 pedagogy and GBLT

So what does all of this mean? Should teachers be striving for a classroom with all authentic L2 use? No, I don't think so. Learning a language via authentic L2 use is not efficient. Sure, people do it when studying abroad all the time, but they also are able to engage with the language everyday, all day. Students in an L2 classroom often only have a couple hours per week. This is why language educators use tasks that target specific skills and vocabulary. That being said, I think it's important to understand what type of language your students are producing and in what contexts. In my classrooms, I strive for a majority of time to be either implicit or authentic L2 use while still acknowledging the role of explicit L2 use in short and limited spaces.

A second implication of this for educators is in regard to how teachers use games in the classroom, and then further how teachers support students during gameplay. Games have the ability to suspend reality for brief moments when players enter a 'flow' state (Csikzentmihalyi, 1988). However, if

teachers are constantly reminding students of their purpose they may disrupt this opportunity for authentic L2 use that can occur when students are more focused on goals within the game rather than their L2 skills. When working with a second grade class learning Chinese in a dual language immersion program, I acted as a guide while playing a board game designed to promote a collaborative learning environment both Chinese as an L2 and math skills (Poole, et al., 2019). In the beginning of the game, I provided scaffolding in the form of reminding students of the rules, helping with unknown words, and establishing a turn-based routine specific to the game. As the students developed an understanding of the gameplay and learned the vocabulary, I slowly removed my support from gameplay and watched as my students (second graders) engaged in authentic L2 use. Students still made L2 errors, but I did not rush to correct them. These errors were noted and saved for post-game discussions. By not interrupting gameplay to point out linguistic errors and/or cultural phenomenon, the learners engaged with the game and the language in a manner that I have rarely seen in the L2 classroom. Conversations about the game continued on well after the game had ended, even as students lined-up to go home for the day. One way to foster buy-in and player investment into a game, is to let students play the game *their* way and sometimes that means taking 'the sage off the stage, to be the *silent* guide on the side'.

4. Response to reviewers

Jonathan deHaan
"Research on second language (L2) pedagogy has made clear distinctions between authentic material and material made for pedagogical purposes."

> **JdH**: This is what makes me think of the comment that i posted in the last section. you raise the topic here, but dont really address the COTS/ed game topic... or am i missing it? material vs pedagogy? Two different papers/topics?

> **FP**: The Commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS)/Educational games would definitely fit into this framework. It would fall into level 1 of the second concept map.The focus on GBLT comes at the end when I argue that authentic L2 use can be realized via games. In this new version I illustrate the role of the educator to support authentic L2 use. *I collapsed a few similar questions into this response.

> **JdH**: how do you see this paper connecting to the TBLT literature? Do you want to cite / refer to / build in anything related to that?

> **FP**: I'm not sure yet. On the one hand this model does discuss tasks and their characteristics which would make it a good fit for task-based language teaching (TBLT), but on the other hand the focal point is on the learner and the outcome of the task. Further, TBLT is an approach, while this is more of a reframing of how we conceptualize an individual unit within TBLT. I think when I write this up into a full manuscript it'll make sense to illustrate how this fits into TBLT.

"Fantastical"

> **JdH:** I think this is a keyword that will resonate with GBLT (gamification?) people as well? the unreal, the fantastical, the playfulness.... definitely LLP/GBLT keywords...how do games / GBLT intersect or rely on fantastical activities, and what are the implications of this?

> **FP:** So, one of my realizations when reconfiguring my concept map was that fantastical tasks can still fall into the authentic vs adapted (pedagogical) task dichotomy. Especially when one considers it through the functional authenticity defined by Buendgens-Kosten (2013), and the side note on the right of my map that indicates the value of appropriateness. In other words, imagining that one is on Mars and needs to develop a plan to survive is a form of playful roleplay the many children and youth engage in with ther native language, thus this would be a functional authentic task. Trying to use the same tasks for a businessman learning English so that he can expand his network would probably make this an adapted task.

"Authentic language use"

> **JdH:** Maybe this should be worked into the title of the piece somehow?

> **FP:** Agreed! I'm open to ideas… I've played around with Authentic L2 Use, Authentic L2 Use in the classroom, among others… but they don't feel like they capture the purpose of the paper. This might be one of those things that become clearer when this is expanded.

JY: Buendgens-Kosten, J. (2013). Authenticity in CALL: Three domains of "realness." ReCALL, 25(2), 272–285. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0958344013000037 It's a good overview of authenticity, dividing it into three different "types" of authenticity. Could be used to prop up the start of the paper nicely.

