1 Introduction

Introducing Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Instructional Pragmatics

Aim and scope of the book

The purpose of this book is to construct a framework for second language (L2)[1] instructional pragmatics that is grounded in Vygotskian cultural-historical psychology, most often referred to in applied linguistics and L2 acquisition (SLA) research as sociocultural theory (SCT) of mind (see Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Vygotskian SCT provides a powerful theoretical account of human development that recognizes the central importance of social relationships and culturally constructed artifacts in transforming biologically endowed psychological capacities into uniquely human forms of mental activity. From the perspective of SCT, the sociocultural domain is not merely a set of factors that trigger innate developmental processes within the mind/brain of the individual. Instead, it is the primary source, and principal driver, of mental development. When extended to formal schooling, including L2 education, such an orientation to human psychology compels us to engage in educational praxis wherein instruction drives development rather than following an assumed progression of innate developmental stages. As Vygotsky (1978: 89) forcefully argued, the only good instruction 'is that which is ahead of development'.

Although this book is about the teaching of L2 pragmatics, it is not intended to present a set of teaching techniques or tips from which one can pick and choose at will. Instead, it aims to illustrate a coherent, systematic pedagogical program based on the principles of SCT. This includes not only recommendations for materials design and teaching practices, but also—and more importantly—a reconceptualization of the object of instructional pragmatics. Teachers will certainly find the book useful, and the data

excerpts analyzed throughout are intended to show how an SCT approach to instructional pragmatics works in practice. Teachers are also encouraged to think about ways of adapting the pedagogical framework to suit their own needs and to work within institutional constraints. However, the reader should bear in mind that the pedagogical recommendations assume a particular perspective on the nature of language, pragmatics, mental development, and so on, that is derived from SCT. It is therefore necessary to understand the theoretical framework in order to appreciate the developmental significance of the specific pedagogical practices illustrated in this book. The chapters—whose contents are described at the end of this introduction—are organized with the aim of leading the readers through the components of the theoretical framework, using empirical data to illustrate the aspects of the theory under discussion as they apply to L2 instructional pragmatics.

The data used in this book were collected as part of a study of US university learners of French who participated in a pedagogical enrichment program that was designed to incorporate Vygotskian principles into L2 instructional pragmatics (more details are provided below). Although the data deal exclusively with French, the study serves to illustrate the principles and components of an SCT framework for instructional pragmatics. The framework can certainly be adapted for use in the teaching of any other language.

Defining pragmatics

The focus of pragmatics is on the way people accomplish actions through language. For example, a common area of inquiry examines the realization of speech acts such as invitations, apologies and requests. Inviting someone to a party, apologizing for being late, and requesting to borrow a book are all actions that can be—and are more often than not—accomplished at least in part through written or spoken language. Other actions accomplished through (or at least fundamentally shaped by) language include problem-solving, teaching, reflecting particular world views, creating and maintaining interpersonal relationships, performing social-relational roles and identities, and so on. How these actions are accomplished—that is, the language choices made by speakers—and their effects on other people are in turn subject to various communicative constraints and affordances. In this respect, Crystal (1997) offers a useful definition of pragmatics as a user-centered perspective on language-in-use.

> [Pragmatics is] the study of language from the perspective of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication. (Crystal, 1997: 301)

Crystal's definition is particularly well suited for research into L2 pragmatics because it allows for any instance of language use, learning and development to be studied from the perspective of pragmatics (Kasper & Rose, 2002). It follows that, with regard to L2 instructional pragmatics, any feature of discourse can be taught as pragmatics as long as the focus of pedagogy remains on language users' choices, constraints and effects of language use during communication.

From the perspective of SCT, the ability to accomplish actions through language is mediated by the sociocultural resources available to a person. Mediation refers to Vygotsky's (1978) proposal that higher forms of human cognition are accomplished through the integration of cultural tools, including language, cultural scripts and concepts. These resources—or mediational means—include language forms as well as a person's knowledge of which forms may or may not be appropriate for a given speech event. Also relevant here is Leech's (1983) and Thomas's (1983) now-classic bifurcation of pragmatics into *pragmalinguistics*—the intersection of pragmatics and grammar—and *sociopragmatics*—the intersection of pragmatics and culture. Both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge mediate social action.

Pragmalinguistics entails knowledge of the conventional linguistic means through which social actions can be accomplished (e.g. the various ways of requesting the loan of something such as *Give me that book* versus *Could I borrow that book* versus *I was wondering, if it isn't too much of a bother, whether you might consider loaning me that book, just for a little while*). In this way, pragmalinguistics encompasses the conventional linguistic tools used to mediate social action. However, speakers do not simply use any and all pragmalinguistic resources randomly or inconsequentially. Instead, sociopragmatic knowledge intervenes to mediate the choices speakers make from among these pragmalinguistic resources in light of present goals for the course of action and potentially changing circumstances. Sociopragmatic knowledge involves an understanding of the conventions of 'proper' or 'appropriate' social behavior, including what to say to whom and when, as well as an understanding of the social consequences of conforming to or breaking those conventions (see Chapter 2). In short, sociopragmatic

knowledge mediates the choices speakers make in implementing the available pragmalinguistic resources in the accomplishment of social action. This relationship is depicted in Figure 1.1 as three interlocking ovals. Social actions are goals to be accomplished (e.g. inviting someone to dinner), and these actions are mediated by the means available to speakers (pragmalinguistics), the selection of which is in turn mediated by speakers' knowledge of sociocultural schemas, concepts and social relations (sociopragmatics).
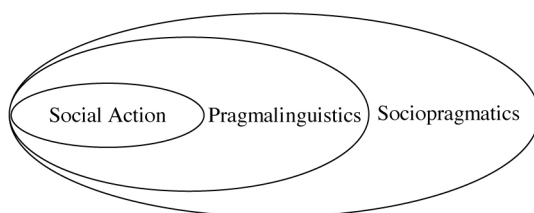

Figure 1.1 Interwoven nature of social action, pragmalinguistics, and sociopragmatics

In sum, mediation lies at the center of a sociocultural conceptualization of pragmatics. Social actions, pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics are interwoven facets of goal-directed activity. As language users, we employ linguistic resources with an objective in mind, and we use our knowledge of sociocultural schemas to choose the resources that can be used to achieve our goals the way we want to achieve them. While this view certainly includes conventional patterns of meaning and language use, the emphasis on agentive language use leaves open the possibility that the way in which we want to accomplish a given goal may break social conventions. In other words, we can *choose* to conform to or reject conventions of appropriate social behavior because we know what the consequences of doing one thing or another may be given present circumstances. It is this information—clear, systematic sociocultural schemas—that is often missing from L2 pragmatics instruction.

Teaching pragmatics

Research inspired by Kasper's (1997) call for investigations into the teachability and learnability of L2 pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics has suggested that classroom learners do indeed benefit from some form of instruction. (Thorough reviews are provided in Alcón Soler & Martínez-Flor, 2008; Ishihara, 2010; Kasper, 2001; Kasper & Roever, 2005; Kasper &

Rose, 2002; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010; Rose, 2005; Rose & Kasper, 2001; Taguchi, 2011; Takahashi, 2010.) Yet this research has yielded mixed findings regarding the efficacy of implicit versus explicit approaches to teaching. In some cases, implicit conditions—which involve the provision of positive evidence of pragmatic forms and corrective feedback on infelicitous learner language—appear to be as beneficial as explicit instruction in developing pragmalinguistic knowledge. However, the literature suggests that explicit instruction in which metapragmatic information is provided is more beneficial than implicit instruction in developing sociopragmatic knowledge (Takahashi, 2010). Sociopragmatic information, it seems, is more difficult for learners to deduce from positive evidence than is pragmalinguistic form. As such, some explicit intervention is helpful in drawing learners' attention to sociopragmatics.

