



# **Learning at a Weekly French Community in a SALC**

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Nanzan Language Education Seminar  
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# Theoretical background

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**Out of class / Beyond class learning** (Reinders and Benson, 2017)

## Community of practice

- Shared interest through interaction (Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner, 2015)
- Motivation sustained amongst peers (Hughes et al., 2012)
- Near peer role model (Murphey, 1996) / Future self (Murray, 2017)
- Learning (how to learn) from and with others (Mynard et al., 2020)
- (Multiple)Identities (Wenger, 1998)

## Social constructivism

- ZPD (Vygotsky, 1987) / ZPA (Murphey, 1996)

# Context

## Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS)

- Private university, Chiba.
- Majors: English, Chinese, Spanish, and Korean, International Communication, and Languages and Culture (English and Thai, Vietnamese, Portuguese or Indonesian)
- MULC (multilingual communication centre)
- Self-Access Centre (SALC): promote language study and use and development of autonomy
- French: 1st and 2nd year students as a third language (No French major or department)



# Context

## The French table

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- 2016
- Student-led communities (Watkins - Course)
- SALC (Workshop section)
- Close to the building's entrance
- Tables and chairs (Plastic dividers - COVID-19)
- Surrounded by books (English)
- Weekly 6-12 members - students and staff (administrators and teachers)
- Every Friday - Lunch time (30 minutes)

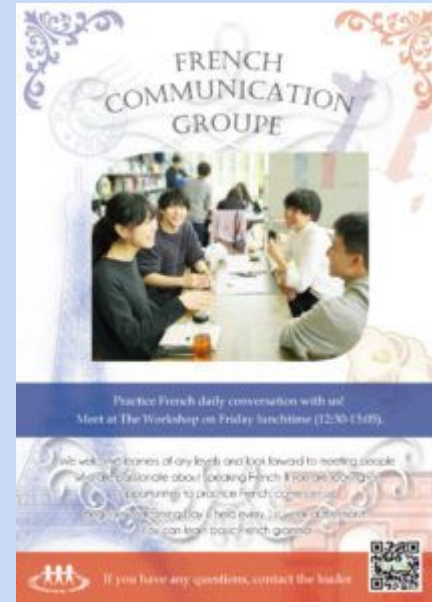


# Methodology

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- 7 participants  
(5 students, 1 administrator, 1 English teacher)
- On-going research
- Qualitative data:
  - Questionnaire (September 2022)
  - Language learning histories (September 2022)
  - Two individual semi-structured interviews (October 2022 and January 2023)
  - Wheel of language learning (December 2022)



# Findings



# **Out-of class learning and communication opportunities**



## Sole opportunity to communicate in French

"It helped me so much compare to my classes where I **don't have speaking chances**. [...] I can increase the number of people we can talk with, **if I can be able to find speaker.**"

"If this community didn't exist [...] I **couldn't talk with someone in French.**"

"When I was freshman [...] I **only talk to myself**. I am so happy to find this community."

## Recreate immersion context

"**It's like in France**. Other learners also speak French."

"I **feel like being in the United Nations** [...] we use English, and in that time of the community, I use French."



**Community of practice**  
**Construction upon diversity and similarity**



## Shared interest (flourishing) through interaction / motivational factor

"**People over this community accept me.** [...] I can't speak French but they did **cheer me up** and they tried to make me improved and teach some effective useful phrases."

"**Everybody is so kind** [...] I think for this community everybody learns and speak French, beginner like me."

## Near peer role models / Future self

"I have a model [...] She's [leader] very good at French. **I want to match her level.**"

"So many good students who can speak French well, so, I feel like **I should study more to get to her [leader] level.**"

"I set her (group leader) of **my goal to learn French.**"

## Learning (how to learn) from and with others

"He remembered French word using a notebook. **We exchange strategies.**"

"Sometimes the leader sent us **some effective websites to practice alone.**"

## Linguistic adaptation towards social/group integration

"if she (group leader) uses Japanese or English for learners [...]. **It is more easier for everybody to join the community or speak about the topic.**"

"The first time, when I came, she (group leader) almost speak English. **So I feel very easy learning French.**"

# **Multilingualism**

## **Languages in contact**



## Multiple (perspectives on) languages and identities

"**Portuguese** is my major, but I feel very calmly, relaxed [...] **French** is a very rich image. I like to study history. French is using very rich person, for example king or noble person. [...] **Spanish**, I feel exciting because the sounds is like skipping. [...] English is also rich because I am talking **British English**. So, I imagine I am a noble person."

"French has a lot of relations with any areas or **histories**. And I have learned that I want to learn **French** profoundly."

"Simply learning French is interesting for me [...] it makes my world bigger."

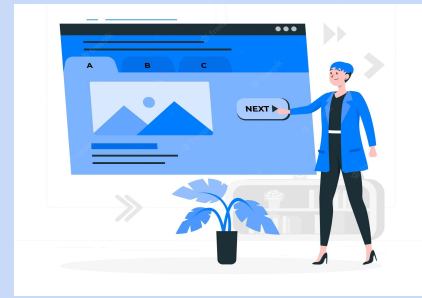
## Cross-linguistic aspect

"**The relationships between the languages, like similarity**. It makes it easier."

"My Spanish knowledge is useful to learn because **French is similar to Spanish**."

# Next steps and Suggestions

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- Collect further impressions (December - Wheel of language learning)
- Conduct individual interview (January)
- Introduce journaling (next semester)
- Foster out of class opportunities (communities, tandem learning)
- Encourage students to learn from each other (collaborative activities)
- Acknowledge students multiple identities and languages (multicultural biography)
- Provide opportunities to reflect on those experiences (self/peer- reflection)

# Preliminary Conclusions

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Preliminary findings indicate that community members reflect on their learning processes and their zones of proximal development (ZPD) and adjust their zones of proximal adjustment (ZPA).

- **Out of class learning:** Sole opportunity to communicate in French & Recreate immersion context
- **Community of practice:** Shared interest through interaction / motivational factor, Near peer role models / Future self, Learning from and with others & Linguistic adaptation towards social/group integration
- **Multilingualism:** Multiple languages / identities & Cross-linguistic aspect

# References and contact information







**Merci!**

**Do you have any questions?**