FP: This was a great suggestion! It led me down a rabbit hole of other papers discussing authenticity. As you can see above, I think her model mainly focuses on defining the types of authenticity in terms of material and task without discussing authentic L2 use. I think in the L2 field there is a tendency to overvalue authentic material. It feels like Buendgens-Kosten (2013) is trying to 'muddy the waters' (illuminate the gray area between authentic and inauthentic) with hopes of illustrating how/why authenticity is overrated. I appreciate the argument because I also find it somewhat arbitrary to compare authentic vs inauthentic materials and tasks. Their value is in the appropriateness of their use in terms of context, linguistic ability, and pedagogical goals.

JY: I have to admit, this is really hard for me to understand. The flow seems convoluted...
Activities --> task --> learner characteristics --> ...
maybe its the colors that are throwing me, but are we supposed to read it from right to left? Or centre to outside? Is red "bad" and green "good"?
Do learner characteristics dictate the L2 us? I thought they would be defined by the teacher and the tasks??

FP: I've included an updated concept map that hopefully is more clear. The first one was admittedly confusing, and was missing several aspects of authenticity outlines in the paper.

"Adapted tasks"

JY: Long uses the term "pedagogic task" for this, and for "authentic task," he uses "target task" (Just as an aside, in case you wanted to align with that particular blend of TBLT) (Casey Nedry seconded this thought.)

FP: I like pedagogic tasks as a term. I will have to read more on target task before I make a decision on that. It feels like keeping authentic task makes more sense given the rest of the model.

"or students may be given a task to post a series of status updates on Twitter and to respond to other Twitter posts"

JY: I wouldn't classify this task as the same as the role-play in terms of authenticity. The second task is "authentic language use" the first, as DM Jones alluded to as well, is more of a pedagogic task.

FP: I think both of these tasks are functionally authentic. But you make a good point in that there is a difference between the two. I think the major difference is where this is happening. If a teacher asked a student to go to a bank and take out $1 for the purpose of practicing their L2, then it would more closely resemble the twitter assignment. I think the argument could be made that the bank role-play contains in-authentic material but with a task that is functionally authentic, and the twitter assignment uses authentic material with a functionally authentic task. Here one has to see material in a much broader sense to encapsulate context and more specifically who is producing language to be attended to. Most important though, I don't think either of these are considered authentic L2 use because students are **given** this assignment. If a student **voluntarily** chooses to engage in social media using the L2 after this assignment (probably as a result of this assignment) then it becomes authentic L2 use.

"I have not seen literature that addresses this"

JY: What about "target tasks" then? For example in ESP courses. The Kosten paper will also help shed some light on this. I.e. if what we are getting learners to do is something they would be doing outside of the classroom anyway, it has **functional** authenticity. Or, if the task is based on a text for native speakers, it has **linguistic** authenticity etc.

FP: English for specific purpose (ESP) courses are definitely interesting cases. I think if content is being taught it becomes authentic L2 use, especially if it's content that is perceived as valuable or needed by the learner. Once the teacher pulls out a vocabulary list for the content area then it shifts over to being manufactured-use again. As for your second point, I agree we are getting students to engage in tasks that have functional or linguistic authenticity, but I argue that authentic tasks do not always lead to authentic use.

"L2 use mimics how native speakers use language"

JY: cultural authenticity. (Again, Kosten)

FP: Thank you for pointing this out, yet another area where I was not clear 😔. When I referred to how native speakers use language, I meant native speakers in generic terms. In other words, if a learner mimics how Chinese people politely refuse a request, this would be cultural authenticity. But here I refer to the idea that native speakers of any language use language for specific reasons (communicate, performance acts, etc.), in comparison to L2 learners who in many situations use the language for the sake of improving the language.

<u>Casey Nedry</u>

"My students all particularly liked this project because it gave them a sense they were learning/using the language in a meaningful way."

CN: How was this "sense" demonstrated? What behavior(s) did you see to draw this conclusion?

FP: Thanks for the prompt here. In this particular activity I was trying something new with my students (exploring a website for renting houses), and so I held a debriefing session at the end of the lesson to see how they felt with the task. I updated the manuscript above to reflect this.

"My students also enjoyed this (all but one actually) because it was silly and because it gave them confidence with their L2 abilities."