As noted above, explicit instructional conditions provide metapragmatic information about the various forms being taught, including judgments of politeness and formality. In this way, SCT partially aligns with non-SCT research into instructional pragmatics that privileges explicit instruction because sociopragmatic knowledge is argued to mediate pragmatic action. However, the SCT framework diverges from more traditional approaches in how it conceptualizes the object of explicit instruction. In traditional approaches to instructional pragmatics, metapragmatic information is typically presented as a set of doctrinal, norm-referenced rules of thumb, or what van Compernolle and Williams (2012c: 185) refer to as 'narrowly empirical representations' of conventions (see also van Compernolle, 2010a, 2011b), that provide learners with little information about the meaning potential of the linguistic forms they are acquiring and are, in at least some cases, inaccurate. Instead, the SCT framework compels us to design coherent concept-based instructional materials in order to mediate learner development (see the discussion of systemic-theoretical instruction, below). A similar critique has been leveled against mainstream instructed SLA research, where the grammatical rules presented to students are often unsystematic and fraught with exceptions, ambiguities and inaccuracies (Lantolf, 2007).

One representative example of the unsystematicity of traditional approaches to instructional pragmatics is illustrated in Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan's (2006) '6Rs' framework. Their recommendations are intended to assist L2 English learners in developing their pragmatic abilities in the speech acts of requesting and suggesting and 'to gradually make learners

pay attention to the importance of the contextual and sociopragmatic factors that affect which of the two speech acts has to be made and how' (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2006: 44). The approach begins by introducing learners to two important issues in pragmatics: first, the difference—and relationship—between *pragmalinguistics* and *sociopragmatics* (following Rose, 1999); and second, the three central social variables presented in politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987)—that is, *social distance*, *power* and *degree of imposition*. Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan provide explanations and examples of these factors and their effect on politeness in language (see Table 1.1) as a teacher's guide to discussing sociopragmatic factors with their students. Although this orientation to teaching pragmatics is interesting, and on the surface appears to articulate with the SCT framework presented in this book (i.e. teaching concepts), there are two fundamental problems with the way in which social distance, power and degree of imposition are supposed to be explained to learners.

Table 1.1 Sociopragmatic factors

Explanation of factors for teachers	*Effect on level of politeness*
Social distance 'refers to the degree of familiarity that exists between the speakers (e.g. Travel Agent—Customer, do they know each other?)' (p. 58)	Politeness increases with degree of social distance
Power 'refers to the relative power of a speaker with respect to the hearer (e.g. Hotel Manager—Receptionist, rank within a company)' (p. 58)	Politeness increases with degree of power difference
Imposition 'refers to the type of imposition the speaker is forcing someone to do (e.g. to borrow money versus to borrow a pen)' (p. 58)	Politeness increases with degree of imposition

Source: Adapted from Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2006

First, these three social variables are represented as static and pre-existing the communicative context. Consequently, language use (i.e. the selection of pragmatic forms) is represented as reactive with no mention of the ways in which the qualities of social relationships (i.e. social distance and power) are *created through* language. Likewise, the explanation of imposition suggests that specific request and suggestion types always impose on the hearer in the same way. For instance, it is implied that borrowing money is always a

great imposition while borrowing a pen is not, regardless of the context of the request. This certainly cannot be the case, since asking a classmate if one may borrow his or her only pen during an exam would be a much greater imposition than asking a good friend if one might borrow some change to buy a drink from a vending machine. It should also be noted that the explanations are generally vague. For example, the terms *power* and *imposition* are actually used to define the concepts of *power* and *imposition*. These definitions, therefore, can have very little explanatory value.

Second, the chart misrepresents the relationship between the three social variables and politeness. On the one hand, the concept of politeness as construed by Brown and Levinson (1987) is not explained, and there is no mention of the notion of face or that of a face-threatening act to contextualize the theory. Consequently, teachers and learners may impose their own everyday understandings of politeness (i.e. as in being polite or respectful), which are highly variable from one individual to the next. On the other hand, the politeness effects shown in the right-hand column are not systematic. Although there is certainly a correlation between social distance and politeness, as Brown and Levinson conceived of it (i.e. the convention may be to use more polite forms when there is increased social distance), it is not a steadfast rule. There are many reasons for which a speaker may use a conventionally less polite form in interaction, and it is certainly true that when interactional factors (e.g. conversational repair) are taken into account, conventionally less polite forms are not interpreted as impolite (Kasper, 2004). More importantly, however, the context of Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan's (2006) explanations (i.e. presenting the pragmalinguistic resources for making requests and suggestions) inaccurately conflates form and meaning by implying that some linguistic forms are inherently more polite than others. Such is certainly not the case. For example, it can be impolite to use a so-called 'polite' form between intimates as it may create unwarranted social distance.

Excerpt 1.1 shows the result of learning unsystematic rules of thumb for displaying politeness, specifically the overgeneralization of a politeness rule. As part of a pre-enrichment phase of the study reported on in this book, Susan (a pseudonym) was asked to identify which second-person address form (i.e. the familiar *tu* vs. polite *vous*) she would use in a variety of social situations, in this case when meeting a good friend's girlfriend, Sophie, for the first time. The situation was somewhat ambiguous because, although Sophie was

described as a peer and the friend of a friend—factors that favor *tu*—she was also a stranger—a factor that, according to the rules of thumb, favors *vous*.

> *Excerpt 1.1*
> 1 **Tutor:** What about the second one. +++ Jean's girlfriend Sophie.
> 2 **Susan:** I would pro<u>bab</u>ly say *vous*. just because I haven't met her before,
> 3   + and its goes back to the whole <u>respect</u> thing, I think,
> 4   + and <u>even</u> <u>though</u>, + she's my age, and + the girlfriend of <u>my</u> friend,
> 5   + I still just + be<u>cause</u> I'm meeting her for the first time, +
> 6   I feel like I <u>would</u> just default to *vous*,
> 7 **Tutor:** okay.
> 8 **Susan:** to be re<u>spect</u>ful,

In selecting her response, Susan applied her rules of thumb for politeness/ respect. Specifically, because she had never met Sophie before, Susan opted to choose *vous* (line 2), conventionally described as the polite form of address in French-language textbooks (van Compernolle, 2010a, 2011b). Although Susan seemed to acknowledge the potential importance of age and the relationship between Sophie and Jean (line 4), she reverted to her default respectful choice (lines 5–8), *vous*, because she did not actually know what do in this situation. Susan failed to recognize that because of their similar age and Sophie's potential friend status as the girlfriend of a friend, her choice of the conventionally respectful *vous* would most likely be seen as strange, or even rude, because it would create an unnecessary social distance between peers with potential friend status (Belz & Kinginger, 2002; Kinginger, 2008). Since Susan had developed only rule-of-thumb-based knowledge of sociopragmatics prior to her participation in the study, she did not have a coherent framework of meanings that she could use to negotiate the ambiguities of the situation presented in the task. As will be demonstrated in this book, the SCT framework for instructional pragmatics develops in learners a systematic, meaning-based orienting basis for making pragmalinguistic choices.

A brief sketch of the SCT framework for L2 instructional pragmatics

The central tenet of the SCT framework for L2 instructional pragmatics illustrated in this book is that instructed L2 development—including pragmatics—is fundamentally a conceptual process (Negueruela, 2008). Culturally constructed concepts—whether spontaneously acquired in the everyday world or intentionally developed through formal schooling—mediate

cognition (Karpov, 2003; Kozulin, 1995; Vygotsky, 1986). Concepts are not merely the content of thought but in fact frame thought that we think through. Because concepts are culture specific, a large part of L2 development entails 'acquiring new conceptual knowledge and/or modifying already existing knowledge as a way of re-mediating one's interaction with the world' (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006: 5). Here, Agar's (1994: 60) neologism 'languaculture' is important. In Agar's view, the notion of languaculture reflects the union of language and culture, traditionally treated as independent of one another, as a dialectic that 're-establishes the unity between people and their fundamental symbolic artifact' (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006: 5).

From this perspective, instructed L2 pragmatic development may therefore be conceptualized as the appropriation of languacultural concepts and patterns of meaning. In other words, pragmatics is not simply about language in its cultural context—where culture is external to language and impacts upon it from the outside—but, instead, implies the union of the two, where language-in-use is simultaneously an expression of culture and a resource for the reification and transformation of culture. Although some concepts may be similar across cultures, how they are enacted in and through social interaction and communicative activity can be highly variable. For instance, although both American and French cultures have similar conceptions of power–distance relationships, only French has a second-person (i.e. *tu* or *vous*) distinction to encode such aspects of social relationships in the personal pronoun system.[2] Thus, learning to say *you* in French is about much more than mastering a few rules-of-thumb and the morphosyntax of second-person verb phrases; it also entails learning to operate within a new conceptual framework, namely that *tu/vous* choice in French both reflects and creates the qualities of social relationships and points to aspects of one's own social identity (see Morford, 1997; for L2 French, Kinginger, 2008; van Compernolle, 2010a).

Another important tenet of the framework is that the value of conceptual knowledge is directly linked to its relationship with practical activity—that is, *use* (Vygotsky, 1997, 2004). It is never enough to acquire new conceptual knowledge detached from its context of use, and pedagogies that value explicit knowledge of the object of study (e.g. language) must include learning activities that link this knowledge to action. The objective is to apply and transform knowledge through practical activity. Within the framework, knowledge and use, theory and practice form a dialectic in which each dynamically exerts an influence on the other. Vygotsky was clear that this

dialectic, *praxis*, was fundamental to any theory of education and cognitive development.

These first two claims find support in Paradis's neurolinguistic theory of bilingualism and L2 acquisition (Paradis, 2004, 2009). Paradis presents evidence that a great deal of adult SLA is subserved by the declarative memory system and, as such, is fundamentally a declarative or conscious process. This model accounts for not only metalinguistic knowledge developed through explicit forms of teaching but, as Paradis argues, such processes as noticing, deduction, and so on, that are not always treated as part of consciousness in the SLA literature. The result, he contends, is that adult L2 learners rely extensively on whatever form(s) of conscious knowledge they have when using the L2. Through use of the L2, access to this knowledge can be sufficiently 'speeded up' (i.e. accelerated) to be perceived as automatic. Paradis's theory complements Vygotskian pedagogies that assign great significance to the quality of conscious (conceptual) knowledge in adult L2 development. In short, if adult L2 learners rely extensively on declarative knowledge, the quality of that knowledge becomes a central pedagogical concern (Lantolf, 2007).

Sociocultural Theory as a Basis for Educational Praxis

The purpose of this section is to introduce the reader to the core theoretical assumptions of SCT—as proposed by Vygotsky—that form the basis for the SCT framework for L2 instructional pragmatics illustrated in this book. These ideas are revisited and elaborated in the following chapters, so the following paragraphs serve simply as a concise overview of the central theoretical tenets of SCT. For a comprehensive account of the theory, and its extension to L2 development, the reader is referred to Lantolf and Thorne (2006).

Mediated mind

The central tenet of Vygotskian SCT is that the human mind is mediated by culturally constructed artifacts. In contrast to dualistic, reductionist accounts of human mental functioning, which assume that mental processes either originate in one's environment (upward reductionism, behaviorism) or are biologically specified within the mind/brain of the individual (downward reductionism, innatism) (see Valsiner & van der Veer, 2000), Vygotsky posited

a dialectical (i.e. organic, unitary) relationship between the biologically endowed and the culturally constructed. Human consciousness, for Vygotsky, emerged from the unity of biologically specified mental abilities and the internalization of culturally constructed mediational means. The integration of these mediational means in cognitive activity effectively reorganizes and reshapes biologically endowed cognitive processes into higher forms of specifically human psychological functions. In short, 'biology provides the necessary functions and culture empowers humans to intentionally regulate these functions "from the outside" (Vygotsky, 1997: 55)' (Lantolf, 2006: 70). The human mind, therefore, is not coterminous with the brain but incorporates culturally-based mediational means (Wertsch, 1998).

   Vygotsky's understanding of the mind as mediated led him to propose that humans interact with the world through indirect or auxiliary (mediational) means. Thus, whereas the leading psychological theories of Vygotsky's time posited a direct stimulus-response relationship between subject and object, Vygotsky insisted that cultural artifacts allowed humans to create their own indirect, auxiliary relationship with the world. Through mediational means, 'the direct impulse to react is inhibited, and an auxiliary stimulus [i.e. a mediating artifact] that facilitates the completion of the operation by indirect means is incorporated' (Vygotsky, 1978: 40). He continued:

> this type of organization is basic to all higher psychological processes … [The auxiliary stimulus] transfers the psychological operation to higher and qualitatively new forms and permits humans, by the aid of extrinsic stimuli, *to control their behavior from the outside* [italics in original]. The use of signs leads humans to a specific structure of behavior that breaks away from biological development and creates new forms of a culturally-based psychological process. (Vygotsky, 1978: 40)

Vygotsky (1978) represented this indirect (mediated) relationship between subject and object as a triangle (Figure 1.2) in which the subject acts on the object via tools and signs. It should be noted, however, that Vygotsky never argued that direct stimulus-response processes did not exist in humans. Rather, he insisted that such processes belonged to a class of lower (i.e. not culturally-based) psychological functions that humans shared with other animals, especially primates. Higher forms of culturally-based psychological processes, however, incorporate cultural tools (i.e. mediational means), which allow humans to control their lower (i.e. naturally or biologically specified) psychological processes. As Cole (1996) points out, 'natural' (i.e.

unmediated) functions are located along the base of Vygotsky's triangle in that there is a direct stimulus-response process, whereas cultural (i.e. mediated) forms of cognitive activity 'are those where the relation between subject and environment (subject and object, response and stimulus, and so on) are linked through the vertex of the triangle (artifacts)' (Cole, 1996: 119). Higher or culturally-based forms of mental activity include such things as voluntary attention, intentional memory, and logical thought and problem solving, which of course rely on biologically specified functions in the brain but which are formed through the integration of mediating artifacts. For instance, intentional memory depends on one's working and long-term memory capacities (i.e. biology) but also on artifacts (i.e. culture) allowing for the intentional control over these functions—that is, remembering what one wants to remember when one wants to remember it, and how one wants to remember it. An illustrative example from my own experience as a blues and rock guitarist—and one that is undoubtedly shared by others—is the use of tablature, or tabs. Tabs depict the strings of the guitar and the progression of fingering positions to be played on each string (e.g. open, first, second, third fret, and so on). Tabs are important not only for reminding the guitarist which notes are to be played in what order but, more importantly, the most relevant fingering positions to play the sequence of notes as well as how the notes should be realized (e.g. slides, bends, hammer-ons, pull-offs), as indicated by various symbols integrated into the tab chart. Tabs are commonly used without actual sheet music, so the guitarist must already be familiar with the song (e.g. rhythm, melody, time signature, tempo). In this way, tabs are a useful, culturally-based means for remembering the song and how the song is to be played.
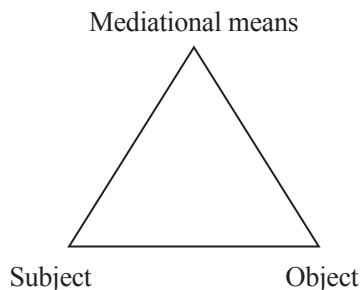
Mediational means

Subject   Object

Figure 1.2 Mediation triangle

It is important to note that, within Vygotsky's theory, artifacts are understood to be much more than physical objects isolated from human

activity. Instead, artifacts can only be understood as a constitutive aspect of the activity in which they are incorporated (Cole, 1996). Understanding an artifact thus entails an understanding of how its use fulfills some aspect of human goal-directed activity and in turn comes to constitute that activity. In this regard, Wertsch (1998) offers the useful concept of the *human-agent-acting-through-mediational-means* to describe the unity of human activity and artifacts.[3] In other words, artifacts are not simply instrumental or supplementary material objects that humans can use to accomplish some action (e.g. the concepts of *cultural toolkit* or *person-plus* proposed by Wells, 1999 and Perkins, 1993, respectively). Human goal-directed activity and integrated artifacts cannot be truly understood independently of each other because 'artifacts assume their character from the activities they mediate' (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006: 67). To illustrate this point, we can return to the example of guitar tabs described above. Guitar tabs may mediate the learning of a song or a particular riff, they may mediate playing during individual practice or rehearsal with a band as a reminder of when to play what and how, or they may mediate one's performance on stage. Although the physical object remains the same, its status as artifact is different in each context: it may be a learning tool or an intentional memory device.

Although Vygotsky's (1978) own research focused primarily on the mediating potential of tools and signs (e.g. physical objects and symbolic artifacts, such as language) introduced during the course of activity (Wertsch, 2007), other scholars have expanded the notion of mediational means to include less explicit forms of mediation. Wartofsky (1973; as cited in Cole, 1996), for example, distinguished a three-level hierarchy that includes primary artifacts (e.g. tools and signs), secondary artifacts (e.g. modes of action using primary artifacts) and tertiary artifacts (e.g. imagined worlds that influence how we perceive the material world). For his part, Cole (1996) highlights the importance of cultural models, schemas and scripts (which he categorizes as secondary artifacts following Wartofsky's [1973] model) in structuring thinking processes and how we integrate primary artifacts into the activities we participate in. Wertsch (2007) distinguishes among explicit forms of mediation, which are intentionally introduced during the course of activity (e.g. physical objects, adult assistance), and less transparent, or implicit, mediating artifacts, such as internalized concepts. For the purposes of the present book, I simply wish to identify three broad categories of interrelated, or interwoven (Cole, 1996), mediational means or artifacts: *tools and signs*, *concepts* and *activities*.

Tools and signs include material objects (e.g. hammers, pen and paper, calculators, computers) as well as semiotic systems, foremost among which is language (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). As noted above, tools and signs are only understood to be artifacts in the Vygotskian sense within the context of the activities they mediate. For example, language is understood to be a mediating artifact only within the context of language-mediated activities, not as the set of decontextualized and isolated sounds and structures privileged in formalist approaches to linguistics (Cole, 1996; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Leontiev, 1981; Thorne & Lantolf, 2007). This perspective compels us to understand language as activity, or *languaging* (Becker, 1988)—that is, as a semiotic process in which meaning is created in and through concrete communicative activity.

Concepts mediate human activity because they constitute systems of meanings that frame human mental activity (Vygotsky, 1986). As discussed in greater detail below, Vygotsky distinguished between *everyday concepts*, which spontaneously arise through extensive empirical experience, and *scientific concepts*, which are abstract yet systematic understandings of objects of study (Davydov, 2004; Galperin, 1989, 1992; see below). Because conceptual knowledge, whether everyday or scientific, comprises networks or associations of meanings as well as relations among objects and other concepts, they fundamentally frame how humans know and act upon the world. As such, concepts mediate mental activity and, by extension, how humans use tools and signs in concrete material activity.

Activities themselves also mediate human behavior and cognition. Routinized patterns of interaction, cultural models, scripts and schemas provide frameworks through which and within which humans operate (Cole, 1996; Engeström, 1987). Activities comprise rules (conventions), divisions of labor, and available mediating artifacts (i.e. tools and signs, concepts) that are appropriate for the accomplishment of the activity in progress. In this regard, Cole (1996: 126) notes that cultural scripts '[specify] the people who appropriately participate in an event, the social roles they play, the object [i.e. artifacts] they use, and the sequence of actions and causal relations that applies'. Knowledge of the roles, appropriate mediating artifacts and sequences constituting activities is constructed from one's experiences participating in phenomenologically similar events. In turn, this knowledge mediates one's orientation to participation in future events.

Internalization and zone of proximal development

Another core concept within SCT is that of internalization. Vygotsky argued that mediational means are internalized through participation in culturally organized activity. The process of internalization, therefore, links the social and the internal-psychological in a dialectical unity—it is the process by which mediational means (i.e. culture) are incorporated into one's cognitive system. It is important to note that Vygotsky conceived of the social as psychological or, put another way, as the intermental plane. This is apparent in his description of the genetic law of development (Vygotsky, 1978), which holds that higher psychological functions are at first mediated by others before growing inwards (Frawley, 1997) to exist on the individual, or intramental, plane. The idea that internalization is a form of inward growth is crucial: internalization is not simply the acquisition of cultural tools; rather, it is a transformative process of appropriating cultural tools and making them one's own (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). At the same time, it should also be recognized that internalization is bidirectional. As Zinchenko (2002) points out, internalization entails simultaneous *growing in* and *growing out* because it is a process that reorganizes the person–environment relationship and thus must have an external, or outward, dimension. (For extended discussion of the bidirectional nature of internalization, the reader is referred to Lantolf & Thorne, 2006: 151–178.)

One of the central themes running throughout this book is that internalization is a process of personalization of mediational means. Although it will be more fully discussed later (see especially Chapter 3), the concept of personalization is important enough to warrant some preliminary comments here. As noted above, internalization involves making something one's own, which entails the transformation of mediational means. In this way, the concept of internalization distinguishes the SCT perspective from acquisition models of development (Kozulin, 2003) because the growing in and growing out processes fundamentally change the qualities of mediational means. In other words, learners do not simply acquire prepackaged knowledge or skills, but instead integrate these in ways that are personally meaningful in relation to concrete material activity. The evidential basis for determining development, therefore, centers on the degree to which the mediational means are personalized. As will be illustrated throughout this book, different learners, though provided with the same pedagogical materials, internalized the mediational means in different ways, forming their own personal relationships with meanings (sociopragmatics) and forms (pragmalinguistics).

To be sure, internalization/personalization does not occur in a vacuum. Rather, as Vygotsky made clear in his formulation of the genetic law of development, higher (i.e. mediated) psychological functions appear first on the intermental plane. As Kozulin (2003: 17) writes, for Vygotsky, development (i.e. internalization) 'depends on the presence of mediating agents in the [learner's] interaction with the environment'. Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), often described as the difference between what one can do alone and what becomes possible with support, represents the pathway through which mediational means are internalized. In this regard, Holzman (2009) offers an insightful discussion of the ZPD concept in which she identifies three interpretations of it: (1) a measurable property of an individual; (2) an approach to interacting with learners to support them in tasks; and (3) a collective and transformative activity characterized as a cooperative undertaking between individuals (see Poehner & van Compernolle, 2011). Holzman notes that the third interpretation is closest to Vygotsky's original proposal.

Understanding the ZPD as collective activity through which mediational means may be internalized offers a powerful way to conceptualize the organization of learning environments. This reading of Vygotsky does not limit discussions of the ZPD to measurable learning potentials or diagnostics of abilities, nor does it rely solely on the concept of assistance, which Vygotsky took for granted in his writings about the ZPD (Chaiklin, 2003). Instead, focus is on cooperatively engaging learners in personalizing the mediational means available to them. In this way, mediating agents, such as teachers, in fact encourage differences to emerge across individual learners (see Chapter 3). In short, ZPD activity entails creating the conditions for qualitative changes in consciousness to occur (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) as learners simultaneously grow in (internal mental activity) and grow out (external mental and material activity).

Educational praxis and the artificial development of mind

Praxis—the unification of theory and practice—is one of the central commitments of sociocultural educational psychology. Vygotsky argued that, while practice was formerly the mere application of theory, which 'had practically no effect on the fate of the theory' (Vygotsky, 2004: 304), it was to be its highest test for his new psychology (Lantolf, 2008). In short, Vygotsky believed that it was inadequate for educational psychology to limit its scope

to the description of naturally occurring developmental processes; instead, he argued, psychology's true objective was to be 'a science of the laws of variation of human behavior and of the means of mastering these laws' (Vygotsky, 1997: 10).

Vygotsky was careful to emphasize that his perspective on developmental education was not equivalent to experimental pedagogies that were primarily concerned with 'the solution of purely pedagogical and instructional problems by means of experiment' (Vygotsky, 1997: 10). Instead, his commitment to praxis meant that educational psychology was 'concerned with *psychological* investigations applied in the field of education' (Vygotsky, 1997: 110). For Vygotsky, formal education had the objective of promoting the 'artificial mastery of natural processes of development' (Vygotsky, 1997: 88)—that is, intentionally promoting development through pedagogical intervention. In contrast to Piaget and other contemporary educational psychologists, who believed that instruction should follow natural developmental stages, Vygotsky argued that learning in a schooled context had the potential to cause particular kinds of cognitive development that were unlikely to occur in non-schooled (everyday) contexts.

> Vygotsky considered education to be a specific form of cultural activity that had important and unique developmental consequences … [E]ducation is not just an undertaking whereby knowledge is obtained, but it is indeed an intentionally organized (i.e. artificial) activity that restructures mental behavior. (Lantolf, 2008: 16)

According to Vygotsky, one of the key differences between natural or everyday development and artificial (intentional) development exists at the level of conceptual knowledge, in particular the distinction between everyday and scientific (or theoretical) concepts (Vygotsky, 1986).

Everyday concepts constitute empirical knowledge (Karpov, 2003) and are based on 'an immediate observable property of an object' (Kozulin, 1995: 123). There are two types of everyday concepts: spontaneous and nonspontaneous. *Spontaneous* everyday concepts are generally inaccessible to consciousness without special education. For example, children acquire the grammar of their first language nonconsciously, and their appropriate use of the language does not depend on any conscious understanding of it. However, this knowledge can become open consciousness through schooling (e.g. learning grammar rules and parts of speech). *Nonspontaneous* everyday concepts are developed through conscious learning processes, whether in the

everyday world or in formal educational contexts. As such, they are open to conscious inspection (i.e. awareness). For instance, the nonspontaneous everyday concept of a circle is formed through the conscious abstraction of objects with the same or similar geometric shape with which one has had more or less extensive experience, 'such as wheels, pancakes, bracelets, [and] coins' (Lantolf, 2008: 21). This kind of knowledge is akin to rules of thumb in language teaching: it provides some practical guidelines, but it is not coherent, nor is it part of a larger system.

Scientific concepts, by contrast, 'represent the generalizations of the experience of humankind that is [sic] fixed in science' (Karpov, 2003: 66). They encompass the essential features of a given set of objects, which may not be immediately observable. To revisit the example of the concept of a circle, the scientific concept is 'a figure that appears as the result of a [360-degree] movement of a line with one free and one fixed end' (Kozulin, 1995: 124; as cited by Lantolf, 2008: 21). The scientific concept describes all possible circles. As Kozulin (1995: 124) notes, this definition of a circle 'requires no previous knowledge of round objects to understand'. Scientific conceptual knowledge of language therefore entails an understanding of the essential features of language. As argued in this book, this kind of knowledge is semiotic rather than structural. Of course, structure/form is important, but a holistic, systematic understanding of meaning potential must be the core of instructed L2 development. In other words, while traditional approaches to instructed SLA in general, and L2 instructional pragmatics in particular, have privileged form, the SCT framework begins with meanings, specifically underlying conceptual meanings relevant to linguistic practices.

Vygotsky (1986) acknowledged that everyday and scientific concepts have their own strengths and weaknesses. Everyday concepts are rich in empirical evidence and closely tied to everyday lived experience. However, because they are empirical (i.e. exemplar-based), everyday concepts often lack generalizability, and they may not be transferable to circumstances that a person has not encountered before. Scientific concepts, however, have the advantage of being abstract and systematic, thus making their use applicable to the full range of possible circumstances. They are also explicit and therefore available for conscious control. Yet scientific concepts are not necessarily linked to empirical experience. Therefore, it may take a long time for a learner to be able to accelerate his or her control over the concept in practice. Keeping in mind Vygotsky's commitment to praxis (i.e. the unification of

theory and practice), he argued that 'for scientific knowledge to be of value it must be connected to practical activity' (Lantolf, 2008: 21). In other words, acquiring scientific knowledge without developing the ability for use results in empty verbalism, or 'knowledge detached from reality' (Vygotsky, 1987: 217). Consequently, pedagogies based on Vygotskian principles must find a way to link abstract theoretical knowledge with concrete practice. In the case of instructed L2 development this means, on the one hand, promoting systematic metalinguistic knowledge and, on the other, creating the conditions for the application, and possible transformation, of such knowledge in performance (e.g. speech or writing). And in contrast to traditional instructed SLA approaches to mapping forms onto meanings, the SCT framework aims to map meanings onto forms (see below). In other words, conceptual meanings come first, and can then be extended to relevant linguistic forms. In this way, instructed L2 development—conceived of as a conceptual process (see above)—is characterized as the 'ascent from the abstract to the concrete' (Ilyenkov, 1982: 135; see also Davydov, 2004, described below).

As noted above, instructed SLA has traditionally focused on the acquisition of forms as means for creating and interpreting meaningful utterances. Accordingly, it is the forms that are privileged in the first instance, and as those forms are acquired they may be mapped onto message-relevant meanings. For example, in many beginning-level French textbooks, past tenses are taught in a stepwise fashion, starting with the preterit (*passé composé*). Units focusing on past tenses in textbooks usually describe the appropriate formation of the *passé composé* (i.e. selecting the appropriate auxiliary verb, *être* 'to be' or *avoir* 'to have', and adding the past particle of the main verb). Practice exercises then reinforce the structural dimension of past tense use. Only later, when the imperfective is introduced (which also starts with a focus on forming the imperfective, i.e. verb endings), are learners then presented with information that is relevant to the meaning of past aspect (i.e. the choice between the perfective and imperfective aspect)—for instance, foregrounding or backgrounding information in a past narrative to move the plot forward or to contextualize actions. Thus, what is privileged first is mastery of the formal features of past tenses and only once these are assumed to be under learners' control are the meanings made available to them. SCT reverses this through concept-based instruction, by focusing first on the meaning and significance of verbal aspect and then mapping those meanings onto the relevant past tense forms, as illustrated in the work of Negueruela (2003).

Meaning, therefore, is not simply about 'getting the message across' (i.e. denotational meaning of utterances) but about the perspectival and representational nuances that are possible in the language one is learning (i.e. psychological meaning). Both types of meaning are certainly important, and they interact in important ways. However, when conceptual meanings are foregrounded, learners are given access to a more systematic and thoughtful orienting basis (i.e. motives) for choosing between forms. It is also important to note that the kind of concepts that are privileged in SCT-grounded pedagogies are those that are relevant for communicative action and meaning making. Thus, while knowledge of verb paradigms may be conceptual in nature, the content of the concept is limited to formal, structural properties of the language and do not necessarily function semiotically. By contrast, appropriation of the grammatical concept of aspect or the sociopragmatic concept of social distance, for example, can foster in learners a systematic and semiotically oriented basis for interpreting and creating meaning in communication that is not limited to a closed set of forms. Aspect is, after all, relevant not only for past tense (there are also perfective and imperfective present and future aspects, realized in different ways in different languages) or even verb forms (lexical aspect may be realized also via verb choice and adverbs), just as the concept of social distance is relevant to many pragmatic features of language, not just address forms or speech act realizations.

Systemic-theoretical instruction

Following Vygotsky's position on the value of conceptual knowledge in formal educational practice, Galperin (1989, 1992) and Davydov (2004) developed concept-based approaches to instruction. Although differences do exist between the Galperinian and Davydovian models—known respectively as systemic-theoretical instruction (STI) and movement-from-the-abstract-to-the-concrete (MAC)—both approaches treat scientific concepts as the minimal unit of instruction. As Ferreira (2005: 55) notes, despite differences in these approaches, both Galperin and Davydov promoted conceptual instruction that 'is explicit, linked to the leading activities [of learners], … focused on conscious awareness of what and why one is doing what one is doing, … and aims at developing autonomy and creativity in students'. The main difference between Galperin's and Davydov's respective approaches is in developing orienting models of scientific concepts for instruction.

For Galperin, the model is inflexible, a procedure used to accomplish error-free action (Haenen, 1996: 190). For example, Negueruela (2003) developed flow charts for teaching the concept of aspect in L2 Spanish. These flow charts led learners through the process of selecting appropriate tenses for the meanings they wanted to create. As such, although Negueruela's study enabled learners to make creative, agentive choices regarding verbal aspect, the flow charts served as a step-by-step guide for selecting appropriate tenses without error. For Davydov, however, the model is flexible enough to guide learners through quasi-investigation of a concept. The model encompasses the essence of the discipline and serves as a tool for the development of theoretical thinking. Ferreira (2005), for instance, used Davydov's (2004) notion of a germ-cell model for teaching the concept of genre in an ESL writing course. A germ-cell model is essentially the core kernel of the concept to be appropriated that encapsulates its essence and can be elaborated and modified as learners are guided through a quasi-investigation of the concept. In the case of Ferreira's study, the model was open to evaluation and revision as learners developed an understanding of the mutual influence of language and context represented in 'the *abstract communicative principle* (ACP)—LANGUAGE ⟷ CONTEXT' (Ferreira, 2005: 19). Thus, rather than providing a step-by-step flow chart or diagram to produce error-free action, the germ-cell model gave learners an orientation to exploring the concept of genre. (For an extended comparison of STI and MAC, see Ferreira, 2005.)

It should be noted that, although Galperin, and later Davydov, focused on teaching experiments (STI, MAC), this research fundamentally addressed the problem of the development of mind within Vygotsky's overall project.[4] What Galperin in particular demonstrated through his STI experiments was that mental activity was not a mysterious internal process occurring solely within the brain of the individual. Instead, mental activity arose in and through practical, material activity, which was goal directed (i.e. purposeful) and always linked to the problems of real-life material activity. As Stetsenko and Arievitch (2010) write:

> the mind gradually arises in development … out of material activity because it serves the need to thoroughly examine emerging, new situations and to anticipate the consequences of actions within these situations prior to their physical execution. (Arievitch, 2010: 244)

And in a later passage:

> acting on the internal plane retains all the characteristics of human real-life activity—it is an active process of solving problems that exist out in the world and of searching for 'what is to be done next' given present conditions and future goals. (Arievitch, 2010: 244–245)

Thus, whether carried out on the internal or external plane, actions are goal directed: 'mental actions are carried out in the medium of meanings' (Stetsenko & Arievitch, 2010: 245), whereas material actions are executed in physical activity. It is noteworthy that neither Galperin nor Davydov considered mental activity to occur only internally (privately), but also included externalized forms of thinking. Take, for instance, the example of an architect who draws blueprints and revises them before actually constructing a building (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). In essence, the building was constructed on the symbolic plane (i.e. in the blueprints) prior to its execution during construction. Thus, the architect's thinking was materialized in the blueprints.

Concept-based pedagogy is therefore grounded in three basic principles (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). First, as mentioned above, concepts serve as the basic unit of instruction. Concepts are systematic representations of objects of study that guide learners' actions during concrete material activity. The two remaining principles aim to support the internalization of relevant concepts: materialization of the concepts (e.g. in the form of pedagogical diagrams) and verbalization (e.g. explaining the concept as such and explaining one's performance in relation to the concepts). As Lantolf and Thorne (2006: 304) note: 'These three principles are derived from [Galperin's] general theory of human mental functioning according to which mental activity is controlled by three processes: orientation, execution, and control.' The orientation process (i.e. the planning function) 'determines what and how something is to be done' (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006: 304). The execution process represents the actual activity, while the control process is responsible for evaluating whether, and to what extent, the orientation (i.e. plan) was successfully executed. Thus, the goal of concept-based pedagogy is to provide students with an orienting basis for action such that both mental and material activities are guided by coherent, systematic explanations of how to plan and execute actions, while at the same time enabling students to control and evaluate those actions in relation to their understanding of the activity's goals. This approach has the potential to develop students' agency, defined as the socioculturally mediated capacity

to act and to assign meaning to one's actions, including its contextually sensitive significance, given the constraints and affordances arising from one's relationship with the environment.

Concept-based L2 instruction

To date, a number of studies have shown that internalized linguistic concepts serve a powerful mediational role in L2 development and use. Such studies have investigated the teaching of tense, aspect and modality in Spanish (Negueruela, 2003, 2008; Negueruela & Lantolf, 2006), Spanish locative prepositions (Serrano-López & Poehner, 2008), genre in an ESL academic writing course (Ferreira, 2005), the concept of voice in French (Knouzi *et al.*, 2010; Lapkin *et al.*, 2008; Swain *et al.*, 2009) and Spanish literature and metaphor (Yáñez Prieto, 2008). In what follows, I provide a description of the research carried out by Negueruela and Swain and colleagues, cited above, as these projects have been the primary models for the design of the study reported on in this book.

Negueruela (2003) implemented a concept-based approach to instruction in an intermediate-level US university Spanish composition and grammar class. Students were presented with pedagogical models (diagrams) of the concepts of mood, aspect and tense, assigned six at-home audio recorded verbalization tasks in which they explained to themselves the relevant concepts, and engaged in several spontaneous spoken-interactive tasks outside of class over the course of a 16-week academic term. Negueruela documented in great detail how learners' verbalizations (audio recorded by learners at home) developed from rule-of-thumb-based explanations of the use of perfective and imperfective tenses to conceptually grounded, meaning-based understandings of the role of tense in assigning a particular aspectual perspective on a given event. This shift was suggestive of these learners' thinking about language no longer as a set of rules to follow but as a system of meanings from which they could choose to fit their specific communicative purposes. Negueruela also documented marked improvement in these learners' spoken performance, namely their agentive (i.e. voluntary, controlled) use of tense to assign specific meanings (aspect) to the events described. Although the learners continued to struggle in performance, as evidenced by faltering control over linguistic forms from time to time, Negueruela explained that this should not be surprising since conceptual knowledge typically develops ahead of performance abilities (Valsiner, 2001). Elsewhere, Negueruela (2008) has

described the internalization of categories of meanings (concepts) as leading to a zone of potential development (ZPOD). For Negueruela (2008), the ZPOD entails the internalization of categories of meanings (i.e. concepts), which sets the stage for the (potential) development of communicative performance abilities.

Swain and colleagues (Knouzi *et al.*, 2010; Lapkin *et al.*, 2008; Swain *et al.*, 2009) developed a one-time concept-based instructional intervention to teach the concept of voice in an intermediate-level Canadian university L2 French course, with a much more experimental design compared to Negueruela (2003) (i.e. with a formal pretest, posttest and delayed posttest). Their primary focus was on the role of verbalization, or *languaging*, in the internalization of linguistic concepts. Their study consisted of developing written concept explanations cards and pedagogical diagrams depicting the concepts for the learners to study independently in class. During an in-class intervention, students were prompted to speak to themselves (i.e. verbalize their thinking) in the presence of a researcher as much as possible. Their results indicated that all learners improved their understanding of the concept of voice, as measured by definition data (i.e. explaining the concept of voice) and a worksheet in which they identified voice in a text and explained how it functioned. However, interindividual differences were found; most notably the amount and quality of languaging varied across the learners. Their analysis, reported on in detail in Swain *et al.* (2009), suggested that high languagers (who performed better than the other groups on a posttest and delayed posttest) produced significantly higher rates of *self-assessment* and *inferencing* languaging units. Swain *et al.* (2009) identified three forms of inferencing:

> (a) *Integration*: the participant uses information presented in previous cards …;
> (b) *Elaboration*: the participant does not only show evidence of retaining the information presented previously but also appropriates the information either by incorporating it into prior knowledge … or by incorporating several pieces of information of the explanatory text …; (c) *Hypothesis formation*: the participant forms a hypothesis based on what he or she has already learned or understood. (p. 11)

Self-assessment refers to languaging units in which the learner monitors or evaluates his/her understanding of the concept. Based on their findings, Swain *et al.* (2009: 22) argued that 'it is not just that high languagers language more, but that they use language in qualitatively different ways, ways that mediate those processes important to the understanding of cognitively complex ideas'.

What both of these research programs illustrate is that the internalization of conceptual knowledge is a key component of L2 development. As described earlier, concept-based pedagogy emphasizes three aspects of mental actions: orientation, execution and control. Internalized concepts provide an orientation to action, and they also serve to control, monitor and evaluate action. Thus, conceptual knowledge is foregrounded as the central component of developing the ability to control one's actions voluntarily in order to achieve one's goals and to respond to present and potentially changing circumstances.

Research Context and Data Sources

The SCT framework for L2 instructional pragmatics proposed in this book draws from a study of a concept-based approach to developing advanced L2 pragmatic abilities among US university learners of French (van Compernolle, 2012). This book elaborates upon the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the study and illustrates the practical extension of the SCT framework to the domain of L2 instructional pragmatics.

Design of the study

The study was designed to explore the extension of Vygotskian pedagogical principles, specifically STI, to L2 instructional pragmatics. To this end, a six-week pedagogical enrichment program was developed to allow students to meet one-on-one with a tutor outside of their normal class. The following materials and tasks were included in the study (details of the materials design and task administration will be fleshed out in the relevant chapters):

• A 36-page concept-based course book, which included written concept explanations as well as pedagogical diagrams depicting the concepts (see Chapter 2), served as the center of the enrichment program. Using the course book, the learners engaged in monologic and dialogic verbalized reflections in which they considered the qualities of the concepts (see Chapter 4).

• Appropriateness judgment questionnaires (AJQs) in which learners were to select appropriate pragmatic forms in a variety of social-interactive situations and to explain their choices (see Chapter 5).

• Spoken-interactive scenarios, modeled after Di Pietro's (1987) strategic interaction methodology, in which the learners planned the scenario, performed it, and discussed their performance with the tutor (see Chapter 6).

In addition, semi-guided language awareness interviews (LAIs) were included in order to assess the qualities of the learners' metapragmatic knowledge. Table 1.2 provides an outline of the study's design.

Table 1.2 Outline of the research design

Session	Procedures
1	• Pre-enrichment LAI • AJQ 1 • Scenarios 1 and 2
2	• Introduction of concept-based materials • Verbalized reflection • AJQ 2
3	• Scenarios 3 and 4
4	• Verbalized reflection (diagrams only) • AJQ 3
5	• Scenarios 5 and 6
6	• Post-enrichment LAI • Repeat AJQ 1 • Scenarios 7 and 8

Session 1 of the program represents an attempt at assessing learners' actual level of development (i.e. what they know and are able to do independently at the start of the program), including an LAI, an AJQ, and two strategic interaction scenarios aiming to elicit informal and formal speech (see above). This first session also served as a diagnostic assessment in that the researcher noted specific areas of difficulties for each individual to be followed up on in subsequent sessions.

Sessions 2–5 represent the enrichment program proper. During this period, the participants were introduced to the concepts via the concept explanations and diagrams (session 2), asked to verbally reflect on the concepts (sessions 2 and 4), and cooperatively worked with the researcher/tutor on various AJQs (sessions 2 and 4) and strategic interaction scenarios (sessions 3 and 5) to develop their conceptual knowledge and performance abilities. The enrichment program aimed not only to provide multiple opportunities to engage in similar tasks but also to withdraw mediation progressively. Thus, while verbalized reflections during session 2 took place while the participants had access to the full verbal concept explanations, they had access only to the pedagogical

diagrams during session 3. Similarly, during interactive tasks (i.e. AJQs, scenarios), the researcher/tutor sought to provide the least explicit assistance required to position the participants to contribute maximally to the task.

Session 6 was designed to mirror session 1 as a means of comparing pre-enrichment and post-enrichment metapragmatic knowledge and performance abilities. As such, the participants engaged in another LAI centered on the same guiding questions as in session 1, the same AJQ used in session 1 as a means of directly comparing pre-enrichment and post-enrichment performance, and scenarios that were very similar to those used in session 1.

Participants

The participants in this study were all undergraduate learners of French enrolled in an intermediate-level (second year) oral communication and reading comprehension course during Fall 2010 at a large public research university located in the northeast United States. The rationale for recruiting from among this population was twofold. First, although students enrolled in second year courses are generally communicatively capable in French, their experience with the language is generally limited to what is taught in formal educational contexts. As such, their awareness of, and ability to use, the range of sociolinguistic and pragmatic variants available to French speakers is limited. Second, students enrolled in intermediate-level coursework have already completed the university's foreign language requirement and are therefore pursuing their studies in French for their own purposes, such as a personal interest in the language, a desire to study abroad in the future and/or a professional/career-related goal.

Volunteers were offered compensation for their time in the amount of $60 for the study, which was prorated at $10 per session. Initially, 15 students expressed interest in the study. However, only ten students were eventually able to arrange meeting times with the researcher. Of these, two students withdrew from the study before it began without citing a reason for doing so. The remaining eight participants all completed the study.

Table 1.3 displays basic information about these eight participants, including the pseudonym selected by, or assigned to, each participant, gender, and previous studies in French at the middle school, high school and university levels. Five were females and three were males. All eight participants had previously taken French in middle and/or high school, including high school French at the Advanced Placement level 4 and/or 5.[5] Six participants had

taken one or two French courses (French 3, the final semester of the basic language sequence,[6] and/or an intermediate grammar course) at the university prior to enrolling in the oral communication and reading comprehension course. The remaining two, Leon and Pierre, had not taken any university-level French courses. In addition, although all eight participants had had a number of years of previous French studies, none reported having had more than very little exposure to the language outside of a formal classroom setting. None of the participants was a French major or minor at the time of the study, although some were considering pursuing a minor, or at least advanced-level coursework, and/or participating in a study abroad program.

Table 1.3 Participant information

Pseudonym	Gender	Previous studies in French: Years in middle school	Previous studies in French: Years in high school	Previous studies in French: University courses
Nikki	Female	2	4	French 3 French Grammar
Susan	Female	1	4	French 3 French Grammar
Leon	Male	2	4	—
Pierre	Male	1	4	—
Mary	Female	—	4	French Grammar
Stephanie	Female	1	4	French 3 French Grammar
Laurie	Female	1	4	French 3
Conrad	Male	2	4	French 3

Overview of the Chapters

This introduction has outlined the key components of the SCT framework for L2 instructional pragmatics to be elaborated in the six remaining chapters of the book. As I mentioned at the outset, this book is not simply a teacher's guide with hints or tips for teaching pragmatics. Instead, its purpose is to present a coherent pedagogical framework based on Vygotskian cultural-historical psychology. To this end, each of the remaining chapters deconstructs a particular theoretical issue in L2 instructional pragmatics from the

perspective of SCT, drawing empirical support from the study described above. Although each chapter can be read as a stand-alone piece, it is helpful to read them in the order in which they are presented in order to fully appreciate the theoretical and practical arguments constructed throughout this volume.

Chapters 2 and 3 delve further into the theoretical and empirical underpinnings of the SCT framework for L2 instructional pragmatics. In Chapter 2, the history of the concept of appropriateness in language learning and language teaching is traced and critiqued in order to arrive at a conceptualization of appropriateness that is commensurable with SCT. Two central concepts are proposed: (1) that sociopragmatic meaning exists as a dynamic and malleable indexical field (Eckert, 2008; Silverstein, 2003; van Compernolle, 2011a); and (2) that pragmatics must be seen as mediated action. Chapter 3 addresses SCT's approach to understanding learners as people-acting-through-mediational-means. The chapter includes discussions of personality development, self, identity, agency and emotions.

Chapters 4–6, then, specifically address the components of the proposed pedagogical framework. Each of the chapters documents the findings of the study in relation to the theoretical claims of the framework. Chapter 4 considers the relationship between thinking and speaking and the role of verbalization in concept formation. Chapter 5 focuses on the development of concept-based pragmatic knowledge as an orienting basis for action during problem-solving tasks, with specific emphasis on the role of cooperative dialogue in driving development. Chapter 6 then links the development of conceptual knowledge to the development of spoken performance abilities. In particular, Chapter 6 explores how dynamically administered strategic interaction scenarios served to develop learners' controlled performance abilities.

Chapter 7 concludes the book. The discussion includes a summary of the SCT framework and its central claims regarding instructed L2 pragmatic development. However, the principal aim of the chapter is to construct a praxis-oriented future for Vygotskian approaches to L2 instructional pragmatics. To this end, the findings of the study reported in the book are then discussed in terms of their implications for research, classroom teaching and teacher education programs.

Notes

(1) Second language (L2) will be used throughout this book to refer to any language learned beyond one's first, whether second, third, foreign, and so on.

(2) Of course, English speakers can encode types of relationships through alternative means, such as titles and honorifics, use of last names versus first names, and so forth. However, the pronoun *you* does not itself encode information about social relationships as do the French pronouns *tu* and *vous*. In other words, the French language predisposes speakers to attend to social relationship qualities in the grammar of second-person verb phrases, whereas this information is only optionally encoded periphrastically in English.

(3) Lantolf and Thorne (2006) argue with Wertsch's (1998) use of *agent* in this term. In their view, 'there are no uniquely human actions that are not mediated … human agency appears once we integrate cultural artifacts and concepts into our mental and material activity' (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006: 63). For this reason, Lantolf and Thorne enclose *agent* in parentheses.

(4) It should be noted that Galperin conducted STI experiments not in controlled laboratory settings, but in classrooms. In line with Vygotsky's (1997) position on developmental education, Galperin sought to perform psychological investigations in educational contexts by intervening in the development of real learners. In this way, he was interested not only in teaching methods, but more importantly in tracing the development of mental activity as it arose in and through pedagogical activity.

(5) Advanced Placement (AP) courses are designed to provide high school students with an opportunity to earn one or more semesters of college-level credit through examination. The exception here is Stephanie, who had four years of high school French but had not taken AP-level French.

(6) None of the participants was required to take French 3 at the university. However, those who chose to take this course did so because they felt they needed a refresher course for whatever reason (e.g. some stated having had bad high school teachers or having done poorly on an AP exam).