CN: How was this "enjoyment" demonstrated? What behavior(s) did you see to draw this conclusion?

FP: The graded readers were actually developed as part of a research project that I was involved in. So, I collected survey data and focal student interviews at the end of the semester to get student feedback on the readers.

CN: I like these personal examples used to illustrate the concepts. It's grounded in experience. What follows after is mostly hypothetical. Perhaps that's why you suggest it's mainly for researchers to use as a framing device?

FP: It is more of a framing device, but actually the idea of authentic L2 use is also grounded in experience. It came while I was playing a board game with 2nd graders in a Chinese DLI program. I have updated the manuscript to hopefully capture this.

CN: Think about keeping your language consistent. Authentic L2 use is previously defined as using lng. for the purpose of accomplishing a self-defined task. How does that definition overlap with the L2 being used for ulterior motives?

FP: Ulterior motives and a self-defined task are meant to be the same. Thanks for pointing these inconsistencies out.

CN: You're right it is confusing. If I understand you correctly, the difference is in whether the learner perceives the use of lng. as practice(drills for learning) or performance(accomplishing X which strengthens concepts previously practiced).

FP: I like your summarization of practice vs performance. I think it captures a large part of the difference. I think performance may be a bit limited though, because L2 use is also often used for entertainment which I'm not sure if that fits under a performance umbrella.

CN: Does your concept map fold the autonomous self-learning student into "factors influencing type of L2 use"?

FP: Great point! Self-learning is admittedly a grey area, and I probably need to readjust my definition of authentic L2 use to reflect this next statement but, I think self-learning falls into the manufactured-use category. Because although it is a self-defined goal in which the L2 is being applied, it still is being applied to improving the L2 itself, and thus this self-defined goal does not reflect typical L2 use of native speakers. I recognize that this must be fleshed out more, which I will attempt in the longer version of this manuscript.

"Fantastical"

CN: This just pops up here like a fairy. You've gone into detail about the other two categories earlier. Why make the distinction between it and manufactured activities?

FP: Great point! I answer this above in response to James. To summarize, I think fantastical tasks are really a combination of adapted material and functionally authentic tasks (for some). Thus, I'm not convinced that such tasks need a distinct category.

Evan Bostelmann

EB: Additionally, it seems you draw a line with L2 authentic use on one end (authentic usage being intrinsically self-motivated, goal-oriented, intuitive and willful) and L2 adapted use on the other (adapted use having overt, outside pressure and motivation at its core alongside meta-cognitive inner-dialogue about the value of simulated second-language reading, writing, speaking and listening). I believe that games, especially board games, give competitive players great motivation to understand the meta conversation around the game, e.g. the game's rules. Doesn't matter which language you are speaking, this is always true. Taking this in the context of a classroom, it suddenly becomes clear that using L2 authentic use is useful when it benefits the user directly, i.e. if they don't know the rules, they can ask, using L2 what the rules are.

FP: First, I think you summarized authentic and adapted L2 use better than I did. So, thank you for that! Secondly, you state that authentic L2 use is useful when benefits the user directly, such as in a case when they don't know the rules. I agree with this, but it's more than just they don't know the rules, it's that they have a strong desire to know the rules. They are not motivated to use the language because they want to improve their language, but because they want to complete the game. They want to know the rules, because they want to win or be successful.

EB: Very cool. I agree totally: the motivation takes root in the task, in this case the game and the desire to win, not the desire for literacy. I read a couple of other things between now and when I made that comment, so I want to add as well that my initial statement if they don't know the rules, they can ask, using L2 what the rules are. doesn't seem as correct to me now. They could easily still ask in L1 out of a desire to win and it would be okay in the classroom context as long as the instructor mediated in real-time , directing the students back to the original goal of learning the L2. I think that the way that authentic use of language figures in to a system of mediation is largely up to the structure of the mediation provided by the instructor. When the students use language authentically could be different person to person, I think it's the teacher's job to provide opportunities to use language authentically, monitor the students output in any given moment in the teaching cycle and proceed throughout the following classes to give them catered chances to succeed. Thanks for the thoughtful response, once again I liked this read a lot. Keep it going.

D.M. Jones

"Does the L2 learner perceive the use of L2 as a learning moment or is the L2 being used for authentic purposes outside of learning the language?"

CN: Just wondering to myself… is the perception binary? does it shift? is it static? does it change or evolve?

FP: Great point! They feel binary to me, I imagine them shifting somewhat rapidly back and forth depending on the context. As a learner leaves the classroom and begins using the L2 out in the 'real world' (I hated typing that) they will begin to shift towards more authentic L2 use. But good L2 learners are very meta-cognitive and are often conscious of their L2 from critical perspective aimed at improvement.

CN: "a language teacher may ask students to engage in role-play in which one student is a bank teller" --Solid example. Wouldn't there be an even stronger example that involves having the students do/build up to the actual task (go to the bank, etc.)? The role-play approaches this, but is more controlled.

FP: Yes, I think if I were to tie this to TBLT, this is the route I would take.

Carolyn Blume

"Does the L2 learner perceive the use of L2 as a learning moment or is the L2 being used for authentic purposes outside of learning the language?"

CB: This is not my area of expertise, but might this have something to do with the concept of "noticing"?

FP: Because noticing relies heavily on a dichotomy of consciousness, I can see how this could potentially be useful. Though I believe that it may lead the reader down the wrong path given that it is typically used to refer to learners noticing cultural or grammatical aspects of a language. In other words, a learner could simultaneously choose to engage in a conversation with the intent of improving their L2 skills, but then also not pay attention to the grammatical structures they chose to use.

CB: I feel like the first half of the paper is about authenticity and the second half is about games in this light. I think it is fine for a "playground" item, but I was confused by the shift in focus.
FP: Agreed, ideally with more space and in a longer piece, I'd build up the implications section to illustrate more ways in which authentic L2 use could be realized.

CB: I think this is an important point. You don't say this within the paper, and I think it should be said. My first thought was akin to yours here, that just because it is "fantasy" doesn't make it more or less authentic. Rather, it's how and where and for what purposes the fantasy is being invoked.
FP: This will be added for sure in my expanded version of this manuscript. I agree that it is important, simply the idea that for many, play constitutes a legitimate, natural activity that occurs frequently.

"With this first-year class I also used inauthentic material made for pedagogical purposes or adapted materials. I created a graded-reading series that my students read each week."
    CB: This is unclear to me. Are you saying these graded readers were authentic or were not authentic? What is the argument this example is helping you make?
    FP: I was trying to illustrate (via examples) that both authentic and inauthentic material have value in the L2 classroom and thus that the debate should not be about which is better, but the conversation should focus on when and how do I use authentic material/tasks, and what type of production from my learners should I expect when using them. Admittedly, this argument can (and will) be made stronger/clearer.

"task"
    CB: I think part of the issue here might be that you can't use the term "task" without clarifying its relationship to task in the TBLT sense. I don't see a great solution, and maybe it can be dealt with quickly, but otherwise it seems unclear.
    FP: Yes, since responding to James' posts above, I think I will have to frame this in the TBLT Literature.

5. Final thoughts

In this playground item I introduced the concept of authentic language use. I illustrated how it relates to other forms of authenticity and then positioned it within a concept map to demonstrate the role of learners in determining authenticity of use. Next, I demonstrated how an educator might promote authentic language use via games in a classroom setting. In this final section, I want to bring a few more questions for the reader to ponder. First, what is the difference between authentic language use and implicit language use? I don't ask about explicit language use, in which the teacher seemingly dictates what the learner should say, because this should be somewhat obvious. However, in both implicit language use and authentic language use, there is some level of autonomy. I would argue that implicit language use is merely a facade of autonomy, but nonetheless a learner who is passionate about a topic being discussed in an L2 class may temporarily forget that he/she is learning a language. I would still argue that it is implicit L2 use given the context (e.g. classroom) and the prompt from a language teacher, but clearly there will be moments when the differences between these two forms of L2 use become minute. Considering how these two forms of L2 use differ becomes important for the next question, which is: What is the value of authentic L2 use? Admittedly, I'm unsure of this. When I was witnessing authentic L2 use in the classroom I instantly recognized that something special was happening, but it wasn't until several months later that I came to reflect on it that I realized what was happening. Now, I look back on it and appreciate the volition of the learners to use their L2 for goals that were created from within. Sure, I created the environment, but I did not

prompt them on what to say and/or how to say it. So returning to the question, what is the value of this type of communication? Does it build self-confidence? Does it make learners better at circumlocution? Does it build fluency? I'm not sure, and I don't envy the bright-eyed researchers who attempt to capture it, because replicating that type of L2 use in a research or classroom setting and then both defining/identifying it will be a nightmare!